

# THE PLAY IN NEW YORK.

BY CHANNING POLLOCK.

Special Correspondence.

NEW YORK, March 18.—Most people believe the average professional critic to be a sour individual who delights in condemning whatever is presented for his inspection. This is far from being true; indeed, the ordinary reviewer is so afraid of being thought acrimonious that he dreads being compelled to write unfavorably of a performance. Quite unaware of the fact that I have been complaining of play after play during the past month, I entered upon last week with a pretty fair idea of what might be something which would praise in terms of unstinted enthusiasm. The schedule looked promising. There was "The Spoilers," by Rex Beach, whom I knew to be an amazingly virile and clever man. Surely, anyone who could live through five years in Alaska and come home to deliver such an after-dinner speech as I heard Mr. Beach make at the Fyvere's supper to Marc Klaw must be able to produce a drama of startling merit. I went to the New York theater with an expectant smile on my face and an eager pencil in my hand.

"All ye who have tears to shed prepare to shed them now." Never was hopeful young critic so bitterly disappointed. Never was such a strange betwixt the promise and the fulfillment. "The Spoilers" is the dramatization of a nightmare; one long, unbroken delirium of ranting, tearing, snorting melodrama. Perfectly impossible heroes and heroines rambled on and off the stage, making desperate efforts not to exercise a particle of that human intelligence which would have cleared up the plot in two shakes of a lamb's tail. Men fought each other over tables and chairs, and a perfect lady from the office sat had a strenuous five minutes with a lusty gentleman, during which a telephone was ripped from the wall, a desk violently upset, a window smashed, and the gentleman himself stretched half-conscious upon a sofa. There were adjectives and adjectives, and long-lost brothers. There was, in fact, everything in the world but calm and coherence. Mr. Beach, talking before the curtain, said that "the history of every new country is cast in the mold of melodrama." It's a pity that this particular history wasn't in the fire before it reached Broadway.

As far as I could make out, the story concerned a primitive man called Roy Glensister, and the part of the story which was told was Helen Chester. Roy was going to Alaska on a ship called the Santa Maria, but tarried to knock down five or six sailors who didn't want to get aboard because he had been on a vessel several of whose passengers had smallpox. A little thing like that didn't keep Roy from sailing, and he landed in Alaska, spot much to the distress of a "dance hall" lady, except Cherry Malotte. Miss Malotte loved Roy, and told him so whenever she got a chance. Helen Chester, who was the "spoiler," was the daughter of a millionaire, and she was going to marry a man called Judge Stillman, at home. Those "papers" were to empower the villain to jump Glensister's claim, but Roy didn't know that, so he tried, and he nearly pushed him into the bass viol.

Judge Stillman got busy as soon as he recovered the "papers." Alexander McNamara and he promptly took possession of Glensister's mine, the Midas, and began working it for their own profit. Glensister said he was going to kill McNamara. He said it 10 times in every act, but always when he started to do it, Helen arrived on the scene and had the fight declared a draw. No acid ever developed invisible ink as Helen developed the yellow streak in Glensister. The rest of the play consisted of threats to kill McNamara and failures to do it, with variations. The principal character, Helen, was a remarkable exhibition of imitation, when, without any mustache to deceive you, she discovered that a general gambler with whom she had been plotting about for two or three years, her brother. Or maybe she hadn't been plotting about with him. That just occurred to me. There were so many things to think about in "The Spoilers" that details escaped me.

In act two Glensister tried to kill McNamara in a fit of jealous rage at an attempt to marry the girl who had been made in an awful den of vice, where scarlet women danced "Ring-around-a-Rose" and something that looked like "London Bridge is Falling Down." Both Helen and Glensister were in the act, and the orchestra played "The Midland Beach March."

There are 21 actors in the present company, and I should feel called upon to mention them individually if they had been half as numerous and twice as good. As it is, Ralph Stuart is the only member of the company who has much credit. "The Spoilers" was an interesting book, but its dramatization

might more aptly have been named "The Spoiled."

