

SHOWER OF NEW PLAYS WILL HIT TOWN THIS WEEK

No Appeals from Verdict of Public

Acting Is One Art Where the Opinion of Expert Has Little Weight in the End.

By HEYWOOD BROWN.

In every art save that of acting final judgment is passed by the expert. Painters, sculptors, novelists, poets and dramatists are accepted among the great at the word of the wise, but the actor must depend, first and last, upon the opinion of the amateur. Colley Cibber commented on this state of affairs in his "Apology" as follows:

"Though the majority of public auditors are but bad judges of theatrical action and are often deceived into their approbation of what has no solid pretense to it; yet, as there are no other appointed judges to appeal to, and as every single spectator has a right to be one of them, their sentence will be definitive, and the merit of an actor must in some degree be weigh'd by it."

Conditions now differ little from the days of Colley Cibber. Jane Cowl, William Hodge, Robert Edson, William Courtenay and any number of our most popular players were raised to the starchy firmament not through what the profession terms "good notices" but simply because the verdict of the public has been overwhelmingly in their favor.

An actor cannot be great without being popular. A later generation may decide that Robert W. Chambers is an insignificant literary figure and unearth some author now obscure as the important figure of the period. This may not be done with the actor. The judgment of one generation in regard to the ability of a player must be accepted by the next. Booth is a great actor to us because he pleased large audiences in his day. It is entirely possible that modern theatregoers would not accept the verdict made in Booth's time, but an actor once acquitted with a reputation may not be placed in jeopardy again.

Of course, acting is ephemeral from its nature, but, more than that, the art is limited from a lack of exact technical language in which it may be described. The technique of the drama has been expounded in book after book. At times when English has not sufficed to comprehend a shade of meaning, first aid has been summoned from abroad and a "denouement," for instance, is added to the vocabulary of criticism.

But acting has always been described in generalities glittering, perhaps, but not in the least illuminating. To be specific, Marie Tempest gave a fine performance in "Rosalind" on Monday night, but it was quite impossible for any one to tell a person who had not been at the theatre just why she was fine.

"Her acting is in a mood of persistent humor, which is delicate, subtle and true," said one paper. "Her gifts," said another, "are exceptional. She plays with such extraordinary, unflagging alacrity of the spirit." And yet again, "Miss Tempest was charming in the frankness and fascination of her humor." Still a fourth reviewer was content to remark, "Marie Tempest was excellent."

Diversified Drama.

"THE ROAD TO HAPPINESS."
A baby on a doorstep stirs the anger of a country squire. His daughter comes, he thinks it best and weds on her his country squire. "You are my daughter, girl, so marry! You go out, don't slam the door!" But William Hodge has got the hand to save her from an awkward fall. He takes a prompt and fearless stand. Uses the battered side of fate. It thrills a guy to hear him tell. The daughter squire to go to— He then defies the wicked one. And when asked to come to grief. He makes as though to pull a gun. He then produces a handkerchief. The while he sprinkles on the sea. Of life his calm philosophy. With dog and horse and hen and hay. And sons of honest rural folk. The plot of this East Lynch life is part and parcel of the plot. The incidents of the land almost—in fact, it is a plot of ground.

BRADY OFFERS NEW PLAY

"Husband and Wife," for 48th Street Theatre.

William A. Brady's Forty-eighth Street Theatre will be opened on Wednesday evening for the season with a new American play, called "Husband and Wife," by Charles Kenyon, the author of "Kindling." As its title indicates, the new drama tells the story of marriage complications. These arise out of the husband's early insistence that his young wife devote herself to no pursuit more serious than that of becoming a gay, thoughtless, extravagant society woman, and she enters into the spirit of this career so thoroughly that when the time comes to stop her the task is not alone that of a man, but of a man and a woman, and the audience nearly always has a soft spot for them. It doesn't matter how wicked a brigand is, there's sure to be a lot of people that like him.

SCENIC SURPRISES IN "STOLEN ORDERS"

Drury Lane Melodrama Opens at Manhattan to-morrow.

