DRAMATIC AND SPORTING

L. A. W. TO RETURN TO FIRST PRINCIPLES.

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The officials of the League of American Wheelmen are about to start a crusade to regale the membership which the different state organizations have put during the past year and also to carry out in a more vigorous manner the objects for the accomplishment of which the members were first banded together.

Every member of the organization as well as a good many others unaffiliated with it is aware that during the past few months the depletion in the ranks of the national body has been very large. Of course the bicycle war was responsible for the loss of a good many members, because a very large percentage of the volunteers are wheelmen, and a good many were members of the league. The spring and early summer months are the ones in which most of the new recruits join the ranks of the L. A. W., and the war at that time occupied their minds to the exclusion of almost every other topic. But there were other reasons for the falling off in numbers, and it is the aim of the officials to formulate plans and change their methods so as to remedy the matter. Mr. Isaac B. Potter, the president of the league, has been devotion means to work in conjunction with the state divisions. One of the main features in the new programme is a radical change in the policy of the L. A. W. One of the greatest objects of the organization has been the improvement of our roads, and in the past the league has spent at least $200,000 in printing and disseminating literature bearing on this subject and in other ways trying to improve the condition of our highways. That most of the work done in this direction in recent years throughout the country is in a great measure due to its efforts every one will admit.

The officials recognize, however, that notwithstanding all their work the results attained do not compensate for the money and labor expended. In the past the L. A. W. has not been in favor of building cycle paths, believing that it would better attain its object by confining its efforts to the improvement of roads in general.

Finding these efforts in many cases ineffectual and sometimes even antagonized by misguided opposition, it has been decided in future to achieve and build cycle paths. Because many people are blind to the usefulness of good roads there is no reason, it is argued, why lists should on that account suffer. "Good roads for all" is still the ultimate end of the league's work, but cycle paths will be substituted as an auxiliary to the greater cause.

Mr. Potter, in furtherance of this move, has published a volume for the L. A. W. Good Roads Library entitled "Cycle Paths," in which he defends the change in front of his methods.

"Every cycle path is a protest against bad roads, a sort of public notice that the public wagon ways are unfit for public travel, a sort of reproach to every highway officer who has seen holes in his road, and a splendid example of the charming relations which the wheel and the roadway may be made to sustain to each other. It is a declaration of independence which for the time being lifts the bicycle out of the mud and gals the wheelmen on a firmer ground of argument for good roads, takes from his critics the charge that the cyclist's warfare is a selfish one, and supplies to every traveler an impressive exhibition of the value of a good wheelway.

"I believe also that the general interests of cycling will be best promoted by the strokes of rooted soil which in so many parts of our country are now called 'roadways.'

"The right to make a cycle path along the public road, while properly the subject of statutory legislation, rests upon the ground of neither privilege nor concession. The willingness of cyclists to undertake this work and in most cases to pay for it in spring, from a purely emergent condition, brought about by the swift growth of cycling and the sluggish conception of the average American statesman. If he (the fundamental right of every person to travel the public highway by his own selected mode of conveyance, and whoever a new and improved vehicle has come so fully into popular use as to complete the ruin of all the wheeled carriages used upon the country roads in addition to the expense of public highway officers to maintain these roads in a condition fit for the passage of all vehicles in common use. It is true that a concert between some of this face has laid hold upon the public mind and that the average highway officer cannot exercise our conditions with his fixed notions of official duty, but these forts where they enjoy a boat for the public cyclist who builds his own road and battles for good wagon roads at the same time, betray a violation of equity which ought to stop. The bicycle has added wealth to the country and has become a strong factor in its social and commercial growth. In hundreds of communities the cyclists include taxpayers, who pay heavily to maintain a wasteful system of mere roadways, and whose every effort for improvement is opposed by the 'old settler' who insists that the rut is good enough."

