"Girls" is the Title of Fitch's New Play

Prolific Dramatist Introduces a Bedroom Scene in His Latest Comedy—"The Servant in the House," Another New Play, Attacks Hypocrisy in the Church.

NEW YORK, March 21.—(Special Correspondence.)—"Girls," the long-promised farce of Clyde Fitch, opened at Daly's on Monday night and proved, as might have been anticipated from its name, a very light trifle, with a lot of fun and laughter sprinkled throughout.

With acknowledgments to the German writer, Hugo Holtz, Mr. Fitch has written in his well-known vein and he has taken three girls, vowed to single blessedness, through amazing experiences which decide them that having some one to shoulder their burdens is better than struggling with them alone.

The plot is all that Mr. Fitch has borrowed and that is far from being rarely original. The three girls are certainly charming and one need only look upon them to know that no reasonable man or men would pass them by, whether or not they were willing. These three girls in their bachelor quarters are Pamela Gordon, a secretary and stenographer; Violet Lansdown, a stenographer and illustrator, and Kate West, a newspaper writer, who afterwards becomes an actress. They appear very serious each night when they sing as evening prayer "No Wedding Bells for Me," and they swear by their hatpins never to believe in men.

Mr. Fitch waits until one is tucked away in a folding bed, another on a couch and another on an extension chair before he introduces mere man. This happens to be the junior partner in the law firm of Sprague & Holt, who in some way or other has gotten into the apartment escaping from a dinner with a gay young woman whose husband is unexpectedly making his appearance. Mr. Holt makes his entrance by means of an ironing-board across the airshaft, which possibility is but too well known to the class of people known as apartment dwellers.

In the second act two of the young ladies are at work in the office of Sprague & Holt and when Holt comes in there is considerable surprise on the parts of the young women who recognize him as the "tight rope walker" of the ironing-board episode. Taken all together, there is a good deal of fun and laughter, without being able to explain exactly why. The cast is as follows:

Pamela Gordon ..... Laura Nelson Hall
Violet Lansdowne ..... Ruth Maycliffe
Kate West ..... Amy Richard
Lucille Purcelle ..... Zelda Sears
Mrs. Dennett ..... Fanchon Campbell
Edgar W. Holt (Sprague & Holt) .....
..... Charles Cherry
George H. Sprague ..... Herbert Standing
Frank Loot ..... Leslie Kenyon
Augustus Dennett ..... John S. Marble
The Janitor ..... Frederick Bumelton
The Postman ..... Harry MacFayden
Messenger Boy ..... Edward Morrissey

* * *

More serious and of far greater importance is the play which also opened on Monday night at the Savoy entitled "The Servant in the House." It is a play in five acts by Charles Rann Kennedy, the husband of Edith Wynne Matthison. The play is an attack upon hypocrisy in the church and the action is laid in a room in the home of the Rev. William Smythe, a vicar of the Episcopalian Church, who is in dire need of funds with which to restore the parish church. His wife has supreme faith in him and identified with his life is also Mary, his niece, the daughter of a brother who has been missing for many years and who was a blot upon the family.

Manson, a new butler, in East Indian costume, exercises a strong influence upon all those around him and when the worldly and influential bishop arrives, he being nearly blind and deaf, mistakes the servant for the master, and plans with the servant for the rebuilding of the church. The church is in bad condition and needs draining for which a man is hired. The drain man appears begrimed and filthy after having been down through the sewers. He finds that in order to do the work thoroughly he must get down under the church and the job is a dangerous one. The child comes upon the drain man, who is no less than her father and the brother of the minister. The latter takes off his coat, to go along with the man who will risk his life to clean out the pipes and as they go hand in hand, the child who is now certain of the workman's identity falls into his arms. At this moment the Oriental servant enters and the bishop arrives upon the scene.

Symbolism runs through the entire play and many times it is strongly dramatic. The company is one of the very best and includes Miss Matthison, who as of old has a strong hold upon the New York public.

The cast is as follows:

James Posonby Makesbift, D.D. .....
..... Arthur Lewis
The Rev. William Smythe ..... Charles Dalton
Aunthe ..... Miss Edith Wynne Matthison
Mary ..... Miss Mabel Moore
Mr. Robert Smith ..... Tyrone Powers
Rogers ..... Galwey Herbert
Manson ..... Walter Hampden

* * *

The Manhattan Opera Company closed its season on Saturday night in the proverbial blaze of glory. The last week brought forth the strength of the company and many of the artists who will be with the company next season. Mr. Hammerstein will sail with his stars March 31, and then he will begin a tour of discoveries. He will search every country not only for artists but for works and it is his ambition to make next season even more successful than the one out of which he has just emerged with glory notwithstanding the terrible financial strain through which the country has passed.

