

# Dramatic

WHAT the box office records of the "Ben Hur" engagement will be, is now the topic engrossing local theatrical people. When the great play was seen here for seven performances two years ago, the receipts went past the \$14,000 mark, an average of a little better than \$2,000 a performance. This broke all Salt Lake records, and gave the town a status in the eastern theater world which it never before enjoyed. Of

by Mr. Smutzer with the Curtis as a starting place.

A friend of Mr. Smutzer's, who just arrived here from Denver, states that the impression he received from a talk with him was that the Salt Lake house would be opened to the independents, although he could not state this as a positive fact.

Manager Arthur C. Smiley of the Grand, also expressed this as his view. "Of course, we have had no official word," he declared, "and the question is entirely in the hands of Mr. Smutzer. However, I know of no reason why this house should not be included. The Shuberts, who are trying to get an independent circuit across the continent, have the Princess, Casino, and Lyric in New York, the Garrick in Chicago, the Garrick in St. Louis, the Bishop theaters in San Francisco and Oakland, and I understand J. P. Howe is building them a theater in Seattle. The jump from Denver to San Francisco is rather long, and if they want the Grand in Salt Lake, as it seems reasonable they would, I have no doubt Mr. Smutzer would close with them. I think the companies will be booked

a whole scrapbook full of enthusiastic press notices.

Should this appear too frivolous, those with a love for high class vocal work in the next number will be catered to in the form of the Grand Opera Trio, three artists who come direct to Salt Lake from the east.

The second sketch on the bill is presented by Lucy and Lucier, who appear in an eccentric comedy, "The Fool's Errand."

Nellie Flore, another name on the bill, however, does not go in for opera. Her specialty is cute songs and trite remarks of a distinctly humorous vein. The Three Jacksons, who already are in Salt Lake, Andrew, Ollie and Glenn, physical culture artists, have an act that is as unique as it is pleasing.

The show will conclude with a kinodrome exhibiting a number of new and entertaining motion pictures.

Not the least pleasing feature of the evening's entertainment will be the work of the orchestra under Prof. Willard Walhe. Denver is boasting regarding the excellence of her Orpheum orchestra, but Salt Lake's competent to judge, who have heard that organization, predict that the local orchestra,

written on Marlborough House paper, with the Prince of Wales' crest in the upper left-hand corner, and is signed "A. E."

It is understood that Sir Charles Wyndham, now 44 years old, will retire not long after the close of his next American season. It is his intention to leave the theater without any formal farewell and without ostentation.

Chrystal Herne, it is said, is to play the leading role opposite H. B. Irving in "The Jury of Fate" at the Shaftesbury Theater, London. Miss Herne has been ill since her appearance as Vivien in "Mrs. Warren's Profession."

James O'Neill's press agent, mindful that the veteran star is to play at the Metropolitan theater shortly, sends word that Mr. O'Neill, who has played Edmond Dantes in "Monte Cristo" 482 times, after this year will never appear in the play again.

Reports from Vienna, Austria, announce that Oscar Wilde's "Salome" has been barred in that city as immoral. After the first attempt Herr Mahler, of the Imperial Opera House, attempted to modify the libretto, but the second attempt proved likewise a failure. It is likely that it will not be tried again.

The Princess theater, London, after a course of extensive alterations and improvements which will make a practically new house of it, is to be reopened as the home of melodrama. Its new manager, Mr. E. Dagnall, believes that there is still a large demand for the type of plays which made the old Adelphi famous.

The success of "The Woman in the Case," Clyde Fitch's play, with Blanche Walsh in the cast, has been so marked that Wagenthal & Kemper have put out another company to meet the demand



HENGLE SISTERS.

Artistic Singers and Dancers Who Appear at the Orpheum Next Week.



THE MEETING OF IRAS AND BEN HUR AT THE FOUNTAIN OF CASTALLA IN THE GROVES OF DAPHNE.

course, neither the company nor the local management expects to reach any such average a second time. Nine performances have been booked for the coming engagement, and if the nine reach \$14,000 there will be no complaining. The fact that the company has Christmas for an opening is in its favor, and the further fact that reduced rates will be given over all railroads during the holidays ought to help swell its receipts. Against this, however, is the opening of the Orpheum and the existence of the Lyric, two factors with which "Ben Hur" did not have to contend on its previous visit.

In spite of all of them, however, the advance sale up to this time assures a splendid financial engagement. From the artistic standpoint, all press reports agree that the company is even stronger than on its previous visit. The Ben Hur will be Alphonse Elmer, a fifth actor, who has mounted high in the profession since the "Coriolanus" days. The Messala will be Horace McVicker, who also has a great number of friends in this city. The theater stage is now in the hands of the advance force of mechanics, who are reconstructing everything to get in readiness for the ponderous mechanism of the production.

