

"For the Ninety-five Million!" The Story of a Dramatic Bulgar.

By JULIAN JOHNSON.
LIVER MOROSCO.

O This whirlwind westerner at the age of thirty-seven has carved his name as high upon the pillar of constructive histrionic fame as any man past or contemporary has carved the entire western half of the continent from the slow artistic death to which supreme New York dominion seemed to condemn it; has discovered not only a new school of authors, but a new world of actors and actresses; has established a new capital of the play upon the Pacific coast and is heralded as the great apostle of youth—a youth which applies not only to his principals, but to his pieces, his productions, his ideas of playwriting and his scheme of stage management. More than any other form of art, the stage is fettered by hidebound convention and the fear of change, and convention and fear are the twin dragons which this St. George of the theater long ago put under his feet.

Any penny a liner can type fulsome paragraphs. Having applauded Morosco, let us see specifically what he has done which is worth acclaim.

His most recent New York successes, "Peg o' My Heart" and "The Bird of Paradise," are great and nationally known triumphs which are in reality merely the capstone upon a structure which is built of years of tremendous, obscure yet untiring effort.

Morosco was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, but went early to San Francisco. Like Belasco and one or two others who have done much for the real advancement of the drama, he was a native westerner and not, as much more than half of the west's people, an eastern engraft.

His father, the late Walter Morosco, utilized the small savings of an industrious career and purchased the lease of the Grand Opera House in the Golden Gate City. He made it the home of melodrama as it was, full of red blood and big ideas sketched rough, not a middle of mawkish sentimentality, as it afterward became. The elder Morosco had a character makes of type represented only by the Theodore Roberts and his kind today, women whose voices thrust home a thrill. They made big drama for wide people. The outdoor man came, and came again and again. Walter Morosco grew rich.

As his means increased he did not, however, become more open handed with his hardworking son, Oliver, who at eighteen was treasurer and acting manager of the Grand Opera House, his press agent, play reader, business manager and often stage director.

Oliver married, and his little son was born, whom he proudly christened Walter Morosco, Jr. Still the parental salary allowance did not go up.

As much a factotum in Morosco's Grand Opera House as was the illustrious baritone in Seattle, young Oliver received the extraordinary remuneration of \$18 a week. He argued vainly.

Then, taking his wife, his baby son and his mother-in-law, Oliver Morosco migrated to Los Angeles. He informed his father that his trek was final only as he was departing.

He reached there in the summer of 1909. He found a theater, called the Burbank, a house of size and some pretense, but it had failed twelve times. The next manager would be dictator number thirteen. He secured it from its owner, John Griffin, for a nominal fee,



OLIVER MOROSCO.

which was happily within his rather pitiful savings, all of which he had in his purse. He paid a month's rent on this playhouse and for his family secured two furnished rooms in a humble neighborhood. His capital had shrunk to \$10, and still he had no attraction for his long deserted stage.

In this dilemma he remembered T. Daniel Frawley, who had been showing San Francisco a finer company than it had seen in years. Frawley, actor and producer of the highest type, had longed to move out of San Francisco, but he had no opening. Young Morosco made him a proposition. Morosco went south. Frawley arrived soon after, and the Burbank theater opened for a career under its thirteenth manager on Aug. 12.

Since that midsummer evening in Spanish war year the Burbank theater, which was the foundation of one of the greatest independent fortunes in the theatrical business and the beginning of independent western productions of the first class, has never had a losing day.

Morosco took only the best actors and the best plays. He spent all of his profits in hiring people and paying royalties. He won a reputation for never missing a payment or flinching a salary under any circumstances, but he was again his own press agent as well as manager, often trudging from composing room to composing room with ad copy in the cold rain of winter midnights.

Frawley, successful at length went on his way with his superb organization,

James Neill, one of the foremost actor-directors that the west has known, came in. He stayed and played successfully—and went away. Neill and Frawley were then the strongest factors in the west. But Morosco was not abashed. He drew upon every resource he had and procured the first Morosco company.

There were, then, a quarter score of wonderful years during which time the Burbank theater of Los Angeles burned a deeper and ever deepening red spot into the country's theatrical map.

