

# 'Tis Hard, Says Flo, to Pick Peaches

By JAMES WHITTAKER.

NEW YORK (Special).—Mr. Ziegfeld, who, of course, knows what he is talking about when he talks about this, has made his spring pronouncement on the subject of feminine beauty. We detect therein a note of practical cynicism. "It is not necessarily important for a girl to be a raving beauty to become a Ziegfeld Follies girl," he announced, and surprises us, for we thought it was. "Of course, she must have regular features, an attractive form and a graceful carriage. But the Ziegfeld wizardry of lighting and scenic effects and costuming makes for beauty where it is in any way lacking."

We are left to suppose that there has always been simply elements of wizardry—Mr. Ziegfeld's, not hers—in the beauty of the Follies girl. Crash goes an illusion. Are there, then, not even among the picked peaches of Mr. Ziegfeld's basket no perfect girls, that even in the Follies chorus we must, to perceive the ideal, have the help of nameless pads, paints and living lights to mend and dissemble the blemishes of reality?

It is legend—and all legends are true before they become legends—that Mr. Ziegfeld, in the course of any year, sees and appraises the beauty of the most beautiful girls of America, for the same reasons that Mr. Heim views and chooses America's most practically perfect nickels. Just now, his practiced eyes are laboring daily on the momentous matter of the choice of new girls, who will be revealed in June in his new Follies. He engages in this task to refer further to his spring bulletin with moderate hope. He will make the best of the bad matter that is the state of physical grace of American female charm. Enormous numbers of the applicants for place in Mr. Ziegfeld's annual salon of living pictures, he estimates, are total lemons. Some are maturely or prematurely haggard, with yellowing skins concealed from their mirrors, but not from Mr. Ziegfeld's penetrating eye, by chemical greases. Those who come simply and untricked from Holokuk Center and other provincial heats of health and honesty average somewhat fairer of face but are sadly apt to move before Mr. Ziegfeld's judicial eye with the grace of startled roes.

Altogether, Mr. Ziegfeld's yearly beauty problem, he hints, has no unchallengeable solution, but is met with fortitude and the foreknowledge that once again the over-winter crop of fair flesh will have the usual average of angular ankles and misplaced muscles which it will be the business of his deceitful crew of stage beauty doctors to disguise. It is hence Mr. Ziegfeld's avowal that, to a certain degree, the Chicago professor of anatomy who recently made the sweeping statement that American women are not wholly beautiful, was, in a way, right.

Mr. Ziegfeld's experiences and those of the audience which attended the first night last Monday of "Voltaire" in the Plymouth theater, suggest that beauty is a matter of surprise. After the second act of "Voltaire," there were cries in the Plymouth of: "Author, author." There was a dramatic pause and then two slender girls trotted bashfully into the limelight. They were the Misses Leila Taylor and Gertrude Purcell, the authors, so unexpectedly young and personable that the audience immediately forgot Mr. Arnold Daly and his triumphs in the play's name part and "Voltaire," for that first night at least, was a successful girl show.

It is extremely likely that either Miss Leila or Miss Gertrude is as beautiful as Mr. Ziegfeld's Ruby de Reamer. Miss de Reamer is too beautiful to be a successful author. But for the seconds that the Plymouth curtain parted and she fell and hid them, Miss Leila and Miss Gertrude seemed infinitely more beautiful. They had had all the advantage of surprise. None expected two authors—usually a brace of flat-footed middle-aged males—to be as pretty as actresses. Unfortunately actresses are, Mr. Ziegfeld cannot surprise his clientele with a pretty girl. He has continually to try to meet the audience's fondest expectations. This is, he says, a tough task.

"Voltaire" is not nearly so surprising as its two authors. One way to summarize it neatly would be to say simply that it is about Voltaire. The young lady authors who are students in Columbia university have read all the commentaries on the illustrious French ironist, are full of the subject of this voluminous man and have hoisted him down to one busy day of the latter end of his life and the three acts of platitude.

