

# ramatic



PROBABLY more eyes in America were directed towards the London stage last week, than at any time in 10 years past. The reason was that the American actress, Eleanor Robson, was booked to appear there at the Duke of York's theater. Thursday night, the 8th, in the play in which she had been so successful in New York and Chicago, "Merely Mary Ann." In Salt Lake, this interest was shared, not only because Miss Robson is the daughter of an old friend, Mudge Carr Cooke, but because a townsman, Ada Dwyer Russell, the solitary member of the American cast Miss Robson selected for the English tour.

Cablegrams to the New York papers poured in on Friday last, and the gratifying verdict is that "Merely Mary Ann" in London is not only a success, but a triumph. The opinion of the Journal is recorded in our New York letter. The New York Herald has these headings over its account: "London Laurels for Miss Robson," "Remarkable Triumph of the American Actress in 'Merely Mary Ann,'" "Is 'Above all Criticism,'" "Metropolitan Press Lays Unanimous Praise at the Feet of the Young Interpreter of Mr. Zangwill's Ideas."

The account that follows runs: "London, Friday.—Never before in theatrical history did a young American girl step so completely into London's affections as did Miss Eleanor Robson in 'Merely Mary Ann,' at the Duke of York's theater last night. Miss Robson's managers, muzzled the press agent and let the young actress win her way almost unaided on the opening night. The result was a demonstration such as few London favorites ever received."

There were a few critical moments during the evening. The London gallery has a way of making his wants known that must be fearfully disconcerting to a foreigner. During the scene where Mary Ann tells the quaint story of her vigil by her mother's deathbed, there were some howls of "Speak louder!" Miss Robson's face flushed, and although the scene was in a measure spoiled, she held courageously to her part. At the end of the act there was a storm of approval, and at the end of the play the audience was applauding for 10 minutes. Miss Robson had London at her feet.

The Daily Telegraph says: "The success of last night was not Mr. Zangwill's comedy, but its heroine, or rather the actress who played the heroine."

"Miss Eleanor Robson, who won all our hearts," in a similar vein writes the critic of the Daily News. "The whole performance was a triumph for Miss Robson from first to last. Her impersonation was absolutely above criticism, and any success which the play will undoubtedly achieve must be attributed largely to her."

The Daily Mail says: "Her success last night was thoroughly deserved. She has power, sympathy, a moving voice and all the gifts that go to the making of a great emotional actress."

"Miss Robson, without the least doubt, will become the idol of London playgoers without exception."

The other papers credit the American actress with an extraordinary first night success.

In the audience were Lady Tama Arnold, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Lady Doyle, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Crane, Prof. Ayrton, F. R. S., and Mrs. Herbert Ayrton, Anthony Hope, Sir Squire Bancroft, the Earl of Yarmouth, W. B. Gilbert, Mrs. Madeleine Lucette Ryley, Baron Kriesthausen and Mrs. Brown Potter."

Miss Robson's managers are sending to dramatic editors the New York Herald account with the following letter:

In calling your attention to the above cablegram—a cablegram containing information of which we are very proud—we desire to add that the success of Miss Robson achieved in London was secured absolutely without any adventitious aids—that is, all advance newspaper exploitation was positively forbidden by Mr. George C. Tyler, who was present and personally supervised all preparations for the opening; no newspaper interviews with Miss Robson were allowed, and not a photograph or sketch of her of any kind was given out. Mr. Tyler declaring openly that if Miss Robson could win she must win on her merits. The Herald's cablegram shows how well she succeeded—and, permit us to add, it was the greatest and most pronounced triumph an American artist, of either sex, has achieved in London in the past 20 years. We remain, very sincerely, yours, LIEBLER & CO.

A note from Mrs. Russell to the dramatic editor of the "News" dated London, Aug. 29, says she and Miss Robson had just landed from their tour of France and Spain, and were in the thick of rehearsals at the Duke of York's theater. She had attended two "first nights," in London, one a failure, the other a success, and she says the "boos" and tumult of the audience at the one were as terrifying as the enthusiasm over the other was uplifting. She and Miss Robson went home full of awe over that most terrible of all things to an actor—a London audience—and wondered what sort of a fate lay in store for them. Fortunately their worries are over, a fact on which the Salt Lake friends of both ladies will congratulate them.