"Stolen Orders," which will have its American premier at the Manhattan Opera House to-morrow night, is described as a genuine Drury Lane melodrama, full of incident, striking situations and amazing scenic effects. To stage the play adequately at the Manhattan it has been found necessary to build an addition to the stage. Jewels of fabulous value, a cup of poison, death and a diplomatic crisis—say nothing of the stolen orders—are some of the things that go to furnish the thrills. Before the hero can recover the stolen orders, which contain secrets that would ruin his country, the trail of adventure leads to a fight in an aeroplane at a presumably dizzy height.

The cast is a large one, there being more than fifty speaking parts as well as many extra people. Among the more prominent members of the company are C. M. Hallard, Franklin Ardell, Clarence Handsyde, Connie Ediss and Flora Caceran, a child actress new to the stage.

NEW COHAN PLAY AT ASTOR

"Hit-the-Trail Holiday," Will Have Premiere To-morrow.

"Hit-the-Trail Holiday," the first of three plays to come from the pen of George M. Cohan this season, will have its first metropolitan performance at the Astor Theatre to-morrow night. The play is built along Billy Sunday lines, and in it Mr. Cohan's brother-in-law, Fred Niblo, will return to Broadway after three years spent in touring Australia.

Among others in the cast will be Katharine La Salle, Lorena Atwood, Laura Bennett, Grant Stewart, Edgar Halstead and Frederick Dempsey.



Danforth Is a Professional Father and Likes the Job

Veteran Actor Has Had Much Experience with Papier Mache Babies and Real Ones, Too.

By GEORGE S. KAUFMAN.

The heart of William Danforth had been won over by a papier mache baby, and the curtain at the Longacre Theatre had descended. As Paul Fabre, the rich but grouchy father in "The Girl Who Smiles," Danforth had continued until the next to the last minute in an attitude of intolerant objection to his daughter's marriage. And then, just when all the out-of-town people had given up hope (your New York theatregoer is too wise a bird), he relented and allowed the curtain to come down on a happy family reunion.

As intimated, it was his grandson, the papier mache baby, that did it. And, inasmuch as William Danforth has a couple of his own—besides you, no, not papier mache ones—that looked like the moment of moments to pick a good papa for his daughter, he decided to ask a few questions.

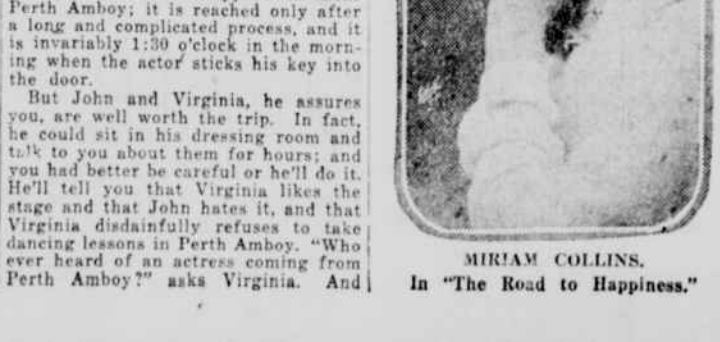
Particularly and especially, information was wanted in regard to this musical comedy father business. Half the musical shows that have come into New York in the last twenty years have had William Danforth cast as the father of the prima donna. That is, Danforth, the man who has been busy, certainly, when the history of the stage is written and the book closed, it will be found that William Danforth was the world's champion all-around catch-as-catch-can musical comedy father.

"Yes, indeed, it's funny how they run." With a quick motion, that actor swept away the make-up of the millionaire and stood revealed as a domestic grouch and stood revealed as a domestic grouch and stood revealed as a domestic grouch.

"We I played brigands with Frank Daniels for ten years, sandwiching in a Cuban planter once in a while to break the monotony. Then suddenly things switched and I started to play kings. I played a couple of kings with Daniels, and then one with Hopper in "Happyland." I guess I played kings of one sort or another pretty steadily for a couple of seasons, and then this father business came along.

So here I am. I'm a musical comedy father, and it looks as though I'm going to have to stay one. This is the second season in a row that I've been the father of Natalie Alt—last year it was "Adeline," before that, "Oh, The Girl From Montmartre," and "Little Miss Fix-It," and "The three Romeros," and "The Debutante," and any number of 'em. They were all fathers.

"But the worst of it was that nearly all of them were millionaires. Oh, I know that you're going to say that it must feel nice to play millionaire. Well, it does, but think of the money you have to spend for clothes! Don't forget that the actor has to buy his own clothes, that a millionaire has to dress pretty well.