The observance of Christmas is always a notable event to the members of the "Ben Hur" company, which numbers just 140 people. They have sent an advance man here to make preparations for the annual celebration after the performance. The Elmer club has very kindly been placed at the disposal of the company, and after the curtain falls Monday night the Christmas program will begin. Not all the company, however, will be concerned in the celebration. As always happens where so many theatrical people are traveling together, there is any amount of professional dissension going on, and report says that the "Ben Hur" organization is split into two big cliques, with about 70 on each side, the actors in one group, and the singers, the stage operators, musicians, etc., in the other. When they are at work, of course, nothing but harmony is in evidence, but when they are at play, as they will be at the Christmas celebration, the yawning gap cannot be disguised. This means that the festivities at the Elmer club will be conducted only by a group of 70, which comprises the group containing the principal actors and the lesser player 70's.

It is just possible that this season will see some of the big "Independent" companies from New York, booked at the Grand theater in Salt Lake. Last year, it is well remembered that Mrs. Fiske could not give a presentation here, as the theaters were then under the control of a syndicate. The announcement made in Denver, however, that the independents had secured the Curtis theater, and that Manager Smutzer could continue to handle them until their own theater should be completed, makes it probable that the same ruling will cover Salt Lake, as the Grand is part of a circuit controlled

here all right, if they come west this season.

Should this report prove true, it will open Salt Lake amusement doors, long closed, to such artists as Mrs. Fiske, Francis Wilson, Jefferson De Angelis, Henry Miller, Margaret Anglin, Fritz Scheff, and should she come west, to Madam Sarah Bernhardt.

The next attraction at the Grand, to be seen up till Wednesday night with a Christmas matinee, will be "Honest Hearts," with Alma Hearn in the leading role. The author of "Honest Hearts," William L. Roberts, who wrote "On the Bridge at Midnight," and "Big Hearted Jim," has gone to Kentucky, in this instance for his romance, uncommon and genuine American types, charm of the south, picturesque scenes and quaint humor. His heroine is the daughter of an old Kentucky farmer who has only her beauty and honesty to commend her to an aristocratic young civil engineer employed on the government improvement in the Cumberland river near her father's farm. Wild, mischievous, uneducated, she presents a combination of character, charm and beauty, which Alma Hearn could cope with successfully on the stage. The play is overflowing with good comedy and the four elaborate scenes, on river and farm, should attract all reasonable expectation of stage pictures.

Following "Honest Hearts," at the Grand, comes a western sensational play called "At Cripple Creek," a new drama by the well known Hal Reid. The story is a wholesome, elevating one, filled with a sense of the tenderest heart interest and beauty, enlivened by bright comedy and containing many novel effects and striking situations. It is said that not since Campbell's "My Partner," has so strong a play of life in the great west been given to the public. The scenes are laid in a small mining camp in the mountains of Colorado. A car load of special scenery is carried for the production and each of the four acts is mounted in the most elaborate and careful manner.

Judging from the opening bill scheduled at the Orpheum next week the new State street playhouse is destined to achieve early achievement in the production of "The House of Mirth." Box office returns already indicate that the S. R. O. sign will be hung out bright and early on the night of the opening. The popularity of sketches in vaudeville is growing more pronounced every season, and the Orpheum circuit, always with a finger on the pulse of the amusement seeker, has booked a number of actors from the legitimate stage to appear as top-liners in the weekly bills. For the opening night, Christmas, Lewis McCord and his company have been secured as the headliners and they will present a one-act play entitled "The Night Before." While this title might suggest anything from an impending marriage to a champagne feast, the skit simply depicts a very strenuous rehearsal prior to the presentation of an ambitious production. The farce is both novel and hilarious.

Following a close second, but of a different order, is the turn of the Hengle sisters, good looking singers and dancers who are heading this way with

picked a sit from the leading talent of the city, will be the best, man for man, on the entire Orpheum circuit—and that is a somewhat sweeping statement.

At the Lyric, next week's attraction will be Miner's Merry Burlesquers, producing "The Goblins Girls." The first performance will be given this afternoon.

## THEATRE GOSSIP

Mrs. Carter began her road tour by a 225 mile automobile run, from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh.

Dustin Farnum is to become Charles Fehman's star at the end of his career in "The Virginian."

Clyde Fitch has engaged himself to write two new plays—one for Miss Blanche Walsh and the other for Miss Maxine Elliott.

The Messers, Shubert have secured the American rights of "The Blue Moon," which has been a great success at the Lyric theater, London, this season.

Frank Worthing, who has been supporting Margaret Anglin in "Zola," has been engaged to support Ellis Jeffreys in London in "The Fascinating Mr. Vandervelt."