Harold Russell left on Thursday for New York where he is under contract to the Liebbers, the same managers who have so long controlled the services of his wife, and under whom she is now playing in London.

Ralph Stuart in the exciting play entitled "By Right of Sword" forms the attraction at the Theater next Tuesday and Wednesday, with a bargain matinee on Wednesday afternoon at 3. The play is told in Russia and details the adventures of one Richard Hamilton, who gets into all sorts of troubles by mixing up with nihilistic plots. The equipment is all brought from the east, and as Mr. Stuart is well-known as a popular delineator of heroic roles, his visit will be interesting to all who like this special class of entertainment.

At the Grand tonight "An Orphan's Prayer" closes the week. Monday night the rural, pathetic and exciting play, entitled "Rock State Folk," forms the bill for the first half of the week.

Those well-known people, Mr. Royce, Mr. Lackaye, and Mr. Crosby still head the cast. The three clever children and the invisible quartet are well remembered features.

The play entitled "For Her Sake," well known as a Russian melo-drama, comes to the Grand the last half of the week. "For Her Sake" is credited with possessing an element which the Russian predecessors lacked and which doubtless more than anything else has

to appear in Philadelphia at the Academy of Music in "Sweet Kitty Bellairs," early in November, as heretofore efforts have been made to keep Miss Crossman out of Philadelphia, but in this the opposition was forestalled and the Academy was rented many months ago by M. Belasco and Mr. Campbell. It was at the Academy that Miss Crossman appeared last year, and during the engagement played one performance, but the gross receipts were a trifle over \$4,000.



RALPH STUART.

contributed to its phenomenal success with theater-goers. It has the comedy element clearly and consistently ingrained in its plot, and it is said to be a high class of comedy.

## THEATRE GOSSIP.

Grace Elliston is supporting Nat Goodwin in his new play, "The Usurper."

Margaret Anglin, who is to star this season in "The Eternal Feminine," returned to New York from England last Tuesday.

Among the attractions booked to appear at the Salt Lake Theater in this city during the coming season, is Mr. Charles B. Hanford in a revival of "Don Caesar de Bazan."

May Irwin will open her season in the new George Hobeart farce, "Mrs. Black Is Back," at New London, Conn., on Sept. 29. The New York run of the piece will begin at the Bijou theater on Nov. 12.

"Yes," says Chauncey Olcott, "for local talent, it was a first rate entertainment," and we made several hundred dollars for the hospital fund, but there was one little hitch. The town undertaker was down for a tenor solo, and he insisted on singing "I'm Waiting for Thee."

Maude Adams' manager has evidently discovered that "The Little Minister" is too valuable a piece of property to be laid on the shelf. In spite of the fact that he has announced several new plays for production by her the coming season, she will resume her tour in "The Little Minister" in November, with Arthur Byron as leading man.

"Marta of the Lowlands," which Florence Roberts will present while on tour this coming season is entirely new to the west, and was one of last season's most pronounced successes at the Manhattan theater, New York. Mr. Hobart Bosworth, one of Miss Roberts' leading men, will be seen in his original role Manolich in this play.

The weather has favored the opening of the season, and New York's hotels are crowded with buyers, returning European tourists and out-of-town visitors. All these conditions are good for the theaters. If managers can provide what the public demands, the season ought to be prosperous from the start. It all depends on that little "it."—Mirror.

On a special train which left New York for Chicago last Saturday went the company, including 150 persons, which will support E. H. Sothern and Miss Julia Marlowe in a revival of Shakespearean plays, beginning Sept. 18 at the Illinois theater. "Romeo and Juliet" will be the opening play, while the repertoire will include "Hamlet" and "Much Ado About Nothing."

Frederick Ward once wrote to Edwin Booth asking his opinion as to the real or feigned madness of Hamlet. The great actor responded: "The subject is, as you know, one of endless controversy among the learned heads. I have been questioned so often about it that I usually find it safest to side with both parties in disputes over the matter. Yes, I confess I do not consider Hamlet mad—mad in craft. My opinion may be of little value, but it's the result of many weary walks and talks with him for hours in the wings."