The police did not succeed in suppressing "Mrs. Warren's Profession." Lack of public interest seems in a fair way to bring about what was not accomplished by Anthony Comstock. Just as surely as water finds its own level, that which is to be well, and some day we shall learn that the law of life need not be enforced by act of legislation. Nevertheless, it is excitement that killed "Mrs. Warren." The agitation of last year, when the play was stopped after one performance at the Garrick theater, obscured the question whether George Bernard Shaw's comedy was a good or a bad play, and left only the question whether it was a moral or an immoral one. Satisfied that it is the former, the theatregoers have become absolutely indifferent to the new production at the Manhattan.

I think no sober and unprejudiced person can deny the merit of "Mrs. Warren's Profession." It is a particularly frank and sane discussion of a subject that needs discussion more and has been discussed less than almost any other topic of our time. Any preaching which sets people thinking that "it can't be right that there aren't better opportunities for women" must be beneficial, and, to my mind, this disposes finally of the question whether or not Shaw's drama should be tolerated. "Mrs. Warren's Profession" is not really a play, if we admit that a play must treat of a man and a woman who meet in the first act, live in the second, separate in the third and are reunited in the fourth, but it is certainly a most interesting dissertation on the condition from which springs harlotry.

Just how possible it is to secure for such a work an audience not composed primarily of avowed abolitionists should not like to say. That which witnessed the piece on its opening night at the Manhattan was positively ghastly. It seemed as if every one who went there had its senses took to be rotten, and laughed and applauded industriously in the wrong places. Undoubtedly, the management catered to this sort of people, and it is not surprising that no other purpose than that of trading upon its unsavory reputation. The company, numbering only six actors and actresses, was pretty bad, and the whole performance—by which I mean alike that behind the proscenium arch and that in front of it—was disgusting. "Mrs. Warren's Profession" is not destined to have a long life in New York.

Last Monday's advertisement of the New Amsterdam Theater contained the announcement: "On account of the strain, Mr. Mansfield will not be able to play 'Peer Gynt' after these few performances." It was a sad statement, for the strain was on the public, the box office of Mr. Mansfield. The great actor's health has always been most accommodating. When he first appeared in "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" it was given out that the "strain" prevented Mr. Mansfield's offering the piece except on Saturdays, after which he was to have a Sunday for rest. Subsequently, however, it was discovered that the Stevenson story was the best drawing card in his repertoire and the Mansfield constitution straightway adapted itself to the possibilities of monetary gain. If I am not mistaken "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" was offered sometimes as often as four times in a single week. Under these circumstances, I may be forgiven for the cruelty of supposing that Mr. Mansfield would have borne up under the strain. If it is a possible fact, however, more enthusiastically received by New York.

Snow covers the streets of this thriving village, and our only indication of coming spring is the announcement that Barnum & Bailey's circus will begin its regular annual engagement at Madison Square Garden on March 21. Already the shop windows are rosy with posters of gentlemen leaping impossible distances through the air, and of the most delicate women in the East too, besides noble steeds. Ah, if nature were so lavish with beauty as are the makers of circus lithographs! You who live out of town have the better of us as regards "the big show." A circus under a roof bears the same relation to a real circus that a swimming tank does to the Atlantic ocean. There is no atmosphere, no conditions, but what is a circus without its atmosphere? Who answers "Nothing." You can see aerial acts in a vaudeville theater, races at a driving park, freaks in a dime museum. No; what makes the circus worth while is the sight of the big tents and the dancing pictures belching forth from the tent of the soft earth under your feet, and of the hard boards under another portion of your tired anatomy; the smell of roasting peanuts and fresh-turned loam; the sound of braying hands and crying hawkers; the taste of lemonade and of mud thrown up by the chariot wheels. Every improvement in the circus subtracts from its charm to me. I bewailed the abandonment of the parade, and cushioned chairs were never half so fine as the top board from which, now and then, I used to peep out under the flaps of the tent just to make sure that there still was a real world—a prosaic world in which nobody wore pink tights and got applauded for being fired into the air from the mouth of a cannon.

