

ACTON DAVIES ON NEW YORK THEATERS.

Special Correspondence.

New York, Jan. 8.—It cannot honestly be said that the new year opened very roscally for most of the theatrical managers. As a matter of fact, most of them find themselves confronted with a situation which is little short of appalling. Since the season opened in September, play after play, which was confidentially banked upon to run for at least four or five months in New York, has fallen down with a thud which has been heard all over the metropolis. You may search the stage records for the last 10 years and you can find no season to compare with the present one in this respect. The result is that the managers have been forced to use at very short notice the plays which they were hoping to save for the spring season, or if luck was with them, to have postponed entirely until next year. For that is one of the situations which always confronts a theatrical manager, no matter how great his success of the moment may be, he has always to be thinking and planning for his theater at least a year

in America. The sudden mad desire on the part of several managers to produce Indian plays shows clearly which way the wind is blowing. The success of "The Girl of the Golden West," "The Squaw Man" and "Strongheart," is, of course, responsible for the sudden enthusiasm of the managers to produce plays in which the Indian has a chance to star. But in each of these successes, with the possible exception of "Strongheart," the Indians were only a novelty. It was the play itself which scored. Mr. Charles Frohman was the first to announce that he intended to produce a play in which there would be nothing but Indians. This play is now being written for him by young Mr. William DeMille. But on the principle of striking while the iron is hot, Manager W. A. Brady has jumped into the breach, and on Saturday night of this week in Milwaukee the company supporting Miss Grace George in that essentially English, "The Marriage of William Ashe," are all to be thrust into an all Indian play. The play scores, a company will be sent out in it at once to take the trail and blaze it as thoroughly as possible before Mr. Frohman gets a chance with his "Strongheart." How London actors like Mr. H. Reeves Smith, Mr. Ben Webster and Mr. Fred Sydney will appear as Indian braves is a question which all the English theatergoers would be glad to give a good deal to see that first performance.

While on the subject of the death of plays it would be well to make a note that it will be many a long season before Mr. Charles Frohman imports another French actor to superintend the rehearsals of his own play in this country. His recent experience with Mr. Pierre Berton, the author of "La Belle Marcellise," which was withdrawn and sent to the storehouse after a few weeks' run at the Knickerbocker theater, proved a costly experiment. That "La Belle Marcellise," in spite of the fact of its New York failure was a fine theatrical property, there can be no doubt. In Paris it was produced at the Odéon, and it was a great success. It scored a hit there for two reasons. In the first place, it had a capital story with a strong plot, and in the second, the real hero was that perpetual Paris idol, Napoleon. Here in America, Mr. Frohman knew that Napoleon in himself could neither make or break a play. The play so to speak, would have to stand on its own legs. Unfortunately for all concerned, however, Mr. Berton, in the flush of his Paris success, laid down certain explicit conditions in the contract for the American production, which he signed by Mr. Frohman and one of them was that he should be brought to America and superintend the entire production. Monsieur Berton came and saw, but did not conquer. Their failure was almost entirely due to their own pique-headedness. Berton is stone deaf, and claims not to be able to speak a word of English. His wife, however, is the linguist of the family, and during the rehearsals, though he could make neither head nor tail of the English dialogue, his faithful spouse kept a cat-like watch on the text and retusally refused to allow any change of syllable or change of the alteration of a solitary bit of stage business. In vain Mr. Frohman and the star, Miss Virginia Harned, explained to them that there was seven situations which, while they were all right for Paris, no doubt, would never be understood in America. The Bertons stood their ground firmly, and eventually the play was shown at the Knickerbocker theater, exactly as it was acted in Paris. If Berton had proved more sensible and had allowed Mr. Frohman to make the changes he desired, the play would have been a success, and the Bertons would have been able to get the thousands of dollars which the success would have brought them. Now, however, Monsieur Berton will have to solace himself with the fact that his play gave him a trip to America and some widening experiences, which he is to be hoped will teach him more common sense for the future. Undoubtedly the biggest personal success which has been scored in New York of late is the hit made by Mr. Fred Walton, the English pantomimist, in the "Babes and the Baron" at the Lyric, in which he plays the silent role of the toy soldier. Since that memorable night when Fred Stone scored his electrical success at the Knickerbocker, "The Wizard of Oz" there has been no actor in extravaganza who has so completely carried New York by storm. His performance absolutely saves the entire play. But at the same time, the performance which the Shuberts have been wise enough to give at \$1 for the best seats, it is all you can do to get standing room in the theater. Personally Mr. Walton is a typical looking Englishman in the early 30's. The little chap which I had with him the other night showed me that here is an artist who takes his work really seriously. "They tell me," he said, "that Americans don't care anything about pantomime. I assure you that the very fact of the silence imposed on me makes the strain of the part infinitely more exhausting. But at the same time, my father was in the business before me, and it is no particular credit to me if I know my own line of work, for since the time I was 3 years old I have done nothing else. This character of the toy soldier took me nearly a year to build up to its present state. I never worked harder on a part in my life, and one of the hardest things about it is that all my efforts are comedy ones. That surprises you, doesn't it? I suppose you think like most theatergoers, that a pantomimist can only attain funny effects. Why, do you know that the greatest hit I ever scored in England was a melodrama in which I played the part of a dumb boy. There was a trial for murder, of which, of course, the hero had been accused, and I, the only witness of the crime, had to take the stand and clear him in the eyes of the jury. The scene was, of course, entirely a matter of gesture and facial expression. And yet, big as my success in this part was, I assure you that it wasn't anything like the tax on one's vitality that a comedy part like a toy soldier is. If I can only convince the American public that pantomime is not entirely a lost art, I shall feel that my work here has been well done."

