

CHEAP MELODRAMA DRIBBLE IN ALLEGED "COLLEGE" PLAYS

"Brown of Harvard" Sample of Over-reached Effort to Inculcate Peanut Moralizing in the Wrong Place—George Ade's "College Widow" Standard That Makes All Others Shrink

By J. F. S.

LIKE college clothes at the ready-to-wear shops, college plays of the ready-made variety were sure to come. Both are a result of the indiscriminate education which has swept over the country. Both pass very well if one isn't too particular.

But after seeing the excellent Mr. Henry Woodruff do his best to infuse verisimilitude into the play at the Heilig last week one is constrained to say "hold, enough!"

Mr. Woodruff really succeeded very well. As long as he was on the stage it was repeating his own interpolations the thing went well enough. You might have imagined you were in the room of some pretty, trifle stage-gump, son of one of Carnegie's "young partners." He was jolly and good company, although that first slenderness of youth had disappeared, and he had some people in his company who were of more than average excellence their parts.

But the play itself, its plot and its lines, were so foolish, so inconceivably improbable, that they killed all interest in it.

The same thing happened with "Strongheart"—an interesting enough play in itself but with other details dragged into the college atmosphere which made it too tiresome for tolerance after the second act also. And "Strongheart," as presented in Portland this season, had none of the attractions that made "Brown of Harvard" endurable. Indians are too near and dirty to be in the west to appeal with any romantic force. We could explain the girl's infatuation only by saying she was obsessed with some morbid disease.

Not that the case was without parallel. At one time a reporter was detected to see a woman who had announced she was to marry a full-blooded vajo Indian.

He was shown into the most exquisitely proper white and gold parlor imaginable. The details were all most sedulously attended to. The pink on the walls matched perfectly with the pink satin upholstery of the chair.

Into the room came the lady. The reporter was positive that he must be taken. She was quaint and fragile and hovering somewhere in that twilight of gray-tinted courtship that lies between 40 and 50. Her dove-colored dress with its bit of lace at the throat and wrists, the same gray continued up into her hair, and was reflected in her eyes. She had to eat her name to make it clear that it was indeed she who intended marry the aborigine.

And this little lady—for in spite of what happened she never failed delicately to impress one with the fact that she was a gentlewoman—sat down and told how she loved her Indian, how much he meant to her, how noble was, how remarkable were his qualities of mind and heart, until she shyly convinced her listener in spite of himself. He began to insist on seeing the noble red man.

Blushing she went out to fetch him from the seclusion of the library, blushing she led him back into the little rose-colored parlor. He stepped into the doorway. The reporter clutched the back of the chair on which he was sitting. The lover was most awful. Streaks of vermillion and ochre ornamented his face and his forehead. He wore a very and very tattered dress of blankets. He would have been picturesque had he not been so near.

His interviewer ejaculated something in a rather feeble and wobbly voice. The infatuated one announced that he—she pronounced his name but most anyone else could ever do was to write it correctly—could only say "Spanish."

Although the reporter had just been studying Spanish and was extremely proud of his little learning, he denied any knowledge of the tongue and after waiting for a few moments at each other they parted never to meet again, at least in the dark.

This woman was really genteel. At first it seemed as though she was rested psychologically but later it appeared that it was merely pathological. She was suffering from a disease and couldn't help herself. The fiercer at the office said her trouble was that it had gotten to be the question with her not who is the man but where is he. They were rather heartily cruel, however.

She allowed public opinion to influence her to the extent that she sent her redskin cavalier back to New Mexico and his adobe pueblo, but the case was incurable with her, as a month or so ago the press dispatches caught the news of their marriage.

But, however interesting the study of a disease may be when a master wielder the knife and lays open the mortifying flesh for the benefit of a glib world, it doesn't properly belong in the college comedy, especially one that really pretends to give a picture of modern college life.

After all, George Ade's "College Widow" stands as the one example of a faithful picture of college life—it is a delightful picture of any one of the h-water schools. It never grows old. The humor is there. The delicately light satire, the fresh "Stubby," the big, blushing, dimpling football player, hopeless in his studies and enchanting from the viewpoint of the under-graduate, the omnipresent co-eds, will live for many a day.

"Brown of Harvard," "Strongheart," "At Yale" and the other fool things often to catch the popularity of anything that has the name "college" tacked on it, are all right to a certain extent, just as "The Man of the Hour" is all right to a certain extent. They are all more or less effective so long as you don't go into their ethics or the truth of the picture. But when you either laugh and wonder why so few people get at the inside of it, or if it happens to be your own alma mater that is caricatured, you get up and howl and hurl over-ripe grape-fruit upon the hard working writers.

