A CHAT WITH HILDA THOMAS

She Is Singing Coon Songs Now, But Way Down in Her Heart She Cherishes an Ambition to Appear as "Caprice."

To meet Hilda Thomas, the girl who made the song "The Cows Are in the Clover" famous, I meandered up to the Empire Theater, where the "Show Girl" was standing them up last week. I found my way to the wings and through the courtesy of Manager Porter I was introduced to Misa Thomas. She was in her dressing-room preparing for her rendition of "Come Down, Mr. Man in the Moon, but this did not serve to make the greeting any the less hearty.

"I am glad to meet you," said Miss "I am glad to meet you," said Miss. Thomas giving me a strenuous and con scientious handshake. Motioning toward one corner of the room where divers bespangied gowns were hung in an orderly way, she continued: "If you can sit down in all that lingerie, you're a brave man." Then with a twinkle of the eye and a laugh: "I guess that trunk will hold you." Miss Thomas hair was being combed by her maid. Seriously, it was lovely hair of a beautiful titian tinge and not in the least scanty. She was dressed in

hair of a beautiful titian tinge and not in the least scanty. She was dressed in an attractive creation, decollette and moderately so from below. I caught a peep of well-contuored shoulders and unbiemlahed, snowy white akin.

Miss Thomas is, I would venture, on the under side of 40, and her features afford generous traces of a beauty over which men have raved. In manner she is joily and she talks with a dash of slang.

"Ah gas I'se titivatin' maself too much," said she, grasping a powder purt.

A look of vague idlocy must have surmounted my countenance because she volunteered immediately: That's a new one on you evidently. You see, J am a Southerner and I like to use the darky phrases occasionally. That means to put on your best bib and tucker and is a great favorite among

wenches."

The strain of "Sing Me a Song of the Sunny South" wafted in from the

house very appropriately.

"The cat me-ouwed," said a voice from the wings.

"Mercy." exclaimed Miss Thomas. "Mercy." exclaimed Miss Thomas.
"that's my cue. Leave your hat on the
trunk so you will be sure and come
bask. See you later," and in another
ten seconds she was in the ray of a
"spot" singing "Come Down, Mr. Man in
the Moon."

After four appores Miss Thomas was

After four encores, Miss Thomas was again with me and this time we scated ourselves in the wings. "How long have you been on the stage." I ventured.

With true feminine instinct, Miss Thomas replied evasively. "Let me see? Ever since I was in my

"Have you always been in comedy?"

"Have you always been in comedy?"

'No. One year I took out a piece of my own "The Fisherman's Daughter.' I played Maggie."

'Do you prefer comedy?"

"Can't say that I do," was her reply, "Ill tell you a story. Years ago, when I was oh, such a little girl. I was crazy to play a part of some sort. I met Madame Janaushek and she said to me one day. "Eef you ere noing to be re-

Madame Janaushek and she said to me one day: "Eef you ere going to be ze drunken woman, be drunk." You know what I mean. She taiked with an accent. Well, I have always remembered that. This part, 'Mag Webbington,' is nothing, but just the same I remember what Madame Janaushek told me, and when I go on, I feel just like I am 'chuck full of dope.' The whole play is 'dopey,' It's nothing but temfoolery. There is no plot to the piece and we claim none for it. Just because I go out there and sing It's nothing but tomfoolery. There is no plot to five piece and we claim none for "Yours?"

It's nothing but tomfoolery. There is no plot to five piece and we claim none for "Yours?"

And once more Miss Thomas left me to kick Johnny Jones' hat sky-high with her 'No. is!' (I am perfectly serious.) the bought tickets and came to me say mercilessly and say that 'Hilda Thomas' ing. 'Miss Thomas, I am going to see beheld.

BLAINE PHILLIPS

he is visiting America.

his oratorio, "The Atonement," was given any mu

at the St. Bartholemew's Church, and his "Hiawatha" has been sung in part and in

entirety in many places in this country,

but no sort of demonstration has been

made even to the mention by the press of the city of his comings or his goings. When one appreciates the amount of

hero worship that is accorded the nest

insignificant individual that plays, or

rather, sings a role at the Metropolitan

Opera-House, it is more disagreeably noticeable that a man of the remarkable

intelligence, ability and position that

Intelligence, ability and position that Coleridge Taylor represents should be treated with that caim nonchalance which indicates not only a sense of superiority, but the determination to allow no sort of recessition to be offered him by the representative musical center of America.

