MONTGOMERY AND STONE WITH MUSICAL FANTASY AMONG MANY OFFERING NEW PLAYS IN NEW YORK

Warm Welcome Is Given Comedians in "Chin Chin"—Longacre Attraction, "Kick In," Is Story of Underworld—Little Theater Abandons Highbrow Productions for Farce, Princess Changes Programme and Harris Playhouse Passes to Managerial Control of Selwyn & Co.

Hardee Kirkland, Pauline Frederick, John Multern in "Innocent," at Eltinge Theater.

Marie Doro

John Mason, in "Big Jim Garrity" at the New York Theater.

Anna Mack Berlem, Jane Gray, Katherine Harris, and John Barrymore, in "Kick In" at Longacre Theater.

BY LLOYD LONERGAN.

NEW YORK, Nov. 7.—(Special.)—New plays are coming into New York with a rush, and the various producers express satisfaction with the outlook, despite the fact that up to date 117 more or less well-known road shows have "closed their seasons."

Probably the warmest welcome extended to any of the new attractions was accorded Montgomery and Stone, who are back at their old home, the Globe Theater, in a three-act musical fantasy, entitled "Chin Chin." The plot of the piece is founded upon the story of "Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp," which gives an opportunity for a long succession of brilliant novelties. The stars are the two slaves of the lamp. They assume many disguises and prove themselves to be as versatile comedians as they ever were. Anne Caldwell and R. H. Burnside collaborated on the book, while Ivan Caryll is responsible for most of the music. The supporting company is more than competent.

It is two years since Montgomery and Stone were last seen on Broadway, and the "regulars" were glad to welcome them back. Their last appearance was with Elsie Janis in "The Lady of the Slipper."

"Kick In" Is Behind Times.

The new attraction at the Longacre Theater is a year or so behind the times. "Kick In" is a crook play, and excellent of its kind. The underworld has, however, in its various manifestations become comparatively familiar to the public. Still Willard Mack must be accorded credit for his skill in presenting his fiction. Mr. Mack is not only the author of the play, but has one of the leading roles.

"Kick In" is a melodrama in four acts, with its scenes laid in the office of a police commissioner, and in the rooms of a pair of ex-convicts, who are engaged in the customary and difficult task of living straight. They are faithful to two of their old friends, who keep at their old trade. A diamond necklace disappears, the crooks are suspected and their honest friends are dragged to police headquarters and put through the third degree in the hope that they will reveal the hiding place of the suspects. The commissioner threatens to tell the husband's employer all about his criminal record, but this fails to have any effect, as the employer knows it all the time. So the first collision ends in the discomforture of the officers of the law.

Later, the stolen necklace is found in the possession of the drug fiend brother of the reformed crook's wife. The police offer to drop the prosecution if it is returned, and then break faith by ordering the arrest of all concerned. It ends with the escape of the aspiring young couple, who tell the commissioner that the police acted in bad faith by promising immunity and then locking them up. So the commissioner relents, and their pathway is ultimately smoothed.

In the main "Kick In" was well acted. John Barrymore was most efficient in the passages of comedy. There he was himself, and it is as himself that the public likes him most, for his style in serious scenes lacks variety. Jane Grey was a sympathetic wife to the honest crook, and Josephine Victor scored in an emotional scene of genuine passion.

Farce at Little Theater.

The Little Theater, heretofore the home of the highbrows, now shelters a diverting farce, "A Pair of Silk Stockings," which had a long run in London. It is not in the least like the plays which have heretofore appealed to Director Ames, but there is, after all, a certain quality to the piece which is not common. It pictures fashionable English life, the personages speak the last word in Londonese, and there is more or less distinguished character about the entertainment. Finally, it might be mentioned that all of the players come from London.