"Town Topics" Brings New Idea to Century Theatre

Ned Wayburn Will Have Big Show to Open House as a Continental Music Hall.

After many weeks of preparation, Ned Wayburn's "Town Topics" will have its first presentation at the Century Opera House Saturday night. The week will be devoted to dress rehearsals, as the production is too large to be taken out of town for the usual that theatre into the Continental music hall. It will be the only theatre of its kind in America.

"Town Topics" is described as an American entertainment in a Continental atmosphere. On the opening night the tap-rooms, tea-rooms, private dining-rooms and smoking promenades will be open, and later in the season also.

"JUST BOYS" AT COMEDY

Big Scene of New Play Will Be Juvenile Court Room.

William Elliott, who produced "Kitty Mackay" and "Experience," will present at the Comedy Theatre to-morrow night a new play dealing with certain phases of New York life, entitled "Just Boys," by Katherine Browning Miller, and Allena Kanka. The company selected by Mr. Elliott includes Ernest Truax, Milton Sills, formerly with "The Law of the Land," Mattie Ferguson, Mary Elizabeth Forbes and Miss Gladys Wynne.

The play is a comedy in four acts and includes a scene in the juvenile court room, which, it is believed, will arouse much discussion.

PARIS SUCCESS FOR HERE

"Two Is Company" To Be Sung at Lyric.

After a run of more than 200 nights in Paris the Savoy Producing Company will offer a Parisian musical novelty called "Two Is Company" at the Lyric Theatre next Thursday evening, September 15.

FEARS CAMERA, NOT CRITICS

Rozsika Dolly Faces "One Big Awful Eye" in Terror.

Rozsika Dolly, who has faced the camera as a dancer, musical comedy star and vaudeville performer, says the camera is worse.

"When I first heard its awful creak," she went on, "and knew it was looking at me with its one big, awful eye I felt just like a poor crippled canary that had wandered into a cat show. But now I'm beginning to love motion pictures by the pound. All except the make-up and the getting-up. I can't get used to the dull finish make-up, and oh, this going to work when the whistle blows! My maid peels me off the bed like a plaster.

"But at first I was so frightened that I gazed straight into the camera. Look! I took on a stony, distant stare. 'No, no! Don't look as if you saw somebody you owed money to. I felt exactly like an incubator chick in a farmyard. Nothing could be much more terrified than that kind of a chicken, could it?"

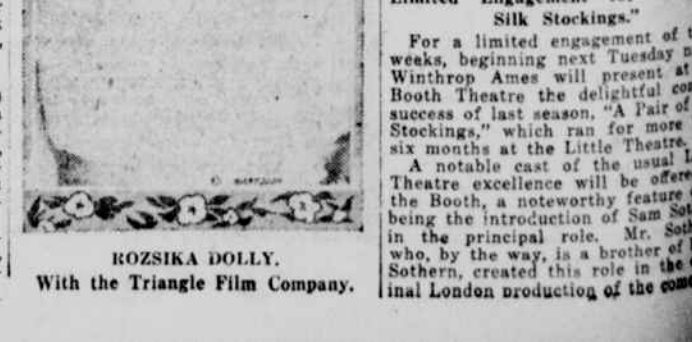
"By and by I quieted down. Working on a low gear is awfully hard, though, isn't it? It's so natural for me to work fast. And doing without talking is one of the hardest things. They did have an awful time making me stop talking. No, I don't find it a bit hard making up the few necessary lines. Gabbling is the best little thing I do."

This is a summary of the impression Miss Dolly's first film appearance has made on her. She is working in California with the Triangle forces, with what results will be shown later, when the Knickerbocker Theatre presents all star combinations on Broadway.

SUCCESS COME BACK TO TOWN

Popular Plays To Be Seen at the Neighborhood Theatres.

At the Standard Theatre, Broadway and Ninetieth Street, the attraction for the week beginning to-morrow night will be Selwyn & Co's substantial success, "Twin Beds," a farcical comedy by Salisbury Field and Margaret Mayo, which played for fifty-two consecutive weeks at the Fulton and Harris theatres last season.



WHERE AND WHY PLAYS CONTINUE

Marie Tempest at Her Best in Lyceum's Double Bill.

"BOOMERANG" SETS PACE AT BELASCO

Kinkead's "Common Clay" Established as Success at the Republic Theatre.

