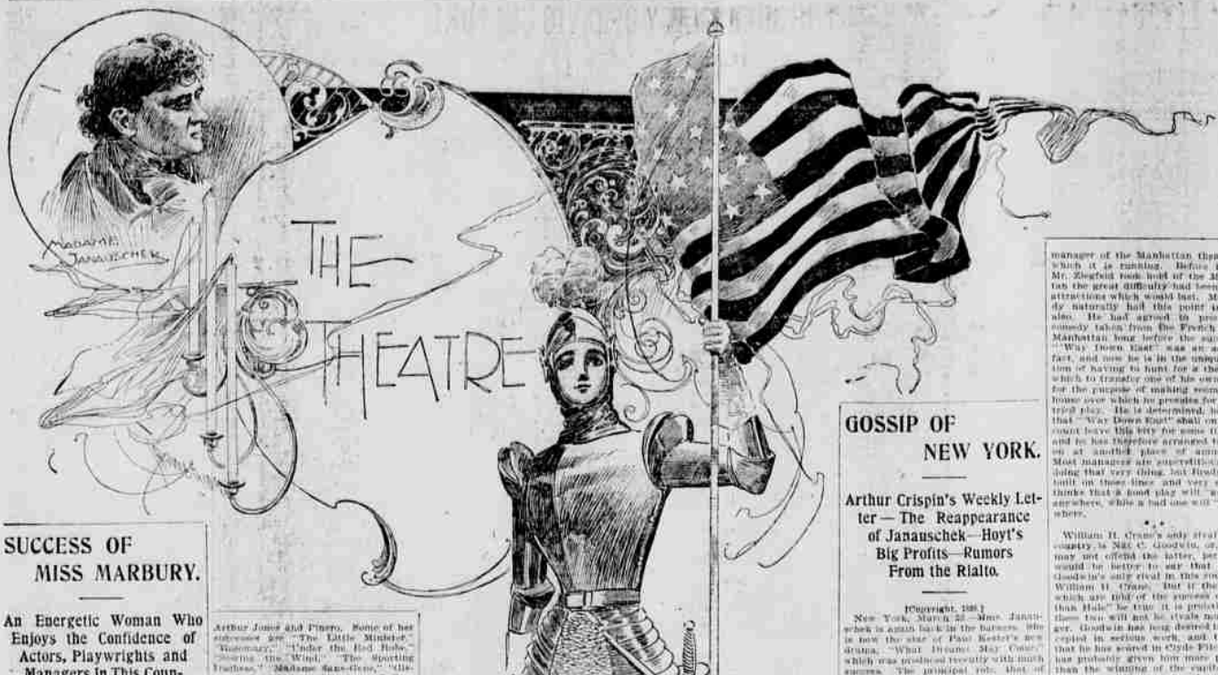


SUCCESS OF MISS MARBURY.

An Energetic Woman Who Enjoys the Confidence of Actors, Playwrights and Managers in This Country and in Europe.

[Copyright, 1898.]

New York, March 25.—Forceful, energetic Miss Marbury, whose name is known as well in London and Paris as in New York, received me in her inner office.

When a woman receives you in her outer office, he sure your stay will be short, pointed and probably unsuccessful. The inner office is the key to her confidence, the barrier between you and the outer world, the boors from which you emerge with a handful of interviewer's notes, a hearty hand clasp and a pleasant memory.

Do men have inner offices? I don't know. Business women do, and they are solid, comfortable and benefiting—mothers-in-law, like Miss Marbury.

One always pictures the victim of an approaching interview. I had pictured Elizabeth Marbury as tall and slight. She is in reality stout and of medium height. I expected to find her elaborately dressed. That subconsciousness which schooled her delight in home always connote Parisian gowns and domestics. I was met by a woman absolutely devoid of frills in a dark, serviceable gown. Miss Marbury renders unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and does not obtrude fancy into professional hours.

It is hard to find a term sufficiently elastic to describe her role. Dramatic agent, the explanation which the glass door affronts you, seems inadequate. An agency suggests limitations. Miss Marbury affirms none. She assumes responsibilities, accepts risks, makes brilliant successes, more disastrous failures without fear or favor.

To establish a reputation in America means energy. To establish one in Europe presupposes energy. To establish one in both places of equal magnitude presupposes stupendous energy. That she has.