Here are some of the people that the early Burbank stage and its early Morosco productions helped to make: Belle Archer, Marguerite Craven, Minnie Dupree, Eva Denmark, Mary Van Buren, Keith Wakeman, Eleanor Hobson, Gladys Wallis, Mary Hampton, Maxine and Gertrude Elliott, Madge Carr Cooke, Alice Johnson, Marion Barney, Adelaide Manola, Adele Nott, Christine Hill, Elizabeth Stewart, Marie Shotwell, Consuelo Bailey, Dorothy Turner, Lola May, Fanchon Campbell, Ethel Clayton, Georgia Welles, Wilton Lackaye, John Mason, Edward J. Morgan, Theodore Roberts, Ben Johnson, Frank Worthing, Harrington Reynolds, Maclay Arbuckle, Thomas W. Ross, H. S. Duffield, Alfred Hickman, Geoffrey Williams, Gardner Crane, H. D. Blackman, Frederick Perry, Francis Carlyle, Henry C. Mortimer, Charles Wyngate, George Foster Platt, E. M. Bell and Louis Payne.

Morosco was not merely satisfied to make money. About 1906 he organized the Oliver Morosco Producing company,

which probably stands today, in point of supreme effectiveness and perfect technique, comparable to none save Augustin Daly's organization in its finest flower. It was not a mere theatrical company—it was absolutely institutional; it was an American Comedie Francaise.

Morosco had now become a figure of general importance through the west, for he had proved that which the syndicate, then all powerful, steadily and insolently maintained to be impossible, the preparation and presentation of thoroughly high class productions with which New York city had nothing to do.

But success breeds competition, and the more resolute the triumph the bitterer the certain opposition. Morosco, who perhaps fancied himself a secure monarch upon a wholly insular throne, awoke one morning confronted with a five million dollar rival corporation, a theatrical firm perhaps richer than any other in the world, for it was backed by two banks and a trust company—against his original ten dollar capital—and for two years the power of a great theatrical name in New York had been steadily used to stow away every available play in this country and in Europe. The concern was the superb Belasco company of Los Angeles.

Morosco, in sporting parlance, was assuredly "reweaved up." Then the absolute military genius of the man manifested itself. The great Oliver Morosco company, at the height of its fame and power, dissolved like sidewalk ice under a hot sun. He dispersed it himself as rapidly as he could get rid of his people. Cheerfully, smilingly, he reverted to the semi-melodrama



FLOWER PLUCKING IN DECEMBER BENEATH THE PERGOLA OF HIS LOS ANGELES HOME.



MR. AND MRS. OLIVER MOROSCO AND THEIR SON WALTER.

of former days. The other theater became the seat of fashion, the Burbank the homely "people's choice."

About this time or a little before he had essayed Broadway favor or disapproval with a piece of his own, "The Judge and the Jury." Broadway laughed uproariously, and such laughter is more dreadful than the sting of a thousand lashes. Afterward he wrote three straight successes.

Month after month, during the glorious reign of the Belasco theater company in Los Angeles, Morosco silently toiled.

A few years after the inception of the rival organization the town was startled one morning by the simple announcement that Oliver Morosco had absorbed it. Single handed and alone he had completely surrounded the five million western theatrical trust and had it cut off from its base of supplies. He had all the plays and the call on all the actors.

From that moment Oliver Morosco became a national figure. Shortly afterward he produced Richard Walton Tully's startling play, "The Bird of Paradise," in New York. It was a sensation.

Then followed J. Hartley Manners' Dresden china comedy, "Peg o' My Heart." It was and is New York's greatest dramatic success in ten years.

Like a king who secures the captured capital, Morosco turned the rival Los Angeles house, now his undivided property, into a fane of vaudeville.

He built the magnificent Majestic theater and there manages and brings west upon his own responsibility the finest of the traveling attractions.

He acquired the Los Angeles theater, Los Angeles' oldest and most historic theater.

He acquired the Lyceum theater, another of its well known dramatic

places. And, lastly, he has built the magnificent Morosco theater, a producing house whose company is second to none and whose architecture is incomparable.

From the pitifully desolate pair of furnished rooms amid surroundings of respectable but dreary poverty the family (Walter junior is fourteen now, a magnificent young replica of his father and still the only child) has moved by quick stages to the magnificent Morosco home on Elden avenue, Los Angeles, a residence costing \$150,000. Elled over, or in the summer to the almost dual estate in the country and on the sea, at Playa Rey (Place of the King).

Last winter Morosco produced in Chicago Paul Armstrong's "The Escape," a terrific and instantly successful study of tenement life in a great city.

This summer he brought there "The Tik-Tok Man of Oz," an operetta whose song hits were written by himself. The piece is still running to capacity houses.

Leo Dietrichstein and Silvio Hein, the country's foremost musical combination, have just finished a new comic opera for Morosco production.

Morosco successes this year will occupy six New York theaters.

Through all of this his motto has been, "The Country at Large!" He does not live in New York. He makes his home in the west; he is of the west and always will be. He contends that, notwithstanding New York's pre-eminence, the greatest theatrical interest is the interest of the multitude of other towns and cities; that the ninety-five million, not the five million, come in for first consideration; that perhaps there are other standards of judgment than New York's, and that, while he

values metropolitan success and is pleased by it, he will count himself an eventual failure if he does not please the whole country the while.