ACTON DAVIES.

One great thing in addition to its huge artistic success the Hippodrome has already accomplished for the public. This is a benefit which will appeal to the country at large quite as much as it does to New York. The scale of prodigious magnificence on which the Hippodrome productions are made—productions, mind you, which include not only unsurpassed spectacle and ballet, but a grand and a magnificent extravaganza—has practically killed the imported and somewhat show-worn London spectacular show and has rung the deathknell of at least 50 per cent of the second and third rate musical shows with which so many of the stages of the first class theaters throughout the country have literally been littered during the past few seasons. Managers who make a specialty of this sort of production now frankly admit that the Hippodrome has killed that sort of show as far as New York is concerned, and though it often happens that a play can make no end of money throughout the country, which New York has either condemned or never seen, it is very hard to persuade them that a play can make no end of money in New York. Hereafter I'm going in only for plays, plays, plays.

All the other managers feel exactly as this one does, but they are against the same tough proposition: where are they going to get these plays? Certainly not in France and not in England, for in both countries the play market is an infinitely worse state than it is here

DRAMATIC

Now William A. Brady is going to do it for him.

W. H. Crane has made an emphatic hit in San Francisco in his new comedy, "An American Lord." Hilda Strong, his leading woman, who plays the part of an Irish widow, has received great praise from the critics for her charming work.

George Broadhurst, author of "What Happened to Jones" and other plays, who has been spending the last four months in southern California, arrived in New York last Thursday and will collaborate with T. T. Dasey on a new comedy, which it is said will be written for William Collier.

Margaret Anglin soon will celebrate

the manuscript of her part as the superior-minded typist in George Ade's "Just Out of College." The author suggested that the character would best be portrayed if Miss Stoddard would enact the role as if she imagined she were a queen hung with ermine, priceless jewels and costly robes, who designed to click a few keys for her subjects in the office, among whom she includes her employer as well as his employees.

If negotiations now being made in New York by Vaghenas and Kemper go through, Blanche Walsh will make a supplementary tour of the Northwest Territory in the spring, playing all the important cities over the Northern Pacific, including Victoria,



BLANCHE KENDALL THOMAS.
The Salt Lake Actress Who Appears Here in Hanford's Company Week After Next.

her one hundredth performance as Zira in New York. Miss Anglin's strong emotional work in the third act of this play is as much the talk of the town today as it was the morning after the first performance weeks ago.

Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar," never performed in Rome, was produced last Tuesday night before the king and queen of Italy. The stage setting was an exact reproduction of ancient Rome.

Sarah Bernhardt made her debut at the Theatre Francaise as Iphigene on Aug. 11, 1862. One newspaper at the time describes her as "pretty and elegant" and her enunciation as "nearly perfect." She won her first distinction in "Rug Lear" and in a translation of "King Lear."

Dennman Thompson has probably played as many character parts as any American actor. He appeared as Uncle Tom in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," as far back as Feb. 6, 1857, at the Royal Lyceum, Toronto. The same evening he played Pat in "Irish Assurance" or "Yankee Modesty."

Forbes Robertson has been compelled to quit the stage, temporarily, by an obstinate attack of influenza, which has put an end to the run of "Mrs. Ryley's Comedy," "Mrs. Grundy," at the Scala theater in London. It may be revived again, however, a little later on, although a new piece is spoken of.