She has offices in London, Paris, Berlin and New York, spending six months of each year "across." She has been selected by the French government as representative of the two leading dramatic associations in Berlin, in association with Felix Bloch Erben, head of the German author's society.

To channel in the important plays which do not pass through her hands, the celebrated playwrights who do not knock at her door, would be easier than to mention those with whom she deals. The list of the latter is long as the moral law, embracing such names as Jerome, Clyde Fitch, H. B. Fresnel, Hadden Chambers, Cecil Hunter, Louis Parker, all the French dramatists of note, all of the English except Henry Arthur Jones and Pinero. Some of her successes are "The Little Minister," "Rosemary," "Under the Red Robe," "Sowing the Wind," "The Sporting Duchess," "Madame Sans-Gêne," "Diamonds," "1492," "A Marriage of Convenience," "The Masked Ball," "A Man and His Wife," "The Tree of Knowledge," now on the Lyceum stage, "The Gay Parisians," Mr. Wilkinson's Widows" and, to quote Mrs. Newly Wed making an purchases for the household, "many others."

I asked Miss Marbury something about her present work, to which she replied: "I have concluded negotiations with Clyde Fitch for his 'Nathan Hale,' produced in Chicago a short while ago by Nat Goodwin, and his 'Moth and the Flame,' recently produced in Philadelphia, which will come to New York Easter Monday at the Lyceum.

"With Miss Evelyn Greenleaf Sutherland, dramatic critic of the Boston Journal, who has collaborated with Percy Mackaye, son of the late Steele Mackaye, for a play in which Judith Berard, Sarah's leading lady, will star.

"With Jacob Litt for the production of 'Sporting Life,' which has made such a hit in England, and I am concluding arrangements with a prominent American star for the American rights of 'Cyrano de Bergerac,' by Rostand, which has been enormously successful in Paris. Coquelin playing the leading role.

"Also for Fanchon Thomas, N. I have had seven applications from different managers and stars for this. It is a play something in the style of Madame Sans-Gene, only with more dramatic strength and pathos. My individual opinion is that it will be the most successful of any of his pieces."

She reflected a moment after my next question. Reduction with Miss Marbury is anticipatory of results. She is so decisive.

"Ada Rehan would fill the part of Pamela admirably. So would Annie Russell or Minnie Seligman. Unquestionably Fanny Davenport, if she could be prevailed upon to take so light a part, would be charming.

"I have recently sold two plays in Mr. Chase, one by Fitch and Dreyfuss, the other by Lewis Parker, and have reserved for him the rights of dramatization of two popular novels and for Mr. Richard Mansfield the dramatic rights of 'The Graft,' the new popular novel by Miss Wyndham.

"Society women are generous with their contributions. Miss Marbury has secured several plays of prominent women engaged in writing plays, among others that of Mrs. Cruger Gallien Gordon, who is collaborating with Clinton Stuart, New York correspondent of the Boston Herald.

Asked concerning her methods, she explained: "I make a specialty of plays. I handle no other class of literary material. I make no charge for reading plays. If an author spends his time writing a play, the least I can do is to read it, for its possibilities are as great for me as for him. In 49 or 50 I may find one with a future. Then I enter into negotiations with the author, resulting in its being given up to me. I do all the work, revise, make the legal contracts, etc., and when it comes out watch the box office receipts. I am paid a commission on all the money that passes through my hands. I have made $1,000 or $1,500 on a play, but I have not large sums on failures. I attribute the success that I have had in a great measure to the fact that my business is an organized one and organization is also full more words, haphazard methods.

"My first venture was 'Little Lord Fauntleroy.' That was an individual undertaking. Yet it suggested to me what I might accomplish and have since done.

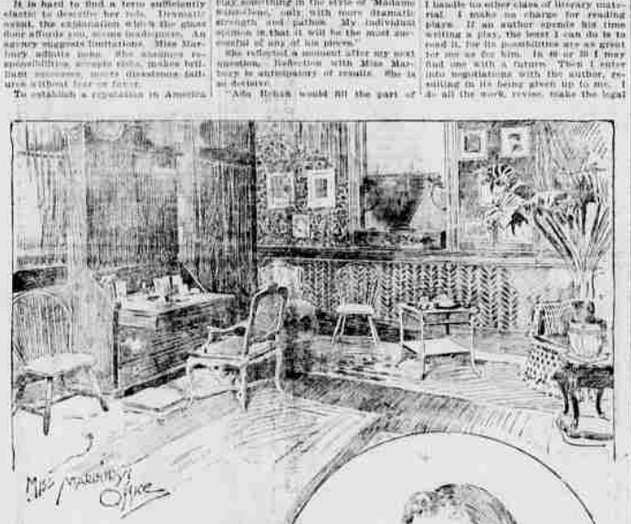
"Do act plays? Yes. I have quantities of them, but they are not disposed of so readily. Managers of vaudevilles, who are so many of them, seem afraid to come to me, as I have the name of selling only the highest class of work."