David Belasco and Maurice Campbell have arranged for Henrietta Crossman

## Leander Richardson's Letter

Special Correspondence.

New York, Sept. 12.—There is more truth than poetry, but a good deal of both, in Arthur W. Pinero's new play "Letty," in which William Faversham has begun his yearly New York engagement at the Hudson theater. The heroine of this comedy drama is a typewriter in a London bucket shop. The proprietor of this establishment is what the English call a "boudier," otherwise a rich vulgarian of the noisy and offensive type. Among his customers is an aristocrat named Letty, more, an individual who means well but doesn't always do well, and who falls in love with Letty. His sentiment is reciprocated, and the girl, who is of fine quality, is expecting an offer of marriage from him when he tells her he already has a wife. He has not meant to deceive her, and in his penitence, advises her to marry her employer and settle down in life. This suggestion she rejects and Letty makes her the counter proposition to come under his protection in which case he will bestow a liberal settlement upon her. The poor girl, after a period of wretchedness which brings her to desperation, goes to Letty's apartment at midnight to give herself up to him, but at that moment he receives word that his dearly loved sister has eloped under scandalous circumstances, and he breaks out in a tirade of denunciation and wrath which exactly fits the case of the distracted Letty, who, realizing her position, begs him to let her go. He yields to her persuasions and liberates her with gentleness and newly awakened consideration. There is a lapse of time and Letty marries a small photographer, a nonentity and who contributes earnest and affecting portraits and the production may be set down a strong and vivid success. "Letty" will undoubtedly draw large and entirely satisfactory audiences to the Hudson theater during the whole of the Faversham engagement.

At the end of the first act of "The Royal Chef" at the Lyric theater, there is a concerted number in which David Lewis, the principal comedian of the company, plaintively sings "Take Me Back to Dear Old Chicago." Such imitations are not often answered as speedily and perversely as this one. "The Royal Chef" has been in town two weeks and will return immediately to the Illinois metropolis whence it came. New York has exhibited a firm persistence in staying away from the Lyric during the tenure of this piece, which is to be superseded by Herbert Kealey and Effie Shannon in a military drama adapted from the German under the title "Taps."

Eleanor Robson's hit in London in Zangwill's "Merely Mary Ann" appears to have been even greater than indicated in the first night dispatches. Private advices to Liebler & Co., from George C. Tyler, the active manager of the firm, are to the effect that the London libraries have practically bought up all the seats in the theater for the next three months, indicating that "Merely Mary Ann" will be in demand for at least a year. When Miss Robson went abroad for this engagement under arrangement with Charles Frohman, it was intended that she should return to this country in November for a tour of the larger cities, but efforts are now being made for a postponement of her reappearance in America in order that she may take full advantage of the opportunity to establish herself permanently in European regard.

The first offering of Daniel Frohman for the current season at the beautiful

the moment in New York, aside from the Faversham and Loftis representations already described, are John Drew in "The Duke of Killarankie" at the Empire theater; Edna May in "The Schoolgirl" at Daly's; the Rogers Brothers in "Facts" at the New Amsterdam, and "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch" at the Savoy. All these attractions are turning crowds away at every performance, and if it were not for the fact that two of them (Mr. Drew and the Rogers Brothers) will have to move in the course of order to let in other entertainments according to schedule, there need be no change at any of the theaters named until well along toward mid-winter.

Henrietta Crossman has but one more

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MRS. FISKE.

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The really great successes of

ceed rapidly to its conclusion. It is stated that there will be no delay in the opening, which has been set for New Year's Eve. The proprietors of this enormous undertaking have established an equestrian school in a large building uptown for the purpose of developing skilled female riders, of whom there is a scarcity. In one of the acts designed for the hippodrome entertainment, one hundred women riders of the best class are required, but less than half that number were to be found upon the most diligent search. The method employed to fill the want was entirely characteristic of the energy and "hang the expense" spirit of this management.

William H. Crane, in "Business is Business," one of the successes of the

Comedie Francaise in Paris, will be next week's attraction at the Criterion theater, following William Collier's long run in "The Dictator." "Business is Business" is being "tried out" during the current week in the East, and is said to have met all the requirements of the star, company and management.