The movement for cycle paths has been taken up in so many with more enthusiasm than in New York. Mr. Mile M. Belding, the newly elected chief consul of New York state, is enthusiastic in regards it, and thinks it will lend wonderfully in building up the league. It may be mentioned here that the popular work of building cycle paths, originated at Lockport, N. Y., was first in a great measure to the efforts of Mr. Charles T. Raymond of that city. Under his leadership the local wheelmen constructed a fine path in Niagara county.

If the plans of Mr. Belding are also seconded and carried out for his association, there is no doubt that New York state at least will soon be in possession of a series of cycle paths and good roads stretching in all directions. Mr. Belding's plans are very broad. As he himself says, he does not believe in confine power in cycling affairs, and so he is preparing to surround himself with a board of advisers and advisers. He intends to appoint committees of representative wheelmen who will have charge of the different objects and aims of the league in the state.

The chairmen of these committees will be now located in or near New York so that Mr. Belding may be readily in touch with them. Local organizations are to be established wherever possible and on this he relies to a great measure to recruit the membership. The building of cycle paths will be one of the principal departments and wherever the cooperation of farmers or local enthusiasts cannot be secured for the construction of good roads efforts will be made to have these substitutes.

The new chief consul also wants the board of officers of the division to meet quarterly instead of but yearly, and in other ways he intends to infuse new life into the organization.

He is in favor of an annual May day parade of L. A. W. members in every city and town of the state, to be followed by good roads meetings or banquets and entertainments. The popularity of this or one that will be a great factor in gathering recruits to the ranks of the league.

There is not a state division or local organization in the Union that could not profitably gather cyclists from the place of Mr. Belding. As evidence of the popularity of the organization and a criterion whereunto present, Mr. Belding receives confidences in every one with whom he comes in contact. He is a believer in the motto that "whatever is worth doing is worth doing well." Although he has many important business interests, he devotes a good of his time to the welfare of his fellow wheelmen. While of course he will look now especially to the building up of the league in his own authority, he is broad minded enough to know that if the organization is to continue its usefulness to wheelmen in general the work must be carried on with vigor in every state, and he hopes to see the good example taken by Smart and Greenwood the country over. There is no more able worker in the ranks of the L. A. W. or one who more thoroughly understands and can carry out his objects and aspirations. Should his efforts as chief consul of New York eventually succeed fully his friends predict that he will be a strong candidate for presidential honors next year.

The advocacy of different prominent cycle paths given herewith are taken from Mr. Isaac B. Potter's new book, "Cycle Paths."

LEO STHERRINGTON.

SOME FAMOUS CYCLE PATHS.

THE STAGE IN GOTHAM.

Arthur Crispin's Theatrical Feuilleton—What the Frequenters of the New York Rialto Are Talking About.

[Copyright, 1898.]

Any one who is in doubt as to the enormous business being done at most of the prominent theaters of this city has only to stroll along Broadway any evening to be convinced that there is truth behind the so-called statements to that effect. That fact alone is sufficient to make anything connected with the theatrical business unique.

I find the results of the principal theaters are night recently to satisfy myself, and I found that for once at least the managers have not exaggerated the business. Nearly twenty-five hundred people crowded into the Casino one night recently to see the production of "Hotel Topsy Turvy" at the Herald Square was well attended. The Garrick, where Richard Mansfield appears in "Cyrano de Bergerac," was packed, as was the Metropolitan, where Viola Allen is exploiting Basil Caleck's "The Christian," into the garden, where Richard Mansfield appears in "Cyrano de Bergerac." At the Manhattan that anything but commendable French comedy, "The Tenth Man," had a very large house, and at the Bijou May Irwin was turning them away with Tom Moss's farce, "Kate Kip, Buyer." Joe Jefferson, at the Fifth Avenue, was, of course, playing to enormous audiences in his role Arthur at Wallack's. Daly's comedy had standing room with "The Runaway Girl," and Weber & Fields' music hall didn't have even that. At the Madison Square "On and Off" was doing well, and over at the Lyceum E. H. Sothern was playing to capacity in "A Colonial Girl." At the big Academy of Music "Sporting Life" was doing even better than during its first week, and all of the continuous performance houses as well as some of the "variety" places were simply packed.