Miss Marbury comes of a well known family. Her father was a lawyer of high standing, Francis F. Marbury, a member of the New York Bar association, member of the Century club and at one time assistant district attorney. Her maternal grandfather was a judge of the supreme court, and one of her ancestors engaged in the famous case of Marbury versus James Madison, a case on record in Maryland.

She is a hard worker, every day at her office from 8 till 6, five nights at the theatre. Only her Sundays are kept from business intrusions. Kingdoms may rise and fall, but the good old institution of one day in seven is strictly adhered to.

Last April Miss Marbury was accorded the distinction of being made an officier d'academie by the French government on account of her services to French authors. She is one of the half dozen women outside of France who are entitled to wear the palmes academiques. Sardou presented her with the jewel in accordance with the brevet, a jewel of precious stones, which she wears with its broad ribbon across her evening gown.

GERTRUDE F. LYNCH.



Sousa's Income.

Somebody has been figuring out Sousa's income and estimates his royalties at nearly $25,000 a year. In addition to this song now he divides weekly about $900 with Charles Klein, the librettist of De Wolf Hopper's opera, "El Capitan." Then there are the earnings of his band, of which he gets the lion's share. This is a pretty big change for a man who half a dozen years ago was conducting the Marine band concerts in the White House grounds at a salary of $6 a week. The change came about in one incident in life.

One day after he had spent some 12 years in the service of the government he asked for an appropriation to increase the salary of his band. As is customary with anything that has to go through the political machinery of even Washington, considerable time was taken up and to no purpose.

He was refused. But some enterprising manager offered to organize a band for him and with it tour the country. He accepted the proposition, and then that date is records the advent of his star. It was the beginning of a new career. The manager sold to himself the first three months the band was on the road was $7,000. His second year, "The Bride Elect," which he sold to Rare & Ishamel and Max Stevens, was produced on Jan. 3 in Boston, where "El Capitan" was first heard. It is said that Sousa comes annually by his business ability. His 12 years' salary, spread over a number of more years, is forgotten. His mother was Lizzie Mayfield, and he was born in Washington.

GOSSIP OF NEW YORK.

Arthur Crispin's Weekly Letter—The Reappearance of Janauschek—Hoyt's Big Profits—Rumors From the Rialto.

[Copyright, 1898.]

New York, March 23.—Mme. Janauschek is again back in the harness, this time in the case of Paul Kester's new drama, "What Dreams May Come," which was produced recently with much success. The principal role, that of Countess Dunitzi, a sort of female Svengali, is one which is said to fit the great Polish actress to a nicety. The general impression is that Kester modeled Countess Dunitzi after the great sensitive, Mme. Blavatsky. The story of "What Dreams May Come" is a very interesting one, in the development of which a number of intensely thrilling situations are revealed, thus affording Mme. Janauschek ample opportunity to display the many phases of her superb art. The piece will be kept on the road for only a few weeks this season, during which time it will be subjected to the pruning and refitting process wherever it may be necessary. Next fall it will probably open in this city for a run, to be succeeded by a long road tour. Mme. Janauschek declares that the public has seemed to be unjaded to believe that she has so often stated—that she has not retired and has no intention of doing so until she shall be absolutely incapacitated for work.

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"There is not much likelihood that Charlys H. Hoyt will ever become an inmate of the poorhouse. Not so very many years ago he was a newspaper man plodding along at his work in Boston for a weekly stipend for which he declares that he used to do much more work than any president of the United States ever did for his $50,000 a year salary. Hoyt's newspaper men, he tried his hand at playwriting, and like most newspaper men he made a failure of his first effort, but he stuck to it and decided that farce was about his metier. As every one now knows, he was correct in this surmise, and it was not long before he began to look down upon by his former associates of the press as a prospective rival of the Vanderbilts. Success followed success, and Hoyt developed into the best writer of light entertainments this country has ever produced. Excepting his initial effort he has never had a failure recorded against him, which is a remarkable record, as will readily be admitted by any person who has ever written for the stage.