There are enough obvious absurdities in college life in this country today to furnish material for a score of very good comedies and satirical farces. It doesn't pay in the end to drag in the dear familiar strains of melodrama from the penny-awful houses, give the heroes and heroines little hats, red-up trousers and a smatter of football talk and set the mess up as a "drah-mer."

PROMISES MADE BY THE PRESS AGENTS

(Continued from Page Four.)

...and are always in the market. The accounts for the high grade plays which are always found at the Lyric. The new bill which begins to show after noon, will be notable for its novel acts and there will not be number on the long list which will afford satisfaction to the people who appreciate bright, modern, new and entertaining. The bright paragon feature on the bill will be the famous Eddy family. Eddy and Eddy are wire artists and run, dance and acrobatic feats on the metal floor as carefully as other people can on the ground. This act played the night of a few months ago and was acted by all who saw the act as the best of its kind ever seen. The special added attraction there will be Kader and his three wives and they have a novelty painting act. They are, of course, not an American act, but they are worth the money. The supporting acts are uniformly good. Second place in the list may rightly be assigned to the three Kuhn, comedy musicians. George Alexander, in his original act, "The High-Toned Hobo," is thoroughly funny and amusing. Claude Rodee, the slackwire king, late of Ringling's circus, has an act that always goes well. Alice Philbrooks and Sidney Reynolds in a bright comedy sketch, "Miss Steno," are also known as clever people. A new illustration song by Fred Bauer, the Portland tenor and the exclusive motion pictures conclude the new bill.

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"Jack Wells of Wyoming." "George Washington Jr." Coming. The Cohan & Harris comedians, a musical organization probably the foremost of its kind in America, will be seen here at the Heilig theatre next Monday, February 9, for an engagement of three nights with a special price matinee Wednesday afternoon in George M. Cohan's most popular success, "George Washington Jr." The troupe in three acts and four scenes, "George Washington Jr." has attained such success and great popularity in the

ing cities. Like all Mr. Cohan's plays, the new piece is said to be notable for its spirit, dash and quickness of action from start to finish. The characters are well contrasted and the musical numbers are very catchy. Advance seat sale opens next Friday at theatre.

"David Harum" at the Baker. William Gleason, the Baker theatre company's well known character man, will be given one of the greatest opportunities he has ever had in Portland next week in the role of "David Harum," originally created by W. H. Crane. "David Harum" is one of the most popular and widely read novels of the past 10 years, and Mr. Gleason's portrayal of the quaint and whimsical New York country banker will be one long to be remembered by patrons of the favorite stock company. The opening performance of "David Harum" will be next Sunday matinee, February 2.

Clean, Clever Fun. The management to which has been accorded the exclusive right to present a dramatized version of ex-Governor George W. Peck's "Bad Boy" will prove at the Empire all week, starting next Sunday matinee, February 2, that they have justified the confidence reposed in them by the famous humorist. The farce comedy of "Peck's Bad Boy" is a most amusing and talented vivification of the magnetic characters from real life, sketched in pure sunshine by a

master hand. It is a treat to make one feel better and brighter for many a long day to come.

Mr. Lee Willard. Mr. Willard belongs to the new school of actors. The new school is really the oldest school of all, but it is the fashion to say that the actor makes a departure, whose methods are natural, whose eyes are always trained on truth, and whose greatest triumphs are the picturing humanity as it is, and the expressing of the greatest emotions without the resort to vocal or gestural exaggeration. Such an actor is Lee Willard. Young as he is, he has learned the technique of his art in the best academy the actor can command, the theatre. He will be seen in his new comedy, "The Country Squire" at the Marquam Grand Sunday, February 2, and Sunday matinee.

Frank Daniels Coming to Heilig. A critic recently wrote of Frank Daniels, who comes to the Heilig theatre,

Fourteenth and Washington streets, February 6, 7, 8, with a special matinee Saturday. It is no credit to Mr. Daniels to be funny, mirth excites from him. To the audience comfortably seated in orchestra chairs indeed it seems reasonable enough to suppose that, given the right lines and a comedian who is recognized as having been born so, the latter finds no more difficulty in getting laughs than a duck finds in natural locomotion. But if Mr. Daniels is to be believed, not only must the comedian have the right lines to say, but he must learn by constant practice and experiment just how they are going to affect an audience.

"Dream City." "Dream City" the New York production from Weber's theatre, New York, the latest of the Weber offerings, will be the attraction at the Marquam Grand in the near future. A splendid company, headed by the clever comedian Little Chip and the fascinating little artist Mary Marble, together with the usual big sprightly chorus, will be the combination of mirth and music.

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