This condition, to far as I am aware, has never before prevailed in New York at this season, and unless a series of fortuitous accidents such as have made this year notable should occur at some future time it is not likely to be duplicated in the near future.

America is not as a rule very appreciative of home talent. This is largely due to the fact that the City of the Theatrical Business is concerned the interests are so largely centered in New York that the verdict of the Gotham critics appears to be necessary to great dramatic success in this country. This is true also as to musical matters.

There would be no disadvantage to the performer in all this if it were possible for any one to come into this city and win recognition on his or her merits, but that is not possible, except in instances as rare as nobly to furnish the exceptions to prove the general rule. The critics here seem to be agreed that nothing good can come out of the west. If you are not a New Yorker, you cannot be a good actor, or at least they will not admit that you are until after you shall have gone through a metropolitan apprenticeship equal to your total term of service on the stage.

The average New York critic does not travel to see what is going on in the towns and cities of the interior of those road companies which never visit New York. Their failure to do this is not due to any desire to be unfair, but merely to the serious delusion under which they labor that no performer who does not come to New York once in a while can amount to very much. A few years ago, when "Chinese Fables" was produced at the Garden theater here, the role of Mrs. Murphy was intrusted to Marie Bates, one of the best character actresses in this country. The next morning, in his review of the piece, a man who is by his own admission one of the most competent critics in America called attention to the fact that Mrs. Bates was certain to make a mass for herself. If the misguided mortal had been as well posted on theatrical affairs as he should have been, he would have known that Marie Bates is a favorite in almost every city of the United States.

Ellen Beach Yaw, whose voice is said to have the greatest range ever recorded in musical history, comes here after a triumphal tour of the country, and her reception was not at all enthusiastic. She has since gone to London, where her success has been phenomenal. For that reason she may now return to New York in the conviction that she will be said received here because, forsooth, we are willing to blindly accept England's estimate of our own artists instead of going to the trouble of making them for ourselves.

Thus it is; thus it has been for many years, and thus it will be until the New York theatrical writers cease to imagine that there is but one city in the United States.

The managers of the New York Casino, encouraged by the phenomenal success of "The Belle of New York" in the British capital, have determined to send another company over. This organization will be entirely American down to the humblest chorus girl, and it will present a review written by Hugh Morton and Gustave Kerker. The subject of this review has not yet been divulged. According to some persons who pretend that they are in a position to know whereof they speak, the piece will be a sort of potpourri of several of the Casino successes, of course not including "The Belle of New York," with which the Londoners are already so familiar.

The company, if the plans as at present outlined are carried out, will be an exceptionally strong one. Walter Jones is said to be certain to go across, and it is possible, though not extremely probable, that elongated Dan Daly may also be a member of the company. Bessie Marie Dressler, who has been scaring heavily at the Herald Square theater in this city in "Hotel Topsy Turvy," has resigned in order to accompany the Casino forces to London, but the proprietors of "Hotel Topsy Turvy" declare that they have an ironclad and expurgated contract with the fair Marie and that if she should attempt to carry out her announced purpose she will be sure to hear from them in legal form. As Miss Dressler is noted for having her own way when she is crazy, and as she is evidently decidedly angry just now, there is every prospect of a very pretty fight.

A few years ago when it was reported that Harry Woodruff was engaged to be married to Anna Gould he at once became the target for all of the supposedly funny writers for the press. He was described, alluded to as "the young man with the pretty face and curly locks, who, being unable to act, had concluded to win fortune and fame by marrying an heiress." Later when he went to Hartford it was asserted that he had been sent there by the Gould family to fit himself for the position in life which he was destined to hold.

Woodruff is really a manly young fellow and in the line of work to which he has devoted himself is one of the best actors in America.

He is now appearing at the vaudeville houses in a little sketch entitled "A Bit of Instruction." The long departed possibility of his becoming a member of the Gould family was not exploited in the advance announcements of his appearance. In fact, no sensational methods of advertising were resorted to; but, despite that lapse, Woodruff went on and made a very great hit. His sketch is now in demand at a largely increased salary at nearly all of the better class of continuous and vaudeville houses in the country.