* * *

At the present time Hoyt and his partner, Frank McKee, are said to be drawing close on to $1,000 a week as royalties on those of their plays which have ceased to be of sufficient value to them to be exploited by the firm. In addition to that very tidy income there are three "A Stranger In New York" companies, all of which are making money, so much of it, in fact, that they will be kept on the road until well into June. They also have "A Day and a Night," the latest effusion of the prolific Hoyt, which those who have read it say will develop into one of the greatest successes with which the genial playwright has ever been connected. "A Stranger In New York" is to be produced in London during the coming summer, and if it should be received with favor there it will be sent on a tour of the English provinces.

* * *

The rumor committee of the Rialto will have to guess again. Every prediction made by that august assemblage from with reference to Lena Wallace Hopper has proved incorrect. The little lady has at least fooled herself, and strange as it may appear, she did it without consulting those who were so despondent concerning her future. She has signed to appear in the forthcoming annual revival at the Casino. If the piece, which is the joint work of C. H. B. McLellan (Black Mustan and Onslow Kerker, should be a great success, it will be sent to England in the fall, and I am told that in that event Mrs. Hopper will go with it. It is also reported that, although she is under contract to the Casino people for only this one production, there is a provision in the contract which stipulates that if she thus the work assigned to her she shall have the privilege of extending the agreement to cover a period of two years. It is believed that Mrs. Hopper has decided to remain away from legitimate comedy, but if she is determined to go in for anything musical it would seem that she has struck exactly the sort of thing in that line for which she is best fitted.

* * *

"Way Down East" is such a substantial hit that the success has had the unlooked for effect of embarrassing Mr. Brady, the owner of the piece and the manager of the Manhattan theater, at which it is running. Before he and Mr. Ziegfeld took hold of the Manhattan the great difficulty had been to get attractions which would last. Mr. Brady naturally had this point in view also. He had agreed to produce a comedy taken from the French at the Manhattan long before the success of "Way Down East" was an accepted fact, and now he is in the unique position of having to hunt for a theater in which to transfer one of his own "hits" for the purpose of making room in the house over which he presides for an outsider. He is determined, however, that "Way Down East" shall on no account leave this city for some time yet and to has therefore arranged to put it on at another place of amusement. Most managers are unwilling about doing that very thing, but Brady is cool enough on those lines and very sensibly thinks that a good play will "go" most anywhere, while a bad one will "go" anywhere.

* * *

William H. Crane's only rival in this country is Nat C. Goodwin, or, that I may not offend the latter, perhaps it would be better to say that Nat C. Goodwin's only rival in this country is William H. Crane. But if the stories which are told of the success of "Nathan Hale" be true, it is probable that these two will not be rivals much longer. Goodwin has long desired to be accepted in serious work, and the fact that he has scored in Clyde Fitch's play has probably given him more pleasure than the winning of the capital prize in a lottery. He is saving the piece for his New York opening next fall, and if it should have a run here we shall have to contemplate with assumed equanimity the prospect of Goodwin appearing as Shylock in the not distant future, with his beautiful wife, Maxine Elliott, as Portia.

* * *

Crane does not appear to have any intention of emulating the example of Goodwin. He had his little fling as Falstaff, which came very near to being a serious character as he played it, and he wants nothing more to do with anything outside of his legitimate sphere. In "A Virginia Courtship," in which he is the star at the Knickerbocker at the present time and in which he has scored a distinct success, he has a role admirably suited to him, but it is not farce comedy by a good deal. He has just signed a contract to appear at Koster's, a spring season beginning late in April, when he will produce a thoroughly farcical play from the pen of the French writer Ludovic Halevy. The title is "His Honor the Mayor." Some years ago Henry C. Dazian, a newspaper man, since deceased, wrote a farce comedy which he called "Her Honor the Mayor," and if Mr. Crane's choice happens to be that of Mr. Dazian play read, he has found a winner. And incidentally it will scare to almost any one that Dazian had the advantage in the matter of title.

Arthur Crispin.

Minnie Seligman contemplates for next season a starring tour, presenting programmes such as were made famous by the late Emma Vokes. Her repertory will comprise 21 one act plays.

