

THE AUDIENCE A PARAFIL

Society Men Martyrs to "No Evening Dress Before 6 P. M."—Zangwill Writes a New Play, "Merely Mary Ann"—Clyde Fitch's Latest Is "Glad of It."

NEW YORK, Jan. 1.—(Special correspondence.)—After the matter of the production of "Parafil," which occupied all our space last week, comes the consideration of the audience, which, although more frivolous, is the more important in a financial sense and does not lack in interest to the public. Before dealing with the audience that saw "Parafil," it may be well to say a few things about audiences in New York, which are not to be judged by those of any other city in the United States.

I have said many times that at the opera as many go to be seen as to see. Indeed, the opera is the only place where society attends, as it were, in a body. Nor do these people behave nor do they give attention either to the performance or to other people's feelings. There is a constant exchange of courtesies and visits, many of them rustling into their boxes after a late dinner and bustling out again to attend something else. The opera is supported by these people, while strangers in the city divide their time and attention between the stage and the boxes that hold the Morgans and the Vanderbilts and the rest of the glittering shore.

Whether in opera, in concert, or at the play the locations and their occupants are worthy of study. Indeed, they furnish material for serious contemplation. To put it succinctly the further up one goes the greater the degree of intelligence in the spectators, and the more contemplative and serious minded they appear to be. In many cases it is because the expense is less, while others really prefer the atmosphere of thought instead of show, and here at the top of the house one finds the student of human nature and literature and the real lover of music.

It is only just to say that there are a few attractions that draw nothing but intellect and refinement to all parts of the house. Among these may be mentioned the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Oratorio Society, the Musical Arts Society, and in the dramatic circle Sir Henry Irving, the Ibsen plays, Duse, and here and there local attractions, but not often. By this I mean that here and there a problem play becomes so very problematic that no one who claims to have advanced thoughts can afford to go to see it, especially when the play has the good fortune to be attacked from the pulpit and to be denounced by moralists as indecent; and as the ideas of people vary so widely as to right and wrong, and as to decency or indecency, each is compelled to see for himself—principally herself.

The "heretic" audience needs no explanation to those who know what Broadway looks like on matinee days. The matinee as an institution is probably the best paying to the theatrical manager. Few of the plays run less than two matinees a week, and there are a few that run one every day. Whether a woman regards the matinee as an amusement or as an education makes little difference as far as she is actually concerned. But as far as her husband is concerned it makes a vast difference, because it makes of a guileless bit of femininity a woman able to put herself in the other woman's position and to see things from her point of view that she did not understand before.

The feminine element is also largely dominating at musical attractions, because, as a general rule, if a man is not a musician himself, it is hardly to be expected that he would give it the attention that women do and can. Even the opera will find women the larger majority in its audiences.

A TALK WITH "MERELY MARY ANN"

Eleanor Robson, One of the Youngest Stars on the American Stage, as a Slave

YES, I think that rug will suit better than the other, and I wish you would place that chair over here." It was on the stage at the Garden Theatre and the speaker was "Merely Mary Ann"—that is, it was Miss Eleanor Robson, the young star who had such a success in the title role of Mr. Zangwill's comedy just the evening before. For this was Tuesday morning and Miss Robson had come to the theatre to consult with the stage manager about certain small changes that she wanted to have made in the state settings and in other details of the performance.

Miss Robson didn't look very much like the pathetic little slave of the play now. It was snowing hard outside, and she was muffled all up in furs, a warmth which was an elegant gown of modish cut, such as one might see in any woman in her coupe down Fifth avenue on her way to the shopping district.

Her interview with the stage manager, Miss Robson turned and began to chat affably about the Zangwill play and other matters pertaining to her stage career.

"Yes," she said, "it is true that Mr. Zangwill made a play out of 'Merely Mary Ann' as a suggestion. For that reason, of course, I am all the more pleased that it has been so well received. Of course I am fond of all the parts I have played. I liked Juliet particularly. You know I appeared in that role last Spring. But I think my liking for Mary Ann was just a little bit more than mere fondness. You see, she was really my own discovery, and I reckon my interest in her is something very much like that of a playwright has in some of the creations of his own imagination."

