

PLAYER-FOLK ARE FLOCKING TO EUROPE OR GRUMBLING ON RIALTO

New York Theatrical Season Is on Wane—Revivals Are Now Vogue—Henry W. Savage Is Taking "Everywoman" and "Excuse Me" to London Town.



ERNEST TRAUZ AND RALPH HERE IN "DOCTOR DE LUKE" AT THE KNICKERBOCKER

BY LLOYD F. LONGERAN.
NEW YORK, May 20.—(Special.)—The theatrical season is coming to an end very rapidly and the first real hot spell we have will be the signal for the shut-down of fully half of the playhouses. In fact, the members of most companies are turning on a week's notice basis, which means that the manager can close without the usual fortnight's grace.

The town is filling up with the actors and actresses who have been on the road all season. The fortunate ones are going to Europe, every steamer outward-bound having a strong representation, while the unfortunate ones are joining the unhappy throngs along the Rialto.

One of the managers who sailed the other day was Henry W. Savage. He is going abroad to look for novelties and also to place two of his successes on the foreign stage. These plays are "Excuse Me" and "Everywoman," which are still running to crowded houses in this city.

A few years ago an American manager would never think of placing "Excuse Me" on in England, the reason being that the public there would fall to grasp the decided American brand of humor that marks this interesting farce. But the success of "Baby Mine," which is drawing crowded houses in London, convinced Mr. Savage that the English public have finally reached a frame of mind where they can enjoy a really good play, even if it is humorous. And "Excuse Me" and "Baby Mine" are certainly two of the best that have been given here in years.

Revivals in Vogue.

For the wintup of the local season, managers seem disposed to either stand by their old successes or else revive plays that have made good in the past. This is why Francis Wilson has brought "The Bachelor's Baby" back and is doing a good business at the Criterion.

Robert Mantell revived "Louis XI" at Daly's and kept his attentive audience always absorbed. His performance of the doddering, palsied monarch, strong only in his power for evil, has improved since he first revealed it to New York audiences. It is a splendid piece of sublimated melodrama, absorbing, consistent and rich in eloquent play and detail.

The management of the performance was adequate and the drama, in the main, very well acted. It is pleasant to note that Mr. Mantell has done well in his Shakespearean revivals, for with the exception of *Sothern and Marlowe*, he is the only actor who has essayed the Bard of Avon's works in New York this year. Next season we are threatened with Mrs. Carter in "Hamlet," but that is another story.

Charles Klein, author of the season's most successful serious drama, "The Gambler," has returned from a month's trip to Europe. During his tour, Mr. Klein devoted much time to the study of relative conditions in the writing and production of plays in Europe and America. He visited many theaters in Italy, Austria, Germany, France and London, and with the advanced knowledge gained is certain that in writing his new play for production next October by the Authors' Producing Company, of which he is general stage director, he will surely succeed in surpassing his previous efforts. Should he do this, it will give him a record of three consecutive big royalty-earners within a year, the others being "Maggie Pepper" and "The Gambler."

John Cort Active.

By the way, John Cort, president of the Authors' Producing Company, is arranging routes for four companies that will be sent out in "The Gambler's" next

season by that organization. Every important city in the United States and Canada will see Charles Klein's gripping play which ran through the entire season at Maxine Elliott's theater.

The energetic George W. Lederer, who is now one of our most prosperous managers, thanks to "Madame Sherry" and a few other successes, will have a new star on his staff next season, unless present plans fall to go through. The woman in question is Fay Templeton, who after her marriage a few years ago, "retired" forever. But actresses differ from prize fighters; they can "come back" and very often they do.

An active correspondence, covering a period of several months, has been in progress between the manager and the star. Mr. Lederer has a play for Miss Templeton, in which she reposes implicit faith, while the actress on her part has such confidence in his judgment and ability that she has declared that the only condition upon which she will return to the stage is that she shall be under the personal direction of Lederer.