"Widow," he made her marry his aide-de-camp with whom she was confessedly in love. In spite of this she married Bonaparte's aide from another of her husband's plots, and all came out right in the end. The play was full of ingenious situations and other manifestations of technique, but without much real life.

Miss Gladys Unger, an American girl who has lived in London for several years, is the author of "Sheridan's" four-act comedy produced by Arthur Boucher at his Garrick theater this week. It is a witty, agreeable and fairly effective pastiche on the great dramatist's marriage, four years after his first wife's death, to the young daughter of the bishop of Winchester. In the first act we find the dramatist, wit and orator, surrounded by creditors, but as gay and happy-go-lucky as if he hadn't a care in the world. He has arranged a marriage for his prize son Tom with the fascinating and rich Esther Ogde, but the girl and Tom do not take to each other, whereas the girl and Tom's dashing father fall in love with each other instantly. Jealousies, money troubles, a duel over scraps into which Master Tom has got himself make many a lively incident until Sheridan and the bishop's daughter elope and, dodging the sheriff's officers, are happily wedded in the last act. Sober history records that the match didn't turn out as well as pictured by Miss Unger, but so much the more for the sober history of a genius who was not always sober.

The Richard Brinsley Sheridan of Arthur Boucher gives further testimony of the fact that this actor, however unpopular and "Sheldrake" in his off-stage proceedings, has been, is a genuine artist. The heroine of the play is Alexandra Carlisle, who is delightfully pretty and lively.

Charles Frohman's latest presentation in musical comedy is Seymour Hicks' "My Darling," at the newly-



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JUST A WEE DROP.



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JUST A WEE DROP.

SCENES FROM "THE BONNIE BRIER BUSH."

Salt Lake Theater, Entire Week of March 25th Wednesday and Saturday Matinees.

crossing room where they quarrel and then remove their makeup. Aubrey Dagwell, a singer who sings old college songs in appropriate makeup. Then there are Rider's monkeys which are nothing but the antics of Shulton intelligence. Animal acts are always popular in Salt Lake and this undoubtedly will make a hit. Another attraction is that of Arty's symphony band, who have recently been recruited from the ranks of the concert artists. Then there will be the Klondike and Vento's orchestra.

Some unique specialties are promised at the benefit for the Theatrical Mechanical association which is to be held at the Orpheum on the night of March 21. The committee in charge has been working hard and as they have secured the house, orchestra, and all help free of charge they are visions of a balance of large and generous proportions. As soon as the various shows scheduled for this week get to down the entire program will be announced. To date the following numbers have been secured: Horace S. Ensign, soloist; Marc Klaw, athlete on Roman rings; Miss Muriel Williams, Italian harp; Miss Millie Williams, illustrated songs; Khan Bros., dance and song specialties; Younger and Wright, feats of marvellous strength; comedy pantomime; "Behind the Scenes, Setting and Striking an Act," and the Klondike.

Murray & Mack, two well known entertainers, come back to the Grand for the whole of next week. This troupe was always popular in Salt Lake and the management doesn't deem it necessary to change the bill in the middle of the week, as usual. As the company brings an entirely new production this year, including a chorus which is heavily billed as "The Chorus Beautiful," the wisdom of the management's decision is evident. In addition to Murray & Mack the company includes in its cast Gladys Van, Gus Pixley, Gertrude Rutledge, Loby Harrington and many others. Mr. Mack says a special feature this year will be his four dancing meteors, secured in Berlin for Hammerstein's opera house in New York.

The Leighton players, who open at the Grand after Murray & Mack are announced to arrive several days ahead of time, in order that they may thoroughly prepare their plays. Ned Royce's "Friends" will be the opening bill, and the statement is made that Mr. Leighton is a friend of Royce and plays under his endorsement. "Friends" will be followed by "The Evening of the Gods," "The Heart of Maryland," and "The Bolzano plays."