While the actress, in her up-to-date costume, standing there in the middle of the bare, dimly lighted stage, had none of the outward appearance of "Merely Mary Ann," still there was much in the expression of her face, her eyes, the turn of her lips, the wave of her hair—yes, and in the tone of her voice, that did suggest the charming little heroine of the play.

Miss Robson has all the attractiveness of girlhood off the stage that makes her work on it so appealing. There is an earnestness, too, in her manner of expression and her manner of speech that gives an added charm to her conversation and makes one feel that here, indeed, is an actress who takes her work seriously, who has ambitions of the right sort—ambitions that she might well be encouraged to fulfill.

"That was several years ago—that is, I mean, two or three years ago," said she, "that I first spoke to Mr. Zangwill about 'Merely Mary Ann.' I was in London and had only met him once or twice when he made me a present of the story bound in the little pamphlet form that you could buy in the book stalls at that time for a shilling. I took it home and read it, and was so affected by its pathos that I read it over several times. It brought the tears to my eyes, and the lump into my throat every time, just as it did when I first went over it, and I fell completely in love with the poor, friendless, overworked, little slave."

"Then the idea came to me that this would make a good play, and that I

things occurred. Some faintest, whether from hunger or emotion could not be determined. After the first act when the curtain fell about five minutes before 11, there was an intermission of one hour and 15 minutes. A slight almost incoherent at the Metropolitan Opera-House was then witnessed, when from the depths of music rolls, of deceptive looking books, came sandwiches and other edibles pertaining to picnic parties usually. Hundreds of others partook of dinner set in the foyer cafe. The bill of fare could not be compared with Sherry's or even Martin's, and the principal item of interest was the expense. There was a sense of the relation of the fitness of things between the "Parafil" and the scene of its interior decorations, the difference being that "Parafil" gave no cause for complaint, while the lunch gave no cause for anything else. One of the most noticeable details was the gown and the dress in general of the audience. It is much more supposable that the cause for more somberness in attire was to be found in the fact that the curtain went up at 5 o'clock, than that the audience felt called upon to dress in keeping with the spirit of the play. On the other hand it gave some of the ladies the opportunity to show how stunningly they could gown with semi-modifications.

When men face the problem of evening dress or afternoon dress it really seems very much more serious than among women. One might be justified in this belief from the fact that in the intermission many of the sticklers flew on the wings of an automobile to their homes and changed into evening dress. Some men were brave enough and sure enough of their social positions to appear in afternoon dress and to remain thus clad through the evening. Among these were Robert Goetz, Captain Lydie, Marshall Kernochan, and Rawlins Cotten. Some of the most particular who could not reach their homes to make the change necessary, sat in their overcoats buttoned, notwithstanding the extreme warmth of the house; this being a slave in a noble cause, and from all over the house which in the evening was a great thanks for preserving the time-honored tradition of "no evening dress before 6 P. M."

The boxes were not all occupied by the regular subscribers, many of them had passed over to strangers for this performance. But it must not be forgotten that it was Christmas eve, and many of the society people spent the holiday out of the city.

The gallery audience was interesting to a marked degree, as this time not only did it contain music-lovers and musicians, but there were large numbers of people who had no conception of the first principles of that great art, who went there because of the remarkable advertising the play had received in New York City. There were also priests and ministers in plenty. These people, who sat seven floors up, arrived at the side entrance of the Metropolitan Opera-House about 3:30 in the afternoon, and waited patiently for the doors to open. Among the most conspicuous persons in the audience were those awful educational "institutions" who felt it was their duty to explain to the children the meaning of the play on the stage and what it all meant. Whoever has not suffered from this infliction has no idea to what degree man can suffer. There were a few other annoyances. For instance, some of the children with diabolical dark lanterns about two inches large. This intent Wagnerian use to follow the libretto or the score. These flashes of light which are not an evasion of the will or the wisp, danced around like fire flies and shared honors with Parafil or Kundry by attracting one's attention. And there were many Italians as keenly interested as the Germans or the Americans, who at every climax of nobility insisted upon reminding everyone present that "Italy" was the great home of music.