MLLE. KSHESSINSKAIA.

THE BALLET IN RUSSIA.

Production of "The Mikado's Daughter" at St. Petersburg—Success of Mlle. Kehessinskala, the Russian Dancer.

It is possible the average American audience does not fully realize the dramatic beauties of the ballet. At least in this country and in England it is regarded in the same spirit of enjoyment as the epicure regards a rich dish of special entree—something delicious, palatable perhaps, but not of consequential importance or deserving of an undivided attention.

In St. Petersburg, however, they take the art much more seriously. There ballets have a continuance of three hours and the theater there is the endeavor of the best talent. The most realistic and the very sensational are in vogue. It has the full indorsement of royalty. The ballet, too, takes on a form of pantomime for children, and frequently a ball of amusement is the night with the little people all arrayed in their best clothes.

The special event of the winter season has been the production of "The Mikado's Daughter," a ballet by the talent Langammer, the artistic director of the Imperial Theatre Marie, one of the three royal playhouses of the Russian capital. It has been drawing crowded houses and distinguished audiences, and there has not been such a terpsichorean success since Tchaikovsky's "La Belle au Bois Dormant" (The Beauty of the Sleeping Woods).

The ballet is entirely Russian, as all Russian ballets are, of the numbers dancers, Mlle. Kehessinskaia, a native, educated in the imperial school, of which she possesses all the distinctive features and facile grace. The Russians call it the French school of dancing to distinguish it from the Italian method. Mlle. Kehessinskaia, though not precisely beautiful, is something more interesting in her dainty attractive face and lithe and graceful form. Her ankles are such as might flock to M. Langammer's court and exquisitely molded they are. Her feet are small and arched, her ankles are lithe as breezes, and may indeed be seen to entain themselves in knots with more ease than does this charming Japanese woman.

"The Mikado's Daughter" is properly a ballet should be—colorful, spectacular, based on strictly romantic realism. The music, Delibes' Sylvia, is original, well adapted to the scene and full of tuneful melody that will not disturb the most modest.

To write the excellent libretto the author has evidently studied all the best authorities on Japan, and the result is a highly entertaining object lesson on the habits, customs and superstitions of the mikado's subjects.

A prominent dancer is not impossible in this ballet, which is called "a fantastic." Dutch it is such that it is full of humorous and pathetic incidents that is the readiness of the great stage representation at the present hour. A leading dancer is made to appear at a wheel of fortune, and the prince of Satsuma, disguised as a coolie in Paris, pointing to a card of the disappearance of the coolie, is called in Milan, is represented as the ballet in Milan, is represented as the coolie, who are drifting more or less intelligently.

Why He Let It Grow.

Thomas W. Keene was met by an old friend in New York last summer, who exclaimed: "Why, Tom, I never saw you with a mustache before! I always thought impostors were supposed to have it. The impostor brushed and smoothed his mustache and said: "Why, I wear this as a disguise. I have been continually taken for President Cleveland, Mr. Bryan and Senator Hanna, so that I was afraid that I might lose my identity, and I concluded to let my mustache grow."

THE STAGE FOLK.

It is authentic news from Paris that Jean de Reszke has added to his repertory "Frondeur" and "William Tell" and that he will sing in both operas when he reappears in America next season. It is also said that Calve is studying the part of Lorelei. This may result in a generous boon for the American opera season.

The most convincing lies I ever read on the subject of actors, were left Dr. Adams. Was written in Italy, yet he took on the sub of a dressing room in a northern Chicago house. It was this: "Aging the rich boxes actors."

Meet Hoffman has signed a new contract with E. S. Willard whereby she will be Mr. Willard's leading lady for the next two seasons. Miss Hoffman will open her season in Boston in Sardou's "Madame Sans-Gene."

The Cat and the Cherub, evidently pleasing the air. It is still running in Boston, and a New Yorkmaker is touring the provinces with Mr. Fernald's Chinese tragedy. Arrangements have also been made to move the piece in which the play will be produced at the Renaissance, in Paris, this month in conjunction with a new play that Gerhart will bring out.

Bronson is furnishing the illustration at least of what stage and church companies in as many lines of the country. George H. Boniface, Jr., George Olcr, Anna Belmont, Rothchild Greenman and other celebrated minstrelsy are in the cast.

"Madame Sans-Gene" is to be played in Madrid under the name of "La Cuna de Napoleon I."