"The Duke of Killarankie," at the Lyceum Theatre, is a light comedy by Robert Marshall which gives Marie Tempest a splendid opportunity to show her remarkable skill. "Rosalind," a one-act play by Barrie, which follows the longer piece, is whimsical in the extreme, but again Miss Tempest scores with a clever performance.

"The Boomerang," at the Belasco, is a light comedy by Victor Mapes and Winchell Smith. Excellently conceived and acted with rare skill, this pleasant piece should prove universal in its appeal. The cast includes Martha Redman, Wallace Edginger and Arthur Byron.

"Common Clay," which has established itself as a success at the Republic Theatre, is a six-act play of a certain power, in spite of some crudities. The piece is frank in the extreme. A notable cast includes Jane Cowl, John Mason, Russ Whytal and Dudley Hawley.

"The Blue Paradise," at the Casino Theatre, is an exceedingly tuneful musical comedy. Cecil Lean and Clio Mayfield contribute to the comedy by excellent comedy work, and there are a number of good singing voices in the company.

"Young America," at the Gaiety Theatre, is a light comedy by Fred Ballard. Decidedly one of the most wholesome plays in town, the piece is dramatically well worth what has been acted with much skill. A number of delightful stage children and a remarkable trained dog add much to the performance. It is a good play for boys and men, girls and women.

"The Road to Happiness," at the Shubert Theatre, is a more or less conventional rural drama, which gives full scope to the pleasant art of William Hodge. It is not altogether a play for the sophisticated.

"Rolling Stones," at the Harris, is a somewhat tangled but lively farce comedy by Edgar Selwyn. Charles Ruggles is amusing as the hero, and the safe blowing scene should give everybody but the most jaded theatregoer a thrill.

"Somebody," at the Fulton, is a farce. Frank Lalar is humorous in a good comedy role and Emma Jansen plays with much skill and success of those angular parts which she always does so well.

"Chin-Chin," at the Globe, is a musical comedy. It is only necessary to say that the piece is in its second year on Broadway and that Montgomery and Stone head the cast.

"Under Fire," at the Hudson, is an exciting war melodrama by Roi Cooper Megrue. Among the thrills of the play is the blowing up of a British trench by the Germans. The play has a good cast, however, to bring victory to the Allies in the end. William Courtenay is the hero and Violet Heming and Frank Craven are other popular members of a good cast.

"Cousin Lucy," at the Cohan Theatre, is a musical comedy by Julian Eltinge, whose specialty is female impersonation. The musical numbers are tuneful. Anybody who likes the art of Julian Eltinge will enjoy "Cousin Lucy."

"No 33 Washington Square," at the Park Theatre, is a farce built around May Irwin. Needless to say, it is as broad as life. The play is a dramatic farce by Lew Secord and Max Merrick. It offers many amusing situations for Miss Irwin, and Leonard Hollister, as a crook, also scores heavily.

"The Girl Who Smiles," at the Longacre, is a musical comedy with musical numbers. The piece is also provided with persons to sing this music. Natalie Alt has one of the best voices in the musical comedy stage and George Bert Williams are among those who support William Danforth contributes an excellent comedy bit.

"The House of Glass," at the Candell, is a melodrama, which emotions are turned on full. Decidedly crude in construction, the play affords opportunities for some excellent acting by Frank M. Thomas and by Mary Ryan. Max Mercin is the author.

"The Passing Show of 1915" begins its fifteenth week at the Winter Garden to-morrow. The show is of the type of other successes at the Winter Garden, and includes a big cast of well known performers. Among those in the company are George Munroe, Eugene and William Howard, Harry Fisher and Daphne Pollard.

"Ziegfeld Follies" begins its last eight performances at the New Amsterdam Theatre to-morrow. Ina Clavin, Mae Murray, Ed Wynn, Will West and Bert Williams are among those who contribute to an exceedingly amusing performance.

The new Ziegfeld Midnight Follies "Just Girls," at the New Amsterdam Theatre, is designed for after the late entertainment and furnishes just that. Will Rogers, the cowboy with his lasso tricks, is one of the best of the performers, and, of course, the chorus is large and beautiful.

REVIVAL AT THE BOOTH

Limited Engagement for "Pair of Silk Stockings."