But it would take a volume to tell of all the incidents that did their share toward making the first production of "Merely Mary Ann" a memorable one. Whenever there is a new play announced it is safe to guess at the writer, and if it is not Augustus Thomas it is Clyde Fitch; if it is not Clyde Fitch it is likely to be both. But this week Zangwill shares honors with the American writers, and in the play of "Merely Mary Ann" he makes his great personality felt. Zangwill will have written a dainty play, full of tenderness and beauty. It was played for the first time in America at the Garden Theatre on Monday night, and it affords a charming rule for Eleanor Robson, who plays the part of Mary Ann exquisitely, as her personal appearance and the quality of her voice lend themselves well to give an added charm to the part. Zangwill by Zangwill—one calculated to arouse every sympathy and admiration. Edwin Arden played the part of Lancelot, the leading male character. A brief outline of the plot may give some idea of its originality if nothing else. Mary Ann is a young Yorkshire girl who has come to South London as maid of all work in a lodging-house. Her extreme sweetness of nature and innate innocence make her accept her work as a natural event, and the abuse that accompanies it in the same spirit. Her certain affection is lavished upon her pet canary until Lancelot comes into her life. He is a musician who has great aspirations and no thought of merely Mary Ann, but of courtesies to show how stunningly she has her sympathy and kindness. The incongruity of the thing makes him believe that his interest is nothing but sympathy, but her love for him grows without her understanding or without his knowledge. Then comes his decision to leave. She takes it as a matter of course that he is going with him as his servant. He cannot make her understand that it is not possible, and upon her insistence he is tempted to take advantage of the situation. He tries to make her understand that he has no intention of marrying her, and it is very apparent that she does not understand the nature of the sacrifice that he is about and willing to make. Then he remarks: "You poor little white dove! I don't think you ever know how you came into the world. You think you just grew!"

"No, sir," she answers with simplicity and reverence, "God made me." This is the close of the second act, and the most exquisite moment in the play. At this point Mary inherits wealth, but her nature does not undergo any change, and she is still determined to live with Lancelot, who tries to make her understand that a great amount of money she possesses. But she wants to give it all up for him. After a struggle he leaves her. She goes to London, and he becomes famous, and of course she meets unexpectedly in a conventional drawing-room. Lancelot realizes that he has always loved her and was too proud to marry her, but now he pleads for that love which he has yearned during the years for which they have been parted. Mary does not immediately accept his proposal, but steals away to get an old fur cap and some heavy gloves which he had bought her. When equipped with these she falls into his arms.

In the characterization of Lancelot there are many points which we may question for whether Zangwill meant to be satirical or whether he drifted into the commonplace. It was not difficult to love Mary Ann after she became wealthy, and Zangwill could have worked it out in a hundred other lines as few writers could have done. However, this was the play as it was written.

A new play by Clyde Fitch bearing the optimistic title of "Glad of It," went on at the Savoy on Monday night. Miss Milly James was in the leading role. Constance, who is the very remarkable character Mr. Fitch himself or somebody else, did not see long ago the opportunities for comedy galore in the department store and its environs, to say nothing of the contents in the knowledge of which Mr. Fitch senses the feminine mind at the bargain counter, both in front and behind it. Perhaps the plot is of less importance than the way in which the details are worked out, and the play never side the onlooker wishes to view it if he goes to see the play he will be "Glad of It." EMILIE FRANCES BAUER.

ling's "Soldiers Three," and there I found just the thing I wanted. Now I can talk quite as naturally in the dialect as I can in ordinary English. That the actress has very carefully studied the character and is presenting it and that she is still studying it, is evident in the fact that she loses no opportunity of discussing its various phases if she thinks any one is suggesting or assistance may be forthcoming.