A new edition of "The Isle of Spice" was presented at the Majestic Theater on Wednesday, and was received with every indication of emphatic favor. This piece is unmistakably one of the solid hits of the early season, and the management in restless desire to still further strengthen its hold upon the public, has not ceased making improvements wherever the opportunity offered.

LEANDER RICHARDSON.

## LONDON WANTS TO LAUGH.

Special Correspondence.

LONDON, Sept. 1.—You can usually tell what a London dramatic season is going to be like, by asking what kind of a play it was that made the biggest hit of the season before. Was it cape-and-sword? Then, by me faith, make way for a whole troop of devil-may-care swashbucklers. Did some manager strike it rich with an adaptation from the French? Then, tenaz, many more managers next season, with many more martial indelities. Last season the pre-eminent financial success was Robert Marshall's farce-comedy, "The Duke of Killarankie," which is running yet with vigor undiminished, and it is safe to wager, therefore, that theatergoers this season will be asked chiefly to laugh and enjoy themselves irresponsibly. Evenings at bridge, and day-time struggles for the wherewithal to pay up, are becoming too strenuous to permit of further strenuousness at places of amusement.

So it is that the season starts off with "The Chevalier"—with the accent on the "cheer"—by Henry Arthur Jones, produced by Arthur Boucher at the Garrick, and with "Beauty and the Barge" by W. W. Jacobs and Louis N. Parker produced at the New theater by Cyril Maude, while his own historic theatrical home, the Haymarket, is renewing its youth at the hands of the carpenter and decorator.

Mr. Jones usually manages to rub London critics the wrong way, and even when he produces a work as skilful and enjoyable as "The Chevalier" proves it to be, they fall foul of him because he calls it a comedy instead of a farce-comedy, or because there isn't much in the play except the uncouth hero. Well, the Chevalier, as embodied by Arthur Boucher, fills the stage so continuously and so joyously, that an audience ought to be able to get its money worth out of him without much else. He is a traveling showman of the conventional type, as flowery in speech as in the pattern of his waistcoat, shrewd in finance and in human nature. The title of "The Chevalier Montague" was bestowed on him by himself "for many distinguished services." It was after a boisterous night at an inn that the Chevalier was found asleep under a table by the Lady Ann Kellond, whose presence in the place

was innocent enough, but not easily explainable to a jealous husband. There had been an agitated interview with a persistent admirer before snoring under the table revealed the presence of the Chevalier. Had that worthy heard anything? As a matter of fact, he hadn't, but he pretended to the terrified Lady Ann that he knew all, and persuaded her to promise that she would influence her husband to promote an exhibition of the Montague circus. The husband proved refractory, however, but lo! he too had a little secret, and guiltily suspected the Chevalier of having discovered it. Again the Chevalier grasps the situation, and ultimately works it to his own profit. That is about all there is to the story, but it provides a role that gives full play to Boucher's high gifts of humor and sympathy with character.

More frankly farcical is W. W. Jacobs' first venture as a playwright, "Beauty and the Barge" and its success has been instant and unquestioned. Stalls and gallery alike rose to it from the start and laughed unconsciously to the end. It is clean and wholesome and hearty, and is certain to find its way to the United States, where it will be appreciated quite as much as it is here. Taken from its setting the story is almost indecipherable. A crusty old daughter rebels against marrying a man chosen by her father, and undertakes to run away from home. For that purpose she engages passage to London on Capt. James Barley's barge. The elder captain is a devil of a fellow, with the women "no arm," he says, "only haffability"—and believes that Beauty has elected to grace his barge because of his own grotesque fascinations. There is, of course, a handsome young naval lieutenant, son of a titled somebody—with whom Beauty is really in love, and he naturally bristles. Capt. Barley's mate to be ill and gets himself engaged in the mate's place, with delightful complications ensuing. Capt. Barley's passages at arms with the various waterside ladies to whom he is or has been devoted, the quaint character introduced, the rich humor of the dialogue, and the skill of Cyril Maude in the part of Capt. Barley, are what really make the play, however, not the plot. Contrary to the general impression this play is not a dramatization of one of Mr. Jacobs' stories.

CURTIS BROWN.

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