It is reported in New York that Lieber & Company have leased the Liberty theater for next season, and will keep Miss Robson there for the year, in a repertoire of plays, including her new dramas by Rostand and Zangwill. It has long been his intention to get a New York theater for Miss Robson for the entire season next year.

In a stage beauty contest conducted by a New York newspaper lately, Miss Louise de Rigny won first honors, Miss Edna May and Miss Dossie Wynn were a tie for second place, and Miss Lella Faust was fourth. The judges were William M. Chase, the portrait painter; Jackson Courant, Miss Almes Durant, Miss Margaret Hubbard Ayer and Julian Mitchell.

David Belasco is engaged at present in mapping out a new play for Mrs. Leslie Carter, which will probably be well along by early spring. Mr. Belasco, at present, is quite as secretive as to the nature of the new production. Whether it will be tragedy, comedy or society drama, or comprising something of all, no one knows at present except the dramatist himself.

A revolution of importance has broken out in Italy in favor of the final abolition of ladies' hats from theaters and concert halls. In Rome the movement has been so successful that a prohibition has been issued both in city and province against feminine headgear anywhere save in private boxes. The masculine agitators have won similar triumphs in Paris, and the vigorous crusade now proceeding in Florence and Naples promises to achieve a like success.

When Blanche Stoddard was given

Vancouver, Seattle and Portland. Her itinerary after her return trip will include San Francisco, Sacramento, Salt Lake City and Denver. Miss Walsh will appear in "The Woman in the Case," written for her by Clyde Fitch.

The annual benefit for the Actors' Home, which Mr. Daniel Frohman is now arranging, will have several new features. It will occur on Jan. 23, at the Broadway theater. Miss Blanche Bates and Mr. Frank Keenan will appear in a one-act play, and Julie Opp and William Faversham will be seen in a new playlet by Mrs. Craigie (John Oliver Hobbes). Other stars and novelties have been secured. "The Mouse Trap," by William Dean Howells will be a feature, with six prominent actresses in the cast.

Mr. James K. Hackett has resolved to present Herman K. Vile's play, "The House of Silence," in the Savoy theater on the 22nd of January. He is bound by contract to play it before February. During its run, "The Walls of Jericho" will be given at special matinees, until it can be put again into the evening bill. Mr. and Mrs. Hackett (Miss Manning) will both appear in the new play, and are likely to act together for some time. There is no particular reason why they should not do so. If their combined brilliancy were great as to endanger the popularity of the theater, it would be a different matter.

In order to establish a prior claim to the original idea of an Indian play in which all the characters are full-blooded Indians, Wm. A. Brady made an elaborate production at the Davidson theater, Milwaukee of a new play entitled "The Good for Naught." To produce Mr. Brady's rights, Grace George and her company, now playing "The Marriage of William Ashe," consented to give one performance of the drama, which was written by Donald MacLaren of Milwaukee, accepted by Mr. Brady seven months ago, and was staged for production at the beginning of next season by Wilton Lackaye, Robert Marshall or one of the other Brady stars.

These are some of Ethel Barrymore's beaux: Richard Harding Davis, the author, in his bachelor days, was very attentive; Frederick Jehan, society man, was reported to be engaged to her; Charles D. Wetmore, wealthy Harvard man, it was rumored, was an ardent suitor; the Duke of Manchester was numbered among her suitors; Prince Ranjitsingh, an Indian nobleman, fell in love with her and tried to give her priceless jewels, when she was in Sir Henry Irving's company her betrothal to her son Lawrence, an actor, was announced by cable; Gerald Du Maurier, Alfred Du Maurier's son, who is an actor, sought to marry her; Capt. Harry Graham, English soldier, litterateur and politician, is the latest, and apparently the most successful suitor.

The difference between what you did pay and what you should have paid for things in your recent shopping is probably enough to make it worth while for you to read the store-aids, hereafter.

THESE are signs of life once more about the Theater. After Sam Jones on the 15th and the amateur athletic show on the 17th, comes the well-known Shakespearean star, Chas. B. Hanford, who puts in two nights on the 24th and 25th, giving three performances. While Mr. Hanford is handicapped in the fact that he follows so closely on the heels of Louis James, who gave us two of his plays, still he has a following of his own, and as only popular prices will be charged he will no doubt play a successful engagement. His repertoire will be "The Merchant of Venice," "Ino-mani," with "The Old Guard" as a curtain raiser, and "Orbello" for the closing performance. Miss Marie Drofiah still remains as leading woman with Mr. Hanford, and will assume the roles of Portia, Parthena and Desdemona.