The silk stockings that give the play its title belong to a divorced wife, who parts with them only to bind up a burglar, who turns out to be her husband, who is trying to get an interview with her so that he may urge her to return to him. The wife, it appears, has come to the country house at which he was a guest with the same general idea in view. To gain admission, she pretended to be the victim of a motor accident, but was not cordially received. In the first place she interrupted the rehearsals for an amateur performance of "Caste," which were in progress in a humorous fashion when the curtain first arose. Then she upset the family in other ways. For example, she happened to get the room of one of the guests who had been called away, an old lover of hers, now affianced to a young girl, also at the house. The husband decides to creep into her room and hide until she appears. While he is concealed in a wardrobe the former occupant of the room returns. He has missed his train, and to avoid disturbing the family, enters by the window. Naturally he is much surprised to find his former fiancee in bed. Then his present betrothed arrives to apologize to the lady for his rudeness. In the meantime the husband has been dragged from the cupboard, and thrust into the bathroom, bound with a pair of his wife's silk stockings. This was all amusing enough, but it was the unravelings of the threads in the last act that kept the audiences in constant laughter. The little play is full of superficial brightness that suits well the slice of modish life that it is intended to represent, its speeches are witty, and the acting is exactly suited to the play. Cyril Harcourt, the author, has an important part, but M. Hamley-Clifford and Caroline Bayler took the honors away from him. This is Miss Bayler's first appearance in America, but she made an instant hit.

Princess Changes Programme.

As the Little Theater was the home of the highbrow play, so has the Princess been the playhouse for "shockers." Like the Little Theater, however, it has changed its programme. In the new bill there is nothing to shock the most sensitive. Not only has sex been eliminated from the scheme of the theater, but with it has gone horror, which was one of the emotions that this house, like its predecessors in Paris, tried to arouse.

The bill is composed of five playlets, of which "Phipps," by the late Stanley Houghton, is the most interesting. There is trouble between Sir Gerald and his wife over money matters, and it is arranged that he shall strike her in the presence of Phipps, the butler, so that she may get a divorce without trouble. The plan goes wrong, however, for the butler gallantly goes to the aid of, as he supposes, beauty in distress, knocks his employer down, and Sir Gerald is only saved from further injury by the frenzied entreaties of his wife. Phipps suggests that there are better ways of getting a divorce than by alleging cruelty, tells Lady Fanny that he has long and hopelessly loved her, and suggests that she fly with him. Then Sir Gerald intervenes, consents to give his wife the pearls she wants if she will make no further demands for six months, she eagerly consents and the butler is given his notice.

Pauline Frederick, in "Innocent."

Holbrook Blinn still heads the Princess company, and as in other years he has surrounded himself with a competent staff of assistants.

Selwyn & Co. Get Harris Theater.

The Harris Theater has passed to the managerial control of Selwyn & Co. This house in its comparatively short career has had many changes of ownership. It was opened as Lew Field's Theater, after the long comedian separated from Joe Weber. Next it was named the Hackett, and managed by the actor of the same name. Next it fell into the hands of the Shuberts and was taken over by Henry B. Harris.

The opening bill at the Harris is "The Salamander," a dramatization of Owen Johnson's popular novel of the same name, which created widespread discussion when originally published. "The Salamander" is given in three acts and an epilogue, and in converting it into play form the author has adhered closely to the original story. Miss Carroll McComas appeared in the title role, and was supported by a well-selected company, including Orme Caldera, Beverly Sitgreaves, Vivian Rushmore, Wilton Taylor and Suzanne Morgan.

News Gossip of Plays and Players

Edited by Leone Cass Baer.

TO read the interviews with all the actors returning from foreign parts you'd think they'd been engaged for a thousand seasons ahead over there. It's sad to read, in print about all the grand jobs they had to let go.

* * *

This from the Dramatic Mirror will be of general theatrical interest:

Priscilla Knowles is soon to appear in vaudeville in a sketch by Marion Short called "Easy Money," with Louis Leon Hall as leading man. Miss Knowles is an ex-Lyric stock actress in Portland, and Mr. Hall was co-leading man with Edward Woodruff at the Baker last season. Dorothy Shoemaker is Mrs. Louis Leon Hall.

* * *

The only advantage I can see in these shows advertising a cast of 100 persons is that in event of a bad house half of the cast can come in at the front door as the audience.