The prejudices of this country are so strong and so stupid that it is small wonder we are recarded as a people of

der we are regarded as a people of

tty intelligence, unable to grasp the

big things that offer themselves, follow-ing like a band of sheep a leader who represents even less in the way of in-telligence than those who follow. It is

too bad that Mr. Taylor was ever in-flueed to come to America. There was little to be gained and much to be lost, as it will scarcely be understood in Lon-

fon, where he is a welcome figure even in court direles, that in this country color and religion are such insurmounta-ble obstacles that no intellect, not even the genius of a Shakespeare could over-

As I have said before of Mr. Taylor.

is a man of exceptional learning, as a plantat whose early musical studies

were pursued on the violin. This instru-

ment he followed until he became more

interested in composition at which he has worked from the age of ten. His story is one of romance if ever there was one, but this story has not been given at

ength to the public who are enlightened nothing except the facts that he born in London 29 years ago, that his er was a native of Sierra Leone and

white Englishwoman. Mr. Taylor is ery much of an Englishman, and it is ally necessary to hear the beautiful Eng-sh that he speaks to realize this. His

as might well be expected, absolutely unique. He is rather shorter than what might be termed the average, and he is slight of build, with a very long face framed in bushy brown hair which he

brushes back from his very serious face. His lips are full, even thick, but in his

es shines the spark which tells of the tellect and the higher aspirations of the man. His complexion is that of the

nality is extremely interesting and

physician, while his mother was



doesn't sing as of yore,' and all that sort | of stuff. But they don't know Hilda."
"The brutes," thought I, and waking

"And your ambition, Miss Thomas?"
"Well, I would like to play something
serious, Really serious and not emotionai, 'Caprice,' Minnie Maddern's old role.

at. "Caprice." Minnie Maddern's old role. That's great."
"Caprice." I exclaimed incredulously.
"Are you guying me? You don't think I can do it? Well. I am like Nat Goodwin. He said: 'I can play Shakespeare if the people will let me, and that is the way I feel about it. If they will only let me."
"Do you like problem plays, 'Iris,' for instance?"

"Wasn't that flerce? No. 1 do not like

"You ask a very difficult question— What I think of rag-time? What can any musician think of it? And still I am

fond of it: but I do not mean the barrel-organ coon-song, or the ragtime which is associated with banal words and bad

songe have done a great amount of harm, especially in England, where there are few negroes, and the only idea that many people have formed of this race is through the coon songe which come over

there from your country. These do not represent the life of the colored man

but are simply musical caricatures. They are not even real negro songs, and have nothing in common with the negro melo-

dies, many of which are remarkably

"I am deeply interested in the genu-

ine negro folk-songs which are di-vided into two classes—those of the African negro, and those of the South-ern negro of this country. There is an entire history to be found in the dif-ferent characteristics of these songs and those of the Southern personand

and those of the Southern negro are

plaintive and pathetic, due no doubt

to the influence of slavery, while the music of the African is martial and bold. Have you ever noticed that the folk-songs of the East Indies or of the

Chinese never appeal to the Euro-peans, but the African songs seem to hit them every time.

The negro is undoubtedly of a mu-

sical race, and people are beginning to see that he has a serious side. When his songs are properly given they are as pretty and as musical as the songs of any other race or nation. One thing

mere. I must say, and it is that, bad as the coon songs of this country may be, they are much superior to those of England, where they have no concep-

tion at all of the negro and are influenced by the coon songs from America which they hear. It will be my attempt to place the negro song before the public in its true light, and even

now I am engaged in writing five bal-lads dealing with Longfellow's poem on slavery, which will be sung at the Norwich festival in England, in about

two months. I have also just complet-

ed, for an American publishing house, a volume of 27 numbers for the plano based upon real negro meledies, eight

of which are of Southern origin and

"This is not a Wagner season!" ex-

claims the unwary, or rather he is un-

wary when he exclaims, 'The Wagner

Wagner bubble burst, indeed! Have

the operagoers not yet discovered the

secret of what constitutes a Wagner-ian enthusiasm or a tendency to the old Italian operas? Well, if I must en-lighten them—here it is. It depends entirely upon the "stars" of the opera company. Caruso holds the boards— and he does not sing German or and

company. Caruso holds the boards— and he does not sing German or even

His the rest African."

bubble has burst."

There is no doubt that these

"Sapho," but don't tell me.' Well, she went and naturally could not conceive the real intent of the piece. She came to me afterward and said:

"'Ge, wasn't Sapho great? I would just like to get drunk once and see what it feels like. Now, when plays of that character only serve to put idiotic ideas into young girls' heads and do not help to preserve our morals, which are had enough, they should be stopped. Personally I do not think Zaza. The Joy of Living' or any of them are entitled to any more consideration than "Sapho." "We certainly have enough of their musical comedy productions, too, but I believe the legitimate drama will be rejuvenated. The best of us have to laugh.

juvenated. The best of us have to laugh, but the serious drama must return. There is nothing which is so essential to education as the play and people who for the moment are carried away by extravagan may will soon receipt their sense. gas will soon regain their senses.