Morosco's greatest achievement, by producing originally a third of the recent New York successes in his own half dozen theaters in Los Angeles, has proved most startlingly to Broadway that progress and enlightenment have moved beyond the Hudson, and he has, by steadily raising California standards, compelled exporting producers to readjust their scheme of offering and to present across the continent shows which are continually getting better and better.

Morosco has raised the tone of all theatrical entertainment from Missouri to the Farallones. He has put not only punch, but modernity, into the show business from Vancouver to El Paso.

By reflex action this rise in artistic temperature has affected the entire east.

What next? Europe. He has already scheduled productions in Berlin, Paris and London for 1914, each in the language of the country. Two of England's most celebrated playwrights are finishing plans for his use in the autumn of 1914. His name has become the synonym for success on Broadway, where scarcely more than half a dozen years ago it was laughed at—and forgotten.

Morosco conquered, perhaps, because he was like Napoleon, who said that his victories were unvarying because he knew every detail of militarism. If a campaign were to be mapped he could map it, and, by the same token, if cannons were to be made or mended he could make or mend them. So Morosco. There is nothing in front or behind apparently, from writing the plays to planting the press stuff, which he cannot do—has already done!

WATERTOWN

Wednesday evening the school board of East Moline gave a farewell party to B. B. Ellis, who recently resigned from the board. He will leave Monday for Syracuse, Ind., to make his home. Mrs. Ellis will follow later. The party was a complete surprise to Mr. Ellis. Those present were: Mr. and Mrs. Dick, Mr. and Mrs. Deltrick, Mr. and Mrs. S. A. Cartwright and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Fair and son, Mr. Hoffman, Miss Adams and Miss Saunders, all of East Moline, and Professor and Mrs. Ross-Palmer of Watertown. The evening was spent with music, games and contests. Instrumental numbers were given by the Misses Saunders and Adams and Mr. Deltrick. A delicious lunch was served.

Archie Ellingsworth of Geneseo is spending a week with his brother, J. H. Ellingsworth, and family.

Mrs. R. C. Leetch and Mr. and Mrs.

Rilling left Tuesday morning for Kansas City, Mo., in response to a telegram bearing the sad news of the death of Mrs. August Klebe, daughter of Mrs. Leetch.

Mr. and Mrs. B. R. Ellis entertained at supper Thursday evening in honor of their son Elmer, Ray Adams and Naomi Swanson and Irene Nordgren, all of Moline.

Charles Scott has been taken to the Tri-City sanitarium for an operation for appendicitis.

Mrs. John Johnson of Fruitland, Iowa, visited with relatives and friends last week.

After business meeting Thursday evening of the East Moline and Watertown I. O. O. F. lodges, the wives of the members surprised them by serving an oyster supper prepared by them.

Mrs. Isabel Moody of Albany is visiting this week with her son Walter and wife.

The quarantine has been lifted from the Shubline home.

Mrs. Emma Farber of Port Byron

is spending a few days with her sister, Mrs. William Parker.

Mrs. E. R. Cosner has gone for a visit with her mother, Mrs. Fude.

Phil Pearsall of Port Byron was a caller here Tuesday.

Mrs. George Walker of Hillsdale was a visitor Wednesday at the D. V. Allsbrow home.

Mrs. Lindvall and Miss Mildred Turnwall of Lynn and Carl Turnwall of Moline were Thursday visitors in Watertown at J. W. Scott's home.

Mrs. Shirriek of Monmouth was a Sunday visitor at the home of Mrs. S. D. Sheppard.

Mrs. Fannie Johnson of Hillsdale spent Tuesday at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Nettie Browning.

Mrs. J. Wise is spending this week in Davenport with her daughter, Mrs. Fred Willey.

Edith Hogue, who has been sick for over a week, is greatly improved.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Mitchell were visitors at the Charles Coleman home.

Mrs. Emma Ellis and daughter Golda from Letts, Iowa, were calling on friends here the first of this week.

E. K. Ausbrook of Rock Island was a Watertown visitor here this week at the home of his brother, W. G. Ausbrook.

Walter Warren and family have moved to East Moline.

Saturday 19 friends of Crystal Bryan gave her a surprise party, it being her eighth birthday anniversary. Those present were Dorcas Cox, Lulu Hix, Pauline Peterson, Bernadine Cox, Golda Lor, Fern Tabor, Edith Sherbine, Inez McCain, Rose Cook and Kenneth Foster. The afternoon was spent in games, after which a lunch was served. Miss Crystal received several nice gifts.