* * *

Amy Gouraud, once Amy Crocker, of San Francisco, and since then Amy several other names, and latest of all The Princess Meskinoff, is a great "pal" of Valeska Suratt's, and is known in New York as one of the regular first-nighters at theatrical productions and a close friend to a lot of Broadway's gayest thespians. She has just returned from abroad and has resumed her nocturnal wanderings in and about Broadway. According to Town Topics, the Princess, or Amy Gouraud, as she once more prefers to call herself, is wearing the happiest smile that has graced her countenance in ages. Says the story further, "Amy's most recent matrimonial alliance, while now merely academic, so to speak, is still legally in force, but the law is taking, or is about to take, its course. Although no longer a slender youth by any means, a well-known musician, for many years accompanist to a celebrated prima donna, who died a few months ago in a far distant land, is said to have completely won the impressionable Amy's heart, and she has whispered to at least one of her intimates that she is not wholly averse to bestowing her jeweled hand upon her attentive cavalier when this shall be legally possible."

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"Variety" relates that the jury which disagreed as to the guilt of Mrs. Carman, who was tried for the murder of Mrs. Bailey, came perilously near providing a sensational headline act for Hammerstein's vaudeville house in New York. Just previous to the announcement of the verdict, arrangements had been settled for Mrs. Carman's appearance in vaudeville. When the jury disagreed, Mrs. Carman's family called the proposition off. Occasionally luck falls our way, even in vaudeville.

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The English war song, "Tipperary," is having a strong sale over here. The New York publisher handling the number is forcing a retail charge of 20 cents a copy for the song, with a probable sale of 1,000,000 copies in sight.

The English agent for the number, one Feldman, who is well known in the music trade, on this side, is said to have thrown down his close American business associates in placing "Tipperary" for America.

* * *

Whistling girls and crowing hens may always come to some bad end, to fulfill the old prophecy, but whistling Belgians sometimes do not. At least there is one at Pantages who has landed right in the middle of a good job and a promise of more to follow. He is Peter Vanaudenhaeye, and he's a Belgian refugee. One day a few weeks ago, Walker O'Loughlin, who has nothing to do but work hard making cartoons and spend the rest of the time searching for inspiration, heard Peter Vanaudenhaeye whistling gay little melodies and "correct imitations" of birds. Walker waxed curious, learned that the man was working in a lumber camp and could whistle anything with a tune to it, and put in all the fancy trills and vocal pyrotechnics known to the world of whistlers. So Walker induced the Belgian with the long name to try out a whistling act at the Lyric on Amateur night. Always on Tuesday night the Lyric has an amateur night. The act took and the crowd liked it well. So Walker O'Loughlin chased up to see John Johnson, the manager at Pantages, and secure a hearing for his protegee. The act went on to Pantages regular bill last week and is given booking on south. And Walker is so pleased. He feels that he discovered a real act. And he made a lot of pictures for the whistler, fitted him out in native Belgian clothes, made-in-America and from now on will be calling himself a patron of the fine arts, although for economical reasons alone Vanaudenhaeye's name can never be put into an electric sign. Walker says now he's going to listen and discover a ventriloquist or a juggling act. In which case I shall recommend the death penalty.

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The report from London says that stage folks have been declared ineligible to application for participation in the war relief funds being raised all over the world. The ruling has been the cause of bitter feeling, since the players have been the biggest contributors to the fund through their stage benefits.

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While Charles Frohman is dickering around trying to get a new farce for Richard Carle that actor is trying out a vaudeville sketch. If he makes good in it he says he'll stick with it for the Winter.

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After Mrs. Leslie Carter finishes being filmed in California she says she is going into vaudeville with a sketch and announces herself as in the market for "one suited to her peculiar line of talents." Someone might boil down Zaza or take a few stitches in Sapho for Mrs. Carter.

* * *

Mabel Wilbur, of "Merry Widow" memory, seems to have set St. Louis by the ears. The prima donna made her debut with the Park Opera Company in that city in "Mlle. Modiste" and the critics liked her better in the role than Madam Scheff, and in comparing the two in the papers give Miss Wilbur the best of it.

* * *

"The Salamander," dramatized from Owen Johnson's novel by Selwyn & Co., has closed in New York, after one feeble week.

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