## THEATER GOSSIP

Mrs. Langtry is said to be writing her memoirs.

Mrs. Leslie Carter has now decided to be her own manager.

George Bernard Shaw wrote the prologue which was spoken by Mr. and Mrs. Cyril Maude at the opening of the Playhouse, their new London theater.

"Willie" Edouin, the English comedian, has been engaged by the Messrs. Shubert for an important role in their coming production of "The Snow Man."

Lillian Woodward, a Chicago dramatic reader, was called to New York last week by David Belasco as a result of a negotiation to engage for an important role.

It is estimated that at least five English and American playwrights receive over \$50,000 annually in royalties on plays presented by stock companies in the United States.

David Belasco is said to be at work on a new play for David Warfield, in which the noted character actor will open the new Shubert theater in New York next September.

Miss Amy Hearn has been engaged for an important role in James K. Hackett's production of "Romeo and Juliet," "The Girl in White," now in rehearsal at the Hackett theater, New York.

"The Ambitious Man," Alcott's is the name of the new play by Leo Ditrichstein, which is to be played in the Astor theater in April. It is described as a study of Washington life, and is supposed to reflect the manners and morals of diplomatic society.

The London Lyceum, Sir Henry Irving's old theater, will be reopened on Easter Monday with a new romantic drama by Walter Howard, called "Her Love Against the World." The manager is Mr. Ernest Carpenter, who has theaters at Brighton and Bristol.

Preparations for the English production of "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch" have been completed and the play will open with a complete American cast, headed by Mrs. Alice Carter, at Terry's theater, London, April 21. The Salt Lake company therefore will have another lady in the title role.

Senator Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin entertained a box party at the performance of "The Man of the Hour" at the Savoy theater, New York, one evening last week, and he is now referred to as a "graft fighter." The senator appeared much interested, especially at the reference to himself.

Lee Shubert said last week that when his firm takes possession of Daly's Theater, New York, May 1, it will make many improvements in the building, redecorating and remodeling it completely. This historic playhouse will be reopened early next season.

Mrs. Leslie Carter claims, it is reported, that she was the business partner of David Belasco in all the latter's enterprises, and as a reconciliation between the two now seems impossible a suit for \$250,000 is on the books of the New York courts. The well known New York lawyer, Mr. Carter's attorney in the case.

After many contradictory reports in regard to the matter, the engagement of Robert Edison, the star in "Strongheart," and Miss Ethel Levey, former wife of George M. Cohan, is formally announced by Mr. Edison. The marriage, it is said, will take place as soon as necessary formalities connected with the standing of the decree of divorce to Miss Levey are completed.

Gabriel d'Annunzio, the Italian playwright, will come to New York in March to attend at the Lyric Theater the opening performance of his play, "The Daughter of Jorio." When Mr. Southern and Miss Marina decided to postpone the play's production from the fourth to the seventh week of their engagement, they called an invitation to the author.

"The Powers That Be," a new play by Avery Hopwood, was given its first production at the Shubert Theater in Columbus, Ohio, last Wednesday evening. The play deals with political corruption in municipal affairs, the story being woven about the fight which a young district attorney, seeking reelection, made against a powerful po-



MANAGER PYPER will no sooner have recovered his breath from his strenuous exertions during the savage engagement, than he will have to round up his shoulders preparing for the big series of events which will mark the season's home stretch. Never before in the history of the Theater did the close of a theater year bring so many notables as are on the list between now and the middle of June. Managers usually feel apprehensive about opening their houses too often when the spring and summer sunshine sets in, but the strength of Manager Pyper's list, he feels, is such as to enable him to snap his fingers at weather conditions. The closing list from next week until Maude Adams ends the season in June is as follows: "Bonnie Briar Bush," March 25, 26, 27.

"Alice Sit by the Fire," April 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31.

Blanche Walsh, April 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31.