The last achievement was to bring forward a new work the last night but one of the season for the purpose of paying a compliment to Mme. Campanini, the wife of the director. Mme. Campanini, who is a sister of Mme. Tetrazzini, astonished all her hearers by her remarkably beautiful and brilliant dramatic soprano voice no less than by her ability as actress. She received a genuine ovation and the evening was one of the most brilliant in the season's history. Nearly all of the Manhattan company sail for Europe tomorrow, some directly for Paris and others for Italy. Among those leaving for Paris are Mary Garden, Mr. and Mme. Campanini, Mme. Tetrazzini, Mlle Gerville-Reache, Mlle Zeppilli, Oscar Hammerstein and others. Mme. Bressler-Gianoli sails on the Ruydam, leaving the same day. Mme. de Cisneros will remain a couple of weeks longer, as she will fill some concert engagements. Before leaving Campanini talked at length concerning the season just past as also concerning the season ahead. His own expressions are herewith given, by means of translation, however, as he does not speak the English language. Among those sure to return next year are Mary Garden, Tetrazzini, Renaud, Zenatello, Sammarco, Gerville-Reache and the courts will settle whether Dalmores will sing at the Manhattan or at the Metropolitan.

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Mr. Campanini is not nearly so glad to get away from America, as he will be glad to rest, but that will not come yet for a couple of months, because he will conduct in London before he returns to one of the three homes which Mr. and Mme. Campanini enjoy in Italy.

According to his own statement, he loves America more each season, and that he will continue to receive the appreciation from everyone as he has in the past is the aim for which he will strive.

"The people in New York can be good friends," said Mr. Campanini, at his apartments in the Navarre, "and it is more than a pleasure to prepare something for them, because when they are pleased they are so very enthusiastic and appreciative. I felt like Mr. Hammerstein before the production of "Louise," and that was uneasy, I assure you. I did not know what the outcome would be, and it did not mean alone this season, but it would have cut off all the beautiful operas which we are planning and had already planned for next season.

"Oh, yes, next season will be very different at the Manhattan. Indeed, this year was more of an experiment than last year at the opera-house, and it was filled with many more dangers. It is an inspiration, however, to work with Mr. Hammerstein, because he is so brave that he inspires one with bravery even when things look gloomy.

"I have, however, enjoyed the spirit of trying experiments, and while I do not mean that we were breaking new ground exactly, but it was certainly many times more risky than if we had been laboring in an unworked operatic field.

"Our success will mean more than just the continuance of operation at the Manhattan. It will mean, without doubt, that next year we will be able to give the modern Italian works, such as those of Puccini, Mascagni and others, and as to the French repertory, it will open up splendidly."

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Campanini was asked his attitude toward French opera now, after an acquaintance with modern works which were heretofore unknown to him. He replied:

"I think that facts speak for themselves. Against 63 Italian works, we gave 57 French operas, and I am sure that each time I was more impressed with their beauty. I hope that I shall never be considered narrow-minded, and here I want to say that I love Wagner as well as it is possible to love those great masterpieces, and the reason that they were not given at the Manhattan was because we could not give them with a German cast and as they should have been given, and if they cannot be produced properly, I certainly do not want to be identified with their production at all. That would be neither in keeping with my own ideals nor with the aims of the Manhattan."

"What will you give next year, Mr. Campanini?" was the next question put to the great conductor, who does not look very tired after having put on 23 new operas in 21 weeks.

"Well, it is not easy to lay plans so far ahead, but without doubt we will give Meyerbeer's 'Etoile du Nord' for Mme. Tetrazzini; also 'Lakme' and 'The Pearl Fishers.' In the French works we will give Massenet's 'Herodiade,' Renaud's great success; also the same composer's 'Griselidis' and 'Jongleur de Notre Dame,' but so far as I know there will be nothing new by Charpentier, or Debussy, as it is a strange fact that everyone in all countries seems dead, as far as new operas are concerned. There is nothing even in prospect, unless it might be Puccini's 'Girl From the Golden West.' One of the greatest pleasures to which I look forward is the production of Verdi's 'Falstaff,' which is one of the greatest things in modern opera. Also 'Othello' will no doubt be one of the offerings of next season, and I will look thoroughly through the works which may have come forward in Italy since I have been away, but as I read very carefully, it does not seem as though there were much outside of the works which I already know."

"Do you find growth of appreciation among the patrons of the Manhattan?"

"Assuredly. This is a great city for opera, and I believe it has hardly begun to appreciate. I think it safe to predict that next season will be far ahead of the present, and when one works with such anticipations, it lends additional pleasure and interest to the labors. The greatest appreciation I receive from Mr. Hammerstein, and together we can only hope for a season which will be throughout what the last eight or ten weeks have been."

"Do you really think that opera will be given on Sunday nights next season?"

"Well," said Mr. Campanini, without committing himself, "you know Mr. Hammerstein as well as I do. Do you think he will carry out what he plans to do?"

And answering the question, he said, "It will rest with the legal conditions, and Mr. Hammerstein studied those very closely before he made his announcement."