Fay Templeton had one of the largest theatrical followings of any woman on the stage in recent years, and if she does return to the footlights, is certain to receive a hearty welcome. And Lederer has demonstrated that he knows what the public wants, in the very season that the veteran Charles Frohman proved himself the way to judges.

The long and highly prosperous season of Grace George in "Sauce for the Goose" having come to an end, the actress and her husband, William A. Brady, are now resting at West Baden, Ind. Next week they will sail for Europe, partly for a vacation and partly to look after Mr. Brady's important interests there. They will be accompanied by James Shipman, who is to work with Mr. Brady upon the manuscript of a new play for next season.

Jury Plan to Be Tried.

Lieber & Co., which firm will furnish the attractions at the New Theater next season, and besides have a long list of other companies do not fear of censors. In fact they will welcome them. Lieber now have a plan which they think is certain to prevent criticism. They volunteer to submit all plays they produce to a jury of 12 competent judges to be selected by leading educational associations of New York City.

This jury will be asked to attend the dress rehearsals of all Lieber & Company's attractions, and no play will be sent out without their endorsement. The managers declare, and apparently with reason, that a jury of this kind is better qualified to pass upon the character of plays than is one of municipal appointments.

The Winter Garden is one of the big attractions that is sure to run all Summer, and is certain to attract the attention of out-of-town visitors. The system by which novelties are added to the performance every week has proven a big success, as it prevents the entertainment from growing old to the regular patrons, who have formed the habit of visiting the playhouse at least once a week. Foremost among the hundreds of players at this gigantic amusement are Kitty Gordon, Stella Mayhew, Mlle. Dacie, Dorothy Jardon, Harry Fischer, Arthur Cunningham, Al Johnson, Tompest and Sunshine, and many others.

Richard Harding Davis, who came to town especially to see the revival of his play, "The Doctor," in which William Collier is appearing with great success at the Comedy Theater, tells an interesting story about his first great success. "Soldiers of Fortune," which Mr. Davis has often been asked if "Clay," the hero, was drawn from life, but always refused to say who the man was, because of character and incident.

Now he admits that Captain George E. Boynton was his inspiration. "Boynton was pretty well known

everywhere in his day," says Mr. Davis, "and I always called him 'Colonel' Boynton to white that he was an American citizen, or appeal to Washington when he found himself in trouble."

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WAGNER'S GREAT PLAY "PARSIFAL" WILL DRAW THOUSANDS TO BEYREUTH

Widow of Famous Composer Asks Opera-Houses of World to Leave Production of Opera to Place Sacred to Her Husband—Story of Long Attempt to Give It to World.

BY EMILIE FRANCES BAUER.
NEW YORK, May 20.—(Special.)—There will be a great pilgrimage to Europe this season, not only on account of the coronation festivities, but this is also the year of the Bayreuth festival, and in Rome the great exposition will attract from all countries. A cable from Germany announces that Frau Cosima Wagner and her son, Siegfried, are making a plea to the opera-houses of the world not to avail themselves of the Hibernian "Parsifal" but to leave that to Bayreuth. It is not likely that many of the opera-houses will agree to this, for many years, they have been waiting anxiously for this work. It may be interesting to learn Wagner's own attitude to this opera and how it came to remain the exclusive property of Bayreuth until Cosima produced it in America.

In his letters to his manager, Angelo Neumann, expressed himself at different times concerning this and other details of his life and work.

From Bayreuth, October 15, 1881, he wrote:

"I devoted 20 years of my life to founding Bayreuth because I had a great and far-reaching plan in my head with regard to it. A Wagner theater in Berlin? Nothing could have been easier for me; years ago I had the offer of the means for it. But that was not the fitting place for the creation I meant to give to the world. What I finally achieved in my secluded spot, where the world is forced to come to me, may now, if it is required, be carried further on. But this requisition must come from the other side; may you represent the other side."