Augusta Daly Opera company, April 25 to May 4.

Mrs. Lillian Russell, May 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31.

"Jefferson De Angelis," May 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31.

Maude Adams, June 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31.

What "The Bonnie Briar Bush" will do without Stoddard, Fox and Easton, we will be able to tell better a week from tonight. That charming comedy "Alice Sit by the Fire" also comes without Ethel Barrymore, but its own strength ought to carry it. Lillian Russell is sure to play to capacity business. The Salt Lake Opera company will duplicate the Savage future, and the repertoire will be made up from such standard works as "La Boheme," "Il Trovatore," "La Traviata," "The Barber of Seville," and "Faust." Annie Russell will be heard in "The Girl in White," a Mid-Summer Night's Dream. What Leslie Carter plays is not yet known. Mrs. Wiggs will come without our old friend, David Belasco, as she is booked for the London opening, April 21. Jefferson De Angelis is always sure of a big welcome and of course what Maude Adams will do is only a question of what the house will hold.

Speaking of Maude Adams, her stay in Chicago has been extended from four to six weeks to give people an opportunity of seeing "Peer Gynt." A line from Miss Adams' home in Wisconsin says that her business in this play has exceeded that of any other attraction that ever traveled. In Pittsburgh alone the week record was made of \$21,000. The Chicago papers draw attention to the fact that the young actress came to that city about a dozen years ago and stopped in a humble Wabash avenue boarding house with her mother. She was then a girl almost unknown, but now returns "as a woman, at the height of her art, fame and income power."

An announcement sure to please all lovers of the "Peer Gynt" drama is that of the coming of "The Bonnie Briar Bush" at the Theater all of next week.

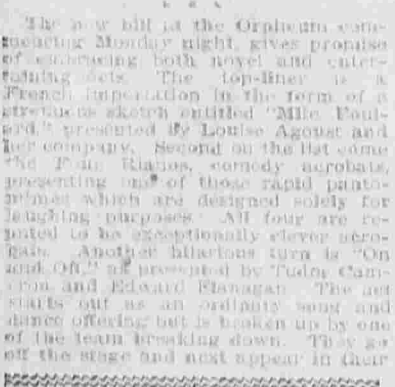
As a dramatic achievement, "The Bonnie Briar Bush" has proven a lasting success, from the fact that it contains that rare quality, the portraying of simple home life among the Scotch people in an all-absorbing manner.

The comedy with which the play begins is supplied by Archibald McKittrick, a tipping Scotch postman, whose love for a joke and the battle is amusing, and Tunnies and Annie, whose love affairs are a great source of laughter through the play.

The original Kirke La Shelle production is carried with a cast new to Salt Lake, while a male quartet interpolates the old-time Scotch ballads and a boy piped Robert Burns' tale of the Forty-fifth Highlanders, adds to the local color by playing on the pipes.

While Nance O'Neill was playing in this city she received a dispatch from her manager in New York announcing that he had secured for her role in Milton Roxley's play entitled "The Girl in White." This is the play that Leslie Carter had in rehearsal, but which Mr. Roxley withdrew from her owing to her taste. Nance O'Neill should shine in the title, in the list of those who support her are such standard actors as Mr. L. Hamilton, William Courtleigh, Mr. J. Ferguson, Mabel Morrison, and of course, McKee Rankin.

The new bill at the Orpheum commencing Monday night gives promise of interesting both novel and interesting acts. The top-line is a French super-production in the form of a structure sketch entitled "Mile. Foulard," presented by Louise Agoust and her company. Second on the list comes "The Peer Gynt," comedy, acrobats, presenting a number of those rapid pantomimes which are destined solely for laughing purposes. All four are reported to be exceptionally clever acrobats. Another hilarious turn is "On and Off," as presented by Tuna Campbell and Edward Flanagan. The act starts out as an ordinary song and dance offering but is broken up by one of the team breaking down. Then, go off the stage and next appear in the



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