Mr. Campanini will have the heaviest work of his season this week preparing Andre Chenier, and rehearsing the "Faust" scene with Mary Garden as Marguerite for the last night, which performance Mr. Campanini will conduct throughout.

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France does not rejoice alone in the welfare of its journalists, poets, musicians and dramatists. They are almost as close to the American people as to their own, brought about no doubt by the influence of the stage. It was therefore very happy news to America when it was made known that Jean Richepin, known here through several dramas, has been chosen to fill one of three vacant places among the Forty Immortals. These vacancies were occasioned by the deaths of Marcelin Berthelot, Andre Theuriet and Sully Prudhomme.

At the recent meeting in Paris 23 members were present, including the aged poet, Francois Coppe. Among those missing, however, was Edmond Rostand, who could not be induced to leave his quiet Pyranean resort in Cambo. Richepin was walking with his two sons and several friends when the news was brought that he had been received into the charmed circle. The great dramatist gave a cry of joy, threw his arms about the neck of the messenger and burst into tears. Other members of his party also burst into tears, among them Raoul Ponchon, the noted poet, a particular friend of Richepin.

He made a short visit to this country last season before the production of one of his plays which was translated into English.

Richepin was born in Algeria in 1849. He was the son of an army surgeon and was educated in Paris. He also made a good record for himself in the war of 1870. Then he roamed for a year or so through Southern Europe, earning a precarious living as sailor, porter, longshoreman, and professor of languages. He tried his hand at literature without any great success, and then joined an obscure theatrical company for a year or so. His Bohemian spirit then called him to the Latin Quarter, where a little literary group, including Raul Ponchon and Paul Bourget, was already beginning to attract attention. It was at this period of his life that he wrote his "Chanson des Gueux." It was also about this time that he became a regular member of the staff of the Revue des Deux Mondes. Poems, stories and plays followed in quick succession. In 1883, when his fame was already well established, he wrote "Nana-Sahib," which the author himself played with Madame Sarah Bernhardt at the Theatre de la Porte St. Martin. Of the neo-romantic type, Richepin gave the Odeon one of its greatest successes, "Le Chemineau." ("The Tramp"). This piece, set to music, has also recently been produced at the Opera Comique.

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Charles Frohman has arranged to have William Gillette appear next season in Henri Bornstein's new play called "Samson." Mr. Gillette will himself make the English adaption from the French. Mr. Frohman has already received offers to have Mr. Gillette appear in that play in London, which he will probably do after the American season closes.

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Speaking of Bernstein plays, it is decided that Daniel Frohman will take the entire company now playing "The Thief" at the Lyceum to Portland, Or., this season. The company will include Miss Illington and Kyrle Bellew.

* * *

J. Scott Hartley, the artist, has just completed a bust of Otis Skinner in the character of Colonel Bridau in "The Honor of the Family." The bust is of heroic size and is considered the finest piece of modelling done by Mr. Hartley, who is famous for his busts of Lawrence Barrett, John McCullough, Edwin Booth and other noted artists.

Mr. Skinner continues to delight the audiences at the Hudson with his wonderful delineation of the dashing, daring, devil-may-care soldier, taken from the Balzac novel and true in detail to the spirit of the great novelist.

* * *

Much interest is manifested in the "New Theater," of which Henrich Conried will be the director, and it is not unlikely that Grabville Barker, one of the best-known managers of London, will be the stage manager. Mr. Barker is on his way to America, after having severed his connection as one of the managers of the Savoy Theater in London. It is believed that light opera will be given at the New Theater several nights in the week, but what has been known in this country as light opera, however, but such works as are given at the Opera Comique in Paris, such as Louise, Pelleas et Melisands and works of that character.

Signs in English Tabooed.

PARIS, April 4.—(Special.)—The correspondent of the Paris Matin at Strasburg telegraphs that the German police apparently regard English and French in the light of seditious languages. A Strasburg merchant has been subjected to a long interrogatory for having an English inscription on his shop front, and the removal of the writing has been insisted on.

COMPLAIN OF POOR PAY

Undertakers' Men in Paris May Declare a Strike.

PARIS, April 4.—(Special.)—Paris is threatened with a novel sort of strike. The men known as "croque morts" are murmuring because, they say, they are poorly paid and have too much to do, as they only get five francs for 12 hours' service and an additional franc when they are sent out on an extra errand. About a fortnight ago some of them flatly refused to lay corpses in coffins after the usual day's work was over, and the fact that outsiders were called in to assist has not tended to allay the incipient agitation. One of them has just explained that the administration of the pompes funebres often requisition the men when their work is over at 6 P. M., between that hour and midnight, giving them a mere trifle in return, adding that this alleged abuse has greatly increased owing to the number of suicides.

It really looks as if the "croque morts" will go on strike unless they can obtain satisfaction. They have explanatory placards all ready to post up, and they are resolute.

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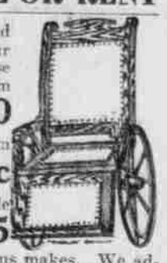

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