Wagner wrote his friend and manager, Neumann, that any theater for Wagnerian works to be built in Berlin must be his undertaking and not Neumann's, and he felt that if he could not find the way to the establishment of a theater entirely devoted to his works. Then about "Parsifal" he said:

"Parsifal" is to be given nowhere else but in Bayreuth; and this from private and personal motives that my glorious benefactor, the King of Bavaria, so thoroughly understood that he even waived his privilege of having it given at the Munich Theater. In view of this, I thought that I should be glad to do as you propose? I cannot and will not ever allow it to be given in any other theater unless it were that I fitted out a real Wagner theater—a stage sacred to the drama which wanders from place to place should spread throughout the world the creations which I have so far tended and brought to the full and stately perfection in my own theater at Bayreuth. In case you are steadfast in your ideas for your great enterprises, the time may come when I shall be glad to entrust my "Parsifal" not to any court theater or to a municipal theater, but to the great wandering Wagner Opera Company."

About this time Wagner had promised to go to London for the rehearsals of his works, which were to have been given there, but even though he was offered the sum of \$100,000, he was unable to go of account of the state of his health, which was failing, and he was still devoting himself to the artistic details of the first presen-

tion of "Parsifal" and he declined the honors from Oxford with thanks and he remained in Venice.

Angelo Neumann, in his admirable memoirs entitled, "Personal Recollections of Wagner," described the first performance of "Parsifal" as follows:

Parsifal is a Work of Art.

"The first performance of 'Parsifal' took place on the 29th of July, and was an epoch-making occasion to all present. The audience itself, naturally on such an evening, was tremendously interesting. Interest and expectation were at their greatest height. Words fail me to express the deep impression the work made upon us all. A lofty ecstasy came over me and I felt I had taken part in a sacred service. As to the interpretation, Amalia Materna and Hermann Winkelmann were marvelous, as was the orchestra, too, under Hermann Levy, but above all, Emil Scaria's Gurnemanz was masterpiece, and without exaggeration I may say it was the perfection of art. After the performance we drove home in a pouring rain to our supper at 'Fantasia,' where we were joined by the 'Klingers' of that evening, Siehr from Munich, with his wife and daughter. And what a remarkable coincidence, this famous bass, who later was to sing Gurnemanz, had always been one of the most violent public adversaries of Wagner's school, and remained so until the close of his days.

"Edward Hanslik sat next to me at supper. That redoubtable critic was evidently still under the spell of 'Parsifal' and was noticeably silent and thoughtful. Naturally, the sole topic of our conversation was the wonderful experience of the day, Hanslik joined eagerly in our enthusiasm, making no caustic comments, and we felt he had been quite converted. During our talk, each giving his impressions of the day, Forster made a statement that struck us all with terror: 'You will see, Wagner's not long for this world.'

"Our animation faded at these words, and we sat there unexpressedly shocked until I managed to stammer: 'What makes you say a thing like that?' Forster answered with quiet conviction: 'A man who is capable of producing a work of this order cannot be long for this world—his work is finished.'

"Earnestly he spoke, almost with tears in his eyes, and his words impressed us with such a weight of horror that it was long before we recovered from their effect. But our earlier light, gay mood was gone for that whole evening."

Wagner Refused to Sell Play.

Later Neumann broached the subject to Wagner that he should entrust to him his most sacred treasure, "Parsifal," and to his great amazement, he promised to consider it at the next meeting, and the manager was to bring a proposition for "Parsifal" at the same time as his contract for "The Ring."

Neumann writes: "On the given day I appeared at Wahnfried with my contracts for 'The Ring' and 'Parsifal.' The master seemed quite disposed to grant my sager wish. As we proceeded to business he signed at once my contract of 'The Ring' and now came the turn of the 'Parsifal' agreement,

that fired my imagination. Boynton was a true soldier of fortune who scorned to white that he was an American citizen, or appeal to Washington when he found himself in trouble."