They include in this one day a half century of his best epigrams, and, I think, without any authority of familiarity with the facts of Voltaire's life—at least a year of his activities. In the short space of the 12 hours of his 60th year, which elapses between the play's beginning and end, Voltaire is in and out of danger of imprisonment in the Bastille for having lampooned a royalty, matchmaker to a pair of young incidental aristocrats, patently invented to visit Voltaire's provincial chateau in Frenay to help out the Misses Leila and Gertrude's love interest, courtier in the grand manner to Mlle. Clairon, the actress, and a busy quoter of his own best bits.

This trick of having their protagonist quote rather than act his life is the defect of the play, but it would be difficult to suggest any other trick to take its place. Voltaire was an ornate and expensive philosopher for whom life was so lavishly staged that the very least of the incidents of his career defied reproduction on the stage.

There is, for instance, the anecdote of his triumph over a rival, a marquis, a glutton and a fop, for the affections of an aristocratic lady of Paris. It seems that the lady planned a dinner for the marquis, and, knowing Voltaire's powers of merciless speech, invited him to be present on the one condition that, at table, he should say no more than three words.

The marquis disgustingly overate. He has neither the leanness nor the leer that are the record of Voltaire's most striking physical characteristics, but he plays the role with an enthusiasm and a vigor that takes the place of his fine points by the simple process of sweeping them violently out of the way. In Mr. Daly one sees the sort of slashing fellow Voltaire would have been had Voltaire been an Irishman.

Richard Wayne, a capable actor, and Gloria Swanson share honors in "Her Husband's Trademark" at the Strand theater this week.

Young Wayne, who is shown in a love clinic with Gloria, hails originally from Beatrice, Neb. He studied to be a musician at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln then went to Europe for a two years' finishing course. When he went to the Pacific coast the movies "got him."

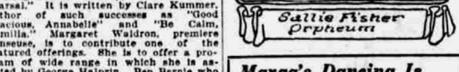
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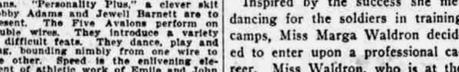
David Warfield  
Coming to Broadway



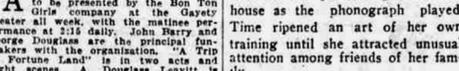
Margo Waldron  
Orpheum



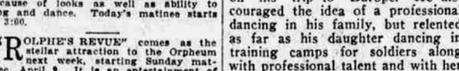
Sallie Fisher  
Orpheum



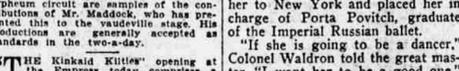
Marga Waldron  
Orpheum



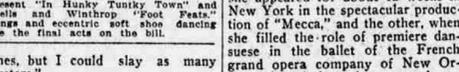
Ben Bernie  
Orpheum



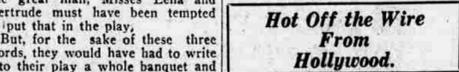
Innie Bros.  
Orpheum



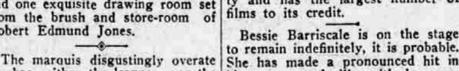
Five Avalons  
Orpheum



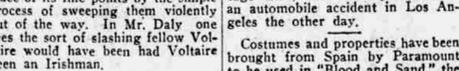
Emile & John Nathane  
Orpheum



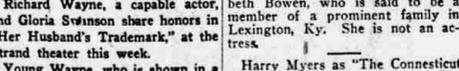
Marga Waldron  
Orpheum



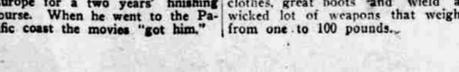
Green Galbraith  
Orpheum



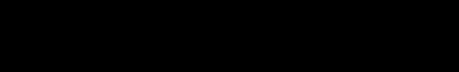
Empress  
Orpheum



Bon Ton Girls  
Orpheum



Hamilton  
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Priscilla Dean  
Orpheum



Stanley in Africa  
Orpheum



Comedy  
Orphe