Miss Ivy Ashton Root, niece of the Secretary of War, has written a five-act poetic drama around the life of Moses, which will be produced at Altona, Pa., Christmas night by Maurice Campbell.

Louis Mann and Miss Clara Lipman have been annexed by the Shuberts and will play a comedy called "Julie Bon Bon," under anti-syndicate auspices. Miss Lipman is the author of the play.

Sarah Cowell Le Moine, widow of W. J. Le Moine, will devote her time henceforth to teaching dramatic art, giving readings from Browning and appearing occasionally on the New York stage for special engagements.

Henri De Vries, the eminent Dutch actor, will make his American debut in New York on Jan. 6. He will be seen in an English version of "A Case of Arson," in which he is at present making a sensation in London.

A short note from King Edward VII to Lily Langtry was recently sold at an auction of autographs for \$25. It is written on Marlborough House paper, with the Prince of Wales' crest in the upper left hand corner and is signed "A. E."

"George Washington, Jr." George M. Cohan's newest play, is scheduled for production January 15. After a three weeks' "out of town tour," it will be taken to New York City, where it is booked for an indefinite time.

A short note from King Edward VII to Lily Langtry was recently sold at an

auction of autographs for \$25. It is for bookings. The new cast is headed by Margaret Bennett, who has been starring in "The Heart of Maryland," and Thomas Coffin Cooke.

Wagenthal & Kemper have arranged for the coming season. Miss Walsh's season in London will be for 12 weeks, during which time she will present "The Woman in the Case," Jacob Gordon's drama, "The Kreutzer Sonata," and the new play that is now being written for her by Mr. Fitch.

Edmond Rostand has agreed to write a play for Europe on Wednesday, but I have changed my mind and will go instead to French Lick Springs and reduce my weight and arrest an incipient double chin. You see my mother lives in Boston and throughout my engagement there I took my meals at home—regular old fashioned New England banquets with pie for breakfast, a la Ralph Waldo Emerson, six courses for lunch and as many more for dinner. Why on Thanksgiving day I, automobile Katherine Grey, Jessie Busley and Neil O'Brien of my company out to mother, and we finally agreed that if she gave us anything else to eat, we would suspend the free list for her special benefit.

Nannette Comstock has been engaged by Henry W. Savage for the leading role in Richard Harding Davis' comedy, "The Gallop," supporting comedian Raymond Hitchcock in his starring tour in this play. Not only has Miss Comstock been identified with salient successes on the American but on the London stage as well. Her last appearance on the boards was as the star in "The Crisis," in which she enacted the heroine.

In her address to Harvard students a few days ago Mrs. Fiske said: "The discriminating class, made up of persons whose taste set standards after

the chaos of a crazy dramatic miscellany has been resolved into constitutions, is the class that the theater must rely upon at all times to keep it within the bounds of sanity. One great play, like the heaven of Holy Writ, may serve to save the theater for any season that may appear to be given over to the world, the flesh and the devil."

Sarah Bernhardt, who is now appearing in this country, made her debut in America late in the year 1880. Her tour, which was under the direction of Abbey Schoffel & Grau, was one of three which, according to the senior partner of this firm, netted more than \$1,000,000. Mme. Bernhardt has very little, if any, of that sum today. Like the late Sir Henry Irving, she has sunk many fortunes in productions of plays which were artistic successes and financial failures.

It is announced that next season Eleanor Robson will have a repertoire of seven plays—two, and possibly three, of which will be presented before the end of the season. In addition to "Merely Mary Ann," Browning's "In a Balcony," and Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer," Miss Robson will be equipped with a new comedy by Clyde Fitch entitled "The Girl Who Has Everything," a romantic comedy drama by Edmond Rostand, a modern English comedy by Jerome K. Jerome and a new comedy drama by C. M. S. McClellan, author of "Leah Kleeschna." The announcement contains the promise of George Tyler, Miss Robson's manager, that never again will his star be presented for an entire season in only one play, no matter how successful.

Nat C. Goodwin has reached New York. He has just closed his brief tour in "Wolfville," in Boston. "The play simply won't do," he said, "and so I am taking the first winter vacation I have had since my career as an actor began. Some people said I 'ambled' through my part. I couldn't do otherwise. It was a character that simply stood about like 'father,' and let the others do all the work."

"I had intended," continued the comedian, "to sail for Europe on Wednesday, but I have changed my mind and will go instead to French Lick Springs and reduce my weight and arrest an incipient double chin. You see my mother lives in Boston and throughout my engagement there I took my meals at home—regular old fashioned New England banquets with pie for breakfast, a la Ralph Waldo Emerson, six courses for lunch and as many more for dinner. Why on Thanksgiving day I, automobile Katherine Grey, Jessie Busley and Neil O'Brien of my company out to mother, and we finally agreed that if she gave us anything else to eat, we would suspend the free list for her special benefit."

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