Pearl Rose of Moline is visiting at the home of F. O. Lyons.

Little Lyle Brecher is improving from his recent illness.

The Baptist Aid society met Wednesday

at the home of Mrs. Osborn. Election of officers took place.

Mr. and Mrs. Warren of East Moline spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Jones.

Mrs. Anna Peterson and children spent one day the first of the week at Hampton with her mother.

The Watertown Methodist Sunday school elected the following officers for the coming year at the meeting held recently: Superintendent, Charles Coleman; assistant superintendent, W. G. Ausbrook; superintendent cradle roll, Mrs. H. P. Cosner; superintendent teachers' training, George Coleman; superintendent home department, Mrs. B. F. Hix; recording secretary, George Coleman; treasurer, Dena Rah; librarian, Harry Millet; pianist, Lela Ausbrook; chorister, Miss Grace Lucas; president Sunday school missionary society, Mrs. Mamie Loy; president Sunday school temperance society, H.

E. Biggs; home department visitors committee, W. G. Ausbrook and Miss Grace Lucas, elected by quarterly conference; teachers, class No. 1, Miss Fern Mitchell; class No. 2, Mina Gill; class No. 3, Grace Lucas; class No. 4, Fred Chidester; class No. 5, not named; class No. 6, Presley Meeker.

Installation of Modern Woodmen and Royal Neighbors officers was held Tuesday evening at the Baptist church. After business an oyster supper was served by the ladies.

Mrs. G. E. Peterson and Mrs. A. D. Cox were tricity shoppers Thursday.

Mrs. John Dawson and Mrs. Howard Adams and little son of East Moline were calling on Watertown friends Thursday.

Mrs. Henry Allen is recovering from a 10 days' illness with the grip.

Miss Allie Trout of the hospital force is suffering a nervous breakdown and is now at the home of B. F. Hix.

Burtis, Davenport

WEEK OF
Monday, January 26
Matinee Wednesday and Saturday
The Liebler Co.'s World's Greatest
Dramatic Speciale

The Garden Of Allah

A dramatization of the novel by Robert Hichens and Mary Anderson.
A Romance of the Sahara with its Caravans of Arabs, Camels, Horses, Donkeys and Goats.

8 Gorgeous Scenes. Company of 200
Prices—50c, 75c, \$1, \$1.50, \$2.
Special prices Wednesday matinee,
50c to \$1.50.

MAIL ORDERS NOW.

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LIVESTOCK MEN DISCUSS A SALE

Auction to Be Held on Last Day of the Coal Valley Exhibit.

The various committees of the Coal Valley Live Stock Pavilion association were in session Saturday afternoon.

It was decided to have an exhibitors' sale the last day of the show which is to be held Feb. 11 to 13.

The question of a sale of the display has been much discussed by the committees. Several expressed their disapproval of the plan of offering at auction the exhibits and it did not seem fair to those who had spent much time in preparing exhibits to

see them sold for a fraction of their value. Other members have expressed desire to realize a little money from their efforts. It was finally agreed that those who wished to dispose of their exhibits might do so and those who were unwilling to part with them could have them returned.

R. L. Bowman, G. B. Krapp and Ray Morgan were named to make arrangements for a machinery exhibit.

Tuesday afternoon the finance and advertising committee will meet at the Commercial hotel in Moline. The

meeting will be called at 2 o'clock.

Announcement was made to the effect that all exhibits must be on the ground at noon of the first day of the show and this rule will be strictly enforced.

Chamberlain's Cough Remedy is a very valuable medicine for throat and lung troubles, quickly relieves and cures painful breathing and a dangerous sounding cough which indicates congested lungs. Sold by all druggists.—(Adv.)

THE ILLINOIS Friday, Jan. 24th

THE BIGGEST THEME OF EVERY AGE

THE NATURAL LAW

IT BEGINS WITH LOVE

BY CHARLES SUMNER

A PLAY ABOUT THE MAGNETISM OF YOUTH

A STARK AND VITAL DRAMA

Packed audiences applaud it everywhere. Physicians endorse and praise it. A stark and vital drama. The dramatic shock of the decade. Certainly has the punch. A plain-spoken play. When the young answer the lure they must pay the price. A physician's duty is to abide by his oath of Hippocrates.

Prices 25c, 50c, 75c, \$1.00, \$1.50
SEAT SALE WEDNESDAY 9 a. m.

Empire Theatre

Remember the Show That Still Holds the Record for Attendance at the Empire will be here but three days

MONDAY, TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY

"Little Miss Mix-Up"

Featuring
Johnny & Ella Galvin

Two Shows Wednesday Night

Phone 708.