This is merely cited as another evidence of the fact that if an actor really has ability, allied to a little pluck, he will "get there" in time, despite the efforts of those who never has an opportunity to cast stars at one who may be more fortunately situated than themselves.

Arthur Crispin

New York.

Matt Dwyer on Dark Horses.

In a recent interview Matt Dwyer, the trainer and driver, has expressed himself concerning the ill success of trotting meetings in New York city. "A trotting meeting conducted on the principle of the Austrian meetings—that is, handicap dash races—would give just about as quick action for the bettors and prove infinitely exciting to those who prefer to see a race decided in one heat. We were given a little of that sort of racing by Manager Fasig at Hartford during the July and September meetings, and it immediately jumped into favor. I have driven in dash races at Vienna when 70,000 people were present. I believe it is the only solution to the question as to how trotting meetings can be made to share the popular patronage of sport being people with the running meetings. If the plan is tried, I believe it will win."

An Armed Tricycle.

An armed tricycle, it is said, will be introduced into the French army. The machine weighs 120 pounds and has two quick firing guns placed in the rear, one on each side, weighing, with their fittings, 66 pounds. A thousand charges, with their cases, are also carried, bringing up the total weight to 224 pounds. Two riders are all that are needed to propel the machine, which will be forced along at a good speed. Upon good roads, experts claim, this device will be very effective.

Some Famous Football Players.

Eggersun, the Notre Dame center, is the biggest man in western football. He is 6 feet 3 inches in height and weighs 255 pounds. Harvard's center, Sargent, is only 5 years old and weighs 239 pounds. Outland, captain of Chicago, weighs 178 pounds. Chamberlain of Yale 182, Hildebrand of Princeton 178, while Dibblee of Harvard tips the scales at only 151.

ELLEN BEACH YAW.

Stories of The Stage.

All of the success that he has attained on the stage William H. Crane lays to hard work and study. The actor's father was born in Connecticut, and it that he gave his son to understand that work and a determination to stick to it. And stick to it Mr. Crane has done all of his life, and today he is one of the most indefatigable men in his profession. There are few men who have been in footlight rewards nowadays who would suffer the inconvenience and be willing to put up with those things which Crane had to contend with when he began. It was no chance that placed him in a position in the profession. As a child he had a deep bass voice, and one of his ambitions was to go to the stage. Mrs. Holmes, who managed a traveling company of children which were given pantomimes and farces, visited Buffalo, he applied to her for a place, and the result was that he was appointed to her for two years, he to receive no board and tuition in lieu of his salary. Little was expected of him, and very after night he used to sit on the first entrance and rehearsing the different parts and the music of the works which were presented. He felt that his chance would come some night, and he would be ready for it.

"Samantha" was announced on the night of its presentation the comedian was taken ill, and it looked as if the house would have to be closed. Here is where opportunity was knocking at Crane's door.

"I can play the part," spoke up young Crane.

"Pshaw!" he was told. "You would have to have a rehearsal, and you do not know a note of the music." But he assured them that he did, and he played the part that night without a break of any kind. That was his first appearance on any stage.

A short time ago one of the young men in the actor's company was heard complaining about an extra rehearsal. Crane called him aside. "My dear boy," said he, "the last week I was with the Hooley stock company I played the parts in four nights."

The young man uttered no more complaints.

The friends of Montgomery, of the team of Montgomery and Stone, tell a funny story on him that happened in San Francisco when he was playing an engagement with the Orpheum circuit.

The big three sheets showed him and his partner in their black face disguise, and, though Montgomery is rather slight, the poster made him out a burly negro.

One evening after the show for looking negroes posted himself outside of the stage door, evidently waiting for some one within. After the show one performer after another emerged from the closely guarded entrance. Finally the colored dame could stand it no longer.

"I'se waitin fob Mr. Montgomery" said she. "When is he comin out?"

"Mr. Montgomery's gone long ago" said the stage watchman. "What do you want with him? If you've got any clothes to deliver to him I'll take care of them."