Would the master consent as he had informally offered, to have the thing produced outside of Bayreuth and to hand me over the exclusive right? He was just about to sign the contract, when suddenly he paused. With his pen poised over the paper he sat there lost in reflection, then turning slowly to me, he said in a low, gentle voice: "Neumann, I did promise you, and if you insist I will sign the contract. But you would be doing me a great favor if you should not insist this time. I've pledged you my word—no one else shall ever have 'Parsifal' but you."

"Master," I answered, "if you say I should be doing you a great favor then naturally that is quite enough for me. Wagner wrung my hand and kissed me eagerly, saying with touching emphasis, 'Thank you, Neumann, thank you!' and as he came to meet me I told him of our interview, and added: 'Karl, my boy, today when I relinquished 'Parsifal' I abandoned the prospect of many millions. 'Father,' said the little fellow (he was then just 7), it's worth more than millions, isn't it, to have Richard Wagner thank you like that?'"

Play Only for Highest Art.

Later, Neumann requested of Wagner the privilege of opening a new opera-house in Berlin with "Parsifal" and Wagner answered him as follows: "I scarcely know what to answer to your urgent request that you should be allowed to give 'Parsifal' at the opening of this new theater—at all our talk on the subject! 'Parsifal' once and for all belongs exclusively to my Bayreuth Theater and it is at our yearly festivals that this work is to be presented. This segregation is due to the lofty character of the work itself. My creation of 'Parsifal' shall stand or fall with Bayreuth. At least this shall be the case until my death for who then will carry out my intentions is still a problem with me. In case my powers which are put to such unspeakable tests by these performances should be exhausted before my life, and I should no longer be able to attend these details I should have to think of some other plans for carrying out the traditions of my work."

"If, by that time, your Wagner Opera Company has reached the perfect plane toward which you are constantly advancing with my other works I might then find it feasible to turn over to you my 'Parsifal' for certain festive performances at stated occasions. And it is only to you and on these terms that I shall ever consign my 'Parsifal.' Of this you may assure your partners in the theatrical undertaking for their satisfaction, but with the proviso that I take it all back if ever you should make this statement public. You know what the reporters are and can hardly blame me for trying to keep this last great task at Bayreuth, my final creation, out of their clutches."

For this reason Frau Wagner and her son have kept "Parsifal" in Bayreuth in accordance with the desire of the great master who died in Venice.

HISTORIC LINCOLN LETTER

When College of New Jersey Proposed to Honor Him.

Princeton Dispatch to New York Times.

Professor Theodore W. Hunt, Princeton '65, in recalling some stirring events through which his class went during the Civil War, makes public a letter which Abraham Lincoln wrote in acceptance of the honorary degree of doctor of laws which the trustees conferred on him in 1864. The letter follows:

"Executive Mansion,
 "Washington, December 27, 1864.
 "To Dr. John Maclean,
 "My Dear Sir: I have the honor to acknowledge the reception of your note of the 20th of September, conveying the announcement that the trustees of the College of New Jersey have conferred upon me the degree of doctor of laws. The assurance conveyed by this high compliment that the course of the Government which I represent has received the approval of a body of gentlemen of such character and intelligence in this time of public trial, is most gratifying to me. Thoughtful men must feel that the fate of the civilization on this continent is involved in the issue of the contest. Among the most gratifying of the proofs of this conviction is the hearty devotion everywhere exhibited by our schools and colleges to the National cause. I am most thankful if my labors have seemed to conduce to the preservation of those institutions under which alone we can expect good government, and in its train social learning and the progress of the liberal arts.

"I am, sir, very truly, your obedient servant."
 A. LINCOLN.

A Schoolman's Sweetheart.

Pathfinder.

Pottle—Why did you break off your engagement with that school teacher? Poot—If I failed to show up at her house every evening she expected me to bring a written excuse signed by my mother.