"There is a part in the story," said she, continuing the conversation, "that I wish might have been in the play. But it would have been difficult to put in. I press, I am afraid. You will find it very near the beginning of the story. It is only a description of the battles poor under Mary Ann has with her conscience as she carries trays of food up the stairs to the boarders. That's all, but the description is wonderful—oh, so wonderful! They are the fiercest sort of fights, and they are always fought out on the stairs way battleground. But, of course, she never touches any of the food, not even a crumb, especially if the tray chances to be for Lancelot. She is so careful not to touch a particle even to feed to Dickie, her beloved canary."

"Mary Ann never puzzles me now," she went on. "I know her so well, Marian, however, as she is called, that I must confess, does not take me in. I thoroughly into her confidence. Just before the last curtain, you will remember, the wealthy Marian Lancelot that it will be impossible for her to marry Lancelot, using just the same expression that he used to her six years before, when she was only a poor slave, and in her childhood she had been told that she was his wife. With the words 'It is impossible' on her lips, she goes from the room, seemingly forever, so far as Lancelot is concerned. Her lover sinks down before the piano and begins to play 'Kiss Me Good-Night, Dear Love.' Suddenly there is a knock at the door, and Marian, wearing again the servant's cap and the gloves the composer had given her, comes back, rough, red hands long ago, comes back into the room. With a cry of surprise Lancelot springs up from the piano."

"Yes," she answers, in the well-remembered tones of the slave, "the little birds in my heart started singing again, and I come back."

And then she confesses that, although it was impossible for Marian to marry Lancelot, it is not for "Merely Mary Ann." "Now what brought her back? When she left the room did she intend to return in the way she did, or did the music compel her to change her mind? I really cannot decide for myself. Which do those who see the play think is the better solution I wonder?"

Miss Robson is one of the youngest stars on the American stage, and she has been before the footlights only a brief half-dozen years.

"I was never stage-struck," said she, speaking of how she first came to go upon the stage. "I really became an actress so that I could be near my mother. It happened this way: When my mother brought me with her from England you know that I am an English girl—she placed me at school in a convent down on Staten Island, while she went away on West India business. I stayed in the convent till 1891, when I was graduated. In all that time

had been separated from my mother, and naturally I was very anxious to see her again, just as she was to see me. But she was playing in the Frawley Stock Company in San Francisco, and there seemed to be no chance for her to come to New York. I had never thought of becoming an actress, and indeed, my great ambition then was to be an artist in the learned to paint on china, and I wanted to go Paris to complete my studies. I wanted to see my mother still more, though, and when she wrote and said that if I would come on to San Francisco that Mr. Frawley would give me a chance to see what I could do on the stage, I did not hesitate a minute about accepting."

Miss Robson made her debut as Margery Knox in "Men and Women," and the San Francisco papers were full of praise for her the next morning. She

stayed with the Frawley Company for a year or more, during which time she made a voyage with them to Honolulu. After returning to America from Honolulu they made an extensive tour through the West and South. A few more years in various Western stock companies and then the youthful actress came Eastward to Chicago, to appear as Bonita in "Arizona." It was in this same role that she made her debut in New York a few years ago. The next season she joined the Teller & Co. force, and then she has appeared as Constance in Browning's "In a Balcony" and as Flossie in "Unlabeled Bread," and Mlle. de la Vire in "A Gentleman of France," in the third act, and she rubs her hands together in excitement and spoiling the feathers."

Women theater ushers in Philadelphia wear a neat uniform of dark material with skirt of walking length, white collar and cuffs and are on the whole more readily distinguishable from the patrons than are the men ushers. Except on matinee days they are free to engage in some other additional occupation during the day, and some of them avail themselves of this opportunity to add to their income.

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MAN'S ALLIANCE WITH THE DOG

Of All Animals the Dog Alone Seems to Be Man's Friend.

Maurice Maeterlinck, in Century.