"Deed I'se done so waitin fob Mr. Montgomery. He was done to see me last Sunday night, and he promised to come back again. I'se been a waitin for him, and when he failed to show up I thought I'd better come and see what's a-keepin him."

Just then Stone, Montgomery's partner, came along. The situation held him.

"This woman wants to see Mr. Montgomery. Maybe you can talk to her."

"I am Mr. Montgomery's partner, my good woman," said Stone. "Let me know what you want and I'll tell him."

"Sah, you can't be Mr. Montgomery's partner, fob he's a black man. There's his picture right now." And she pointed to a big poster in the alley.

Stone laughed.

"You was so down to see you last" he asked.

"Sunday night, and he promised faithfully he would come back again."

"How big a man was he?"

"Oh, pshaw! you know as well as you (Stone and Montgomery) are about the same size and back at the end of supper!"

Somebody had evidently been impersonating the partner, but Montgomery got the laugh all around for a long time afterward.

A New York manager has a stage doorkeeper who has served in various capacities for many years and whose faithfulness has become a shining example in the theater. He had never been off for a night until his manager gave him a little holiday.

"I got to thinking about him the other day," writes his kindly employer, "and decided to give him a holiday. I asked him how he enjoyed himself and what he had done for pastime, expecting to hear that he had gone to a ball game or something of the kind. I got his answer almost speechless when he told me that after trying for two days to make up his mind as to how he would amuse himself, he finally concluded to go down to another theater and see an old acquaintance, who was at the stage door there. And that is exactly what he did." Such is the fascination of the stage for the actor, even though they may get into it no farther than the dingy alley door. The father of Comedian Roland Reed was for 25 years stage doorkeeper of a Philadelphia house, and there he found his ideal happiness.

GOSSIP OF THE STAGE.

The latest Drury Lane melodrama, "The Great Ruby," will be produced in this country next season, probably with Mrs. Sarah Cowell Le Moyne in the leading role. Its great sensation is a balloon scene. Two dastardly dash into the car of the gas ball, pull the lever and shoot up into midair, while the earth recedes beneath them. There is a struggle for life up in the sky. One of the men is thrust from the car. He hugs for mercy, but the other is inexorable. He engages by a rope. He is cut down and falls into the space beneath.

Possibly the biggest theatrical loser of 1898 on record was that for Nellie Farren at Drury Lane theater, London, which resulted in a net result of 120,000, of which the loss was caused by the sale of seats. The benefit realized the largest money on record, 1,000. There were 10 people in the stalls and 3,000 in other parts of the house, besides the actors and actresses behind the scenes. The benefit for Miss Genevieve Ward on the occasion of her farewell appearance in Australia realized $23,000, which was decided to the Women's hospital in Melbourne.

Charles Klein has written a new play for Nat Goodwin Howell. It was made to order in 32 days. The title of this superb machine made since is "The Herald of the Dove Dispatch."

Manager Litt says that James J. Corbett has made a bid for Sporting Life, but that he declined to part with what he considers the greatest success of the day. If Corbett wants a play, perhaps he can persuade Bob Fitzsimmons to part with "The Honest Blacksmith," or maybe John L. Sullivan will let him have some one of his many successes. Hall Caine is working the press agent hard with an entirely new farce. He recently gave a morning matinee of "The Christian," to which he invited all the clergy in New York and vicinity.

Coquelin is reported to have remarked that the mistake made in the Italy production of "Cyrano de Bergerac" was in not casting Ada Rehan for Cyrano. Well, he did the best he could; she looks most of Cyrano's lines as Roxane.

The emperor of Germany is said to be losing plays written on the story of the Hohenzollerns.

Ellie Shannon was born in Boston. She made her first appearance on the stage as a child in the famous production of "Coriolanus" by John Mcullough.

Mrs. Tom Thumb, once the only little pigmy on American shows, is at present appearing with a company of 40 people as one of the exhibition shows at Earl's Court, London.

Verdi, the composer, in his eighty-fifth year, is at work on two new operas, "King Lear" and "Iolo."