A. H. BALLARD Lessee and Mgr.

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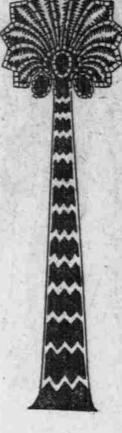
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Romance Which Blossomed in Making Bad-Land Entries Will Fade in Court

THE path of true love never did serve, ripened through the intricacles run smooth, and upon this can be based the story of Nellie Brown and somed in the warmth, and cheer of Eurepe and is now about to fade here. based the story of Neille Brown and her husband. Elmer Brown. Both are former residents of Eugene and have been citizens of Portiand, and both are soon to be in the toils of a Federal indictment for conspiracy to defraud the Government out of lands in the now famous township, it south, of range 7 east, if the story running through the public mind is to be believed.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown have a romance which commenced amid the snowclad and virgin forest of the Cascade Re-

not without someone to claim it, though perhaps no one could legally wear it. It was so likewise with the name of Alexander Brown.

This idea on the part of the Government secret service men was strengthened still further by fresh evidence, and a search was begun for Miss Nellie Gilbert, formerly of Eugens and evidence and a search was begun for Miss Nellie Gilbert could not be found. ernment secret service men was strengthened still further by fresh evidence, and a search was begun for Miss Nellie Gilbert, formerly of Eu-gene. Miss Gilbert could not be found, gene. Miss Gilbert could not be found, but Mrs. Nellie Brown was, and she

and all the evidence tended to show that they were. There was a theory that the names had been forged, and still another that someone had repre-sented the persons for a consideration and then had disappeared. The later developments brought both Mr. and Mrs. Brown to light, however, and the testimony against them, it is said, will result in their indictment on Tuesday next, when the grand jury is reconvened for business

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owing Electricity vs. Steam, The Swing, First Hunting Day, Amor-

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s name means pretty work. He certainly does it, for he is a talkative tricketer. **Prager Sisters**

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Continuous bill today, from 2 to 10:30 P. M. Weekday shows, 2:30 to 4:30 P. M., 7:30 to 10:30 P. M. Admission to any seat, 10 cents.

mulatto and his bearing that of a cul-tured, elegant gentleman, Mr. Taylor is accompanied by his wife, who is the daughter of a well-known barrister of French roles, so unless this matines idol is the center of attraction The opinion of Mr. Taylor on the sub-The opinion of Mr. Taylor on the subject of ragiline is one that must be of
passing interest to those who are determined to regard this form of music
as belonging to the negro, instead of
realizing that it is created purely and
simply from the brain of such composers
who have found that there is money in
claptrap, especially when built upon a
rhyihm so attractive as that of the syncopated measure, which is not by any

Lames, whose Wagner of attraction the
houses are not what they are when he
is present. To this and not to anything else is to be ascribed the
apparent falling off on Wagner nights,
and the great stars include
Sembrich, who never sings Wagnerian
Vocation

Week shows begin 2:15 and 7:15.

Week shows begin 2:15 and 7:15.

them, and I can't understand why such miserable degenerate pieces can play to full houses, but they won't last. They can't. A little girl once purchased seats for "Sapho."

'Ge, wasn't Sapho great? I would just

COON SONGS HAVE DOUBLE ORIGIN Southern Negro Ditties Plaintive and Pathetic; While Purely African Music Is Martial and Bold New YORK, Jan. 2.—(Special Correspondence.)—It is beginning to be obvious that New York has no intention to offer any sort of the "con-song" and of "rag-time" of the greatest composers of England.

Taylor said:

"You sak a very difficult question—"You sak a very difficult question—""You sak a very difficult question—"""You sak a very difficult question—"""

Taylor and the continue of the continue

music.

And "Parsifal"—What shall we say of "Parsifal," which will have its last presentation tonight? I believe I have made clear to the readers of The Oregonian why "Parsifal" did not con-

tion of Jean De Reszke, Schumanntion of Jean De Reszke, Schumann-Heink, Ternina and Bispham—all of whom were Wagnerian singers of wonderful equipments, but beyond this they had the power to attract. Thus it is again proven that the people are de-votees to the stars and not to the music.

gonian why "Parsifal" did not con-tinue to draw hundreds more than could be acommodated in the house at every performance. It has become a matter of ancient history and those who are undergoing the loss, which must be doubtless sustained at the present time, are the speculators who at every performance since the two opening nights have offered \$10 seeks opening nights have offered \$10 s opening nights have offered \$10 seats for the "bargain" sale price of \$150. But let it not be believed that Mr. Conried is losing money, because the Conried is losing money, because the great expense was incurred during the first season and now everything is in readiness. In addition to this it must be remembered that there is still so great an advance on the prices asked, that half a house instead of being better than none is as good as a whole one under ordinary circumstances.

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