Man loves the dog, but how much more ought he to love it if he considered, in the inflexible harmony of the laws of nature, the sole exception which is that order to draw closer to us, the partition, even where it is impossible, that separate the species! We are alone, absolutely alone, on this chance planet, and amid all the forms of life that surround us, not one, excepting the dog, has made an alliance with us. A few creatures fear us, most are unaware of us, and not one loves us. In the world of plants we have dumb and motionless slaves, but they serve us in spite of themselves. They simply endure our law and our yoke. They are impotent prisoners, incapable of escaping, but silently rebellious; and, as soon as we lose sight of them, they hasten to betray us and return to the former wild and miserable liberty. The rose and the corn, had they would fly at our approach, like the birds.

Among the animals we number a few servants who have submitted only through indifference, cowardice, or stupidity, the uncertain and craven horse, who responds only to pain and is attached to nothing; the passive and dejected ass, who stays with us only because he knows not what to do when we are gone; the dog, who, nevertheless, retains the idea that lurks behind his ears; the cow and the ox, happy so long as they are eating and do not have to work, and who are not, as a thought of their own; the frightened sheep, who knows no other master than terror; the hen, who is faithful to the poultry-yard because she finds more maize and wheat there than in the neighboring forest. I do not speak of the cat to whom we are nothing more than a too large and uneatable prey, the ferocious cat, whose sidelong contempt tolerates us only as an encumbering parasites in our own homes. She, at least, curses us in her mysterious heart; but all the others live beside us as they might live beside a rock or a tree. They do not love us, do not know us, scarcely notice us. They are unaware of our life, our death, our departure, our return, our sadness, our joy, our smile. They do not even hear the sound of our voice as soon as it is so long as they are not near us; and when they look at us it is with the distrustful bewilderment of the horse, in whose eyes still hovers the intuition of the cat, or of the gasping of the sheep, the first time that the full stupor of the ruminants, who look upon us as a momentary and useless accident of the pasture.

HE MADE CORRID PAY WELL.

Agostini Knew He Was Temporarily Indispensable and Got Record Price.

New York Press.

Little Giuseppe Agostini, who saved a performance at the Metropolitan Opera-house by singing in place of Signor Caruso the role of Rodolfo in "La Bohème," had to postpone his sailing for Europe in consequence, and thereby lost his ticket. But he made his brief sojourn in this city on his way to Genoa from San Francisco prove very profitable. He got for that single performance at the Metropolitan a sum of money which he has not received in his life before for an appearance, and it is

Salaries of Preachers.

A considerable stir was caused by the proposal to increase the salary of Bishop Potter to \$15,000 a year at just about the time he married a widow worth 20 million dollars. Clergymen draw higher pay in England than here. For instance, the Archbishop of Canterbury, head of the Anglican Church, receives \$5,000 annually. Bishops get from \$10,000 to \$20,000. The emoluments of deans vary between \$4,000 and \$15,000. Rectors, vicars and curates are not so ill as Fanch would have us believe. The first named have privileges, titles and other good things, and are as-

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MR. ANTON HEGNER, Cellist

SIGNOR ROMUALDO SAPIO, Conductor

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THE DEACON'S DAUGHTER

probable that he never received so much for singing in this city anywhere else. Signor Agostini arrived from the West in the morning, and by P. M. was interviewed by one of the many Italian agents of the city on the behalf of Herr Dippel. Signor Agostini did not want to sing, he said. He was too fatigued, too hurried, too much afraid that he might lose his boat, too much afraid of a variety of different things that he mentioned to the other emissaries who had begun to arrive from the opera-house by that time.

"I will sing," he at last announced, "if you will pay me the same cash as that Signor Caruso receives. I am saying the performance, for not half the people will give back their seats. I am worth that much or I am worth nothing."

In vain did the management hold over the tenor the possibility that Herr Dippel might learn the role in time to sing that night. Signor Agostini was obstinate and got his check for \$1000.

The next afternoon he sang again, but the fee was less than that. Signor Agostini was a proud man, however. Had he not reached the zenith of every Italian tenor's ambitions and received \$5000 francs for a representation?

It would be possible to equip an Italian opera company in this city in 24 hours, so great is the supply of talent always available. There are two Italian restaurants in the city, in which are to be found the best of the singers who are waiting here for employment.

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