An interesting event in connection with the Hanford engagement is found in the fact that Miss Blanche Kendall Thomas, daughter of Mr. R. K. Thomas of Salt Lake, will be in the cast, filling second parts to Miss Drofiah.

The events following Mr. Hanford at the Theater are the opera "Woodland" on the 26th and 27th, "The Yankee Consul," 28, 29 and 31, to be followed by the Savage Opera company, Feb. 1, 2 and 3.

Admires of the writings of Mr. Acton Davies, the widely read critic of the New York Evening Sun, will be interested to learn that the first of a series of dramatic letters from his pen appears in this evening's issue of the "News."

The Grand will have two widely differing bills next week, the first being the beautiful southern war drama, entitled "Capt. Haines," produced with the original scenery and mechanical effects as they were first seen at the Herald Square, New York. The production is said to form a big military spectacle, showing as it does Farragut's bombardment of New Orleans, and a realistic battle between the United States and confederate troops. A detachment of the infantry from Fort Douglas has been engaged for this scene, so that nothing will be lacking for a strong presentation.

The last half of week, commencing Thursday, will be devoted to "Her Mad Marriage," a sensational melodrama, dealing with the life of a woman and her infatuation for an actor, whom she merely knew as he appeared before the footlights. The actor was only playing a part, while seemingly in love with her. After her marriage he appears to her in a different light. In the last act bare stage is seen. Her husband is directing a play, and it is there that she realizes the deception. The profanity, his anger and his treatment to her, completely disgusts her. He has committed murder, and is about to be arrested, but he takes poison and death ends his existence. His wife then returns home to her mother, a sadder but wiser being.

Next week's bill at the Orpheum includes several novelties as far as Salt Lake is concerned, notably the four juggling Normans, a troupe of youngsters who do some bewildering manipulations. This company made a great hit in Minneapolis last week. "Ho She, and He" is a playlet which will be presented by the Horsky-Bergere company. This is a little love story of a traveling American and his German rival, said to be very amusing. Count de Butz and his bicycle act, the three Mitchells, refined comedians; Jack Erwin, the monologist; a Spanish song and dance by Poole and Diamant, and the popular kinodrome in new pictures are the other features.

Martin Beck, general manager of the Orpheum circuit, will sail for Europe Feb. 20 to secure a number of new headliners, all of which will be seen in Salt Lake during the year.

The next attraction at the Lyric, opening this afternoon, will be the "Jolly Girls" in their burlesques, "An Eccentric Politician," and "A Tempest in a Tea-House."

A "Salt Lake School of Acting" has been founded with Mr. Luke Cosgrave, the actor, in charge. The institution is located in the Commercial club, and will open for business on Monday next. Both class and private lessons will be scheduled to meet the convenience of all students.

THEATRE GOSSIP

Arthur Boucher will soon produce his English version of "Le Duel" in the London Gaiety theater. The same piece will be played in this city also before long.

"The Heroic Stubbs," Mr. Henry Arthur Jones' new comedy, will be the opening bill at Terry's theater, in London, which is now under the management of James Welch.

Mrs. Bernhardt's management announces that during her supplementary season in New York the spring Kyrle Bollev will appear with her as Armand in "Camille."

They are getting better educated in New York all the time. Now they are speaking of Willard's triumph. "The Awakening," she will present the play in New York in April, according to present plans.

This is Wilton Lackaye's final season in "The Pit." His next role will be Valerian in his own play from "Les Miserables." He has been trying for years to get the play on his own way.

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HENRI DE VRIES
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Henri de Vries, the Dutch actor from the London theatres, is now playing seven distinct characters out of nine in "A Case of Arson," at the Madison Square Theatre. "My family for four generations have been actors," says the player. "My family name is Roosevelt, but I adopted professionally the name of my mother's family. I took up different characters through an accident. I was playing a 'good father' in a piece written by Herman Heyermans. The actor who played the 'bad father' was taken ill. I was producing the play, and for lack of another actor played both parts. The author was so pleased with the result that I continued giving both characters. Then the ambition came upon me to keep on until I could play twenty-five different characters in the same piece. I asked Mr. Heyermans to write me a play with seven characters for myself, and he wrote 'A Case of Arson.' I desired to produce it in London, and Mr. Wilson, the English translator, taught me the English pronunciation of the words, which I committed to memory without knowing the English language. He plays the parts of the owner of a cigar factory, his half-witted brother, an innkeeper, a grocer, a police sergeant, a house painter and a father-in-law."

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