

NEXT WEEK: "DAMAGED GOODS" AT THE WALNUT, BLANCHE WALSH AT KEITH'S



"DAMAGED GOODS"
AT THE WALNUT

LEW FIELDS
AT THE GARRICK

PLAYHOUSE
and
PLAYERS

SEEING Grumpy is a good deal like seeing an old friend. As Cyril Maude plays him, the old man lives with a vitality quite outside the theatre. The impersonation, added to the playwright's rather obvious lines, produces an effect of unusual reality. The blustering, bickering, yet kindly old man, calls up many a relative or acquaintance who has found oil as a happy outlet for little eccentricities that become almost a sort of play in themselves. To the reviewer of the EVENING LEDGER Mr. Maude's Grumpy seemed something of a prophecy as well. There is a faint and muted echo among the faculty of Harvard, who will be another Grumpy when his occasional pretenses of peevish irascibility harden into habit. Such a calling up of recollection is not a bad test of an actor's work.

Cyril Maude on the Movies

Being very far from Grumpy's age himself and a far younger man than his years, both in looks and lively intelligence, Mr. Maude can look on the movies and the phonograph with a friendly eye. To them they do not seem competitors, but things promising friendly assistance.

"This is surely the age of invention in matters connected with the theatre," says Mr. Maude. "The telephone, for instance, to the preacher, to take on John Wayne and listen to him for inspiration a while; to the singer who could reassemble her enthusiasm by listening to Jenny Lind; to the historian, who could actually hear the voice of say, Marc Antony or Demosthenes. How I wish the voices of Henry Irving, of Edwin Booth, or Sarah Siddons, or Forrest had been preserved for us."

"This is also the era of another wonderful form in which the actor's art is to be preserved—I mean, of course, the cinema. How dearly I should have loved to be able to see what Shakespeare looked like when acting. Of course, there is an aspect of the drama, but who can doubt but that gradually what you call the 'movie' is educating and interesting a class of people who heretofore have taken life a bit sadly and not gone in much for dramatic entertainment, encouraging in them an increasing desire for the theatre."

"While this was listened to Carson on the gramophone does not long to hear the great original. Who that has been to a cinema does not long to hear the human voice and to be moved by that wonderful power of which at present we know nearly nothing. I mean the magnetic power, the magic of the voice, which you will find in an enormous predominance of every really successful actor and actress. But it is something more than charm. It is a quality of which we know as little as we knew of wireless telegraphy before Marconi came on the scene."

"This marvelous magnetism! A very distinguished man in the arts has said that he could not mention on single successful soldier who had not got it. Lord Roberts, our own great English hero, he maintained, would never have been what he was without this magnetic quality. And it is a personal thing; it is not really conveyed through the gramophone or the cinema, and I am told that both these things were called the kindergarten of the drama."

Lew Fields Talks

About Other Days

Lew Fields, too, is one of those players who think, as well as talk, about their work. It is rather curious that on his first plunge into "straight" comedy, Mr. Fields is ready to talk about the past which he is leaving than about what the future holds. For one thing, the future is pretty indefinite. "If I can find the right play—" That eternal quest of the actor is made doubly difficult in Mr. Fields' case because he can't risk failure through a play being attributed to his inability to handle a "straight" part. If he could find a writer who knew the East side, the life of New York out of which Mr. Fields drew the inspiration for his early work he might secure some success. But he is a play producer, playwright, and even that quality of kindly pathos which Mr. Fields has shown himself capable of portraying.

Falling that play just now, there is the past to remember, those days when Weber and Fields' Music Hall was a national institution. "It can't be done again," says Mr. Fields, regretfully. "New York's too big. You can't get an audience that knows all the success as our audiences used to. In the early days there were only six theatres in town giving first-class plays: Wallack's, Daly's and the Casino, right around us, the Lyceum and the Alhambra uptown and the Fifth Avenue Stock Company. Everybody in New York had seen their new pieces, and if they hadn't they went to see the play we

were burlesquing before they came to us. It's a pity good travesty can't have more of a show than it gets in "The Walnut" and occasional revivals. It's a wonderful critic of the stage. Annie Russell is a nice good many things from Fay Templeton's burlesque of her in "Catherine."

From Mercutio to Comic Old Men

There is an actor in "The High Cost of Loving" who does quite as finished a piece of work as Mr. Fields, but who is still an "unknown" to the road. It is George Hassell. Walter Prichard Eaton has called him some things that appear very closely, if memory doesn't fail, to the best actor in America. Certainly he is one of the most versatile. At the Garrick he is playing unctuous, fat middle-age. In his stock days in Boston and Pittsfield, Mass., he played all manner of men, from crusty old villains to young lovers. He is certainly the best Mercutio on the American stage. And he could play Falstaff just as well.

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Taylor Holmes Talks

Taylor Holmes has a lot more to do with the selecting of the play in which he appears than the public may think. He and his wife had "The High Cost of Loving" in their hands last summer, when they were settling upon their present vehicle, "The Third Party." From Mr. Holmes' energetic and rapid rise out of small beginnings with Richard Mansfield, it looks very much as if he were a determined young man, with an eye on a career as actor-manager.

Mr. Holmes recalls an amusing incident—one of the many amusing incidents that dotted his association with Richard Mansfield through a small part in "Cyrano de Bergerac."

It was during a rehearsal of the play when Mr. Mansfield took exception to the evident lack of spirit manifested by one of the women of the company. Addressing the lady, he said:

"You must act, act, act at these rehearsals. 'Oh, but Mr. Mansfield,' she replied, 'I never can act at rehearsals. I can't. I must have an audience.'

"Yes—yes," said Mr. Mansfield, "but you have an audience. Am I not here?" That's very true," answered the actress, "but I must have a large number of people to play to before I can get the spirit."

To which Mr. Mansfield replied:

"Well, I want you to act at these rehearsals. I act. Speak loud and at the top of your voice, and use the full volume of your tones."

Becoming irritated through his fault-finding, the lady finally cried out:

"Mr. Mansfield, you're no gentleman." "Quite true—quite true," he replied. "I'm not a gentleman. I can't afford the luxury of being a gentleman. I'm merely a hard-working lumbering man. I don't associate with me in my employ, but work as hard as I do. I'm not a gentleman. I wish I were. My ambition is to be one, and possibly I will be some day. Therefore, I insist upon working at rehearsals, as you must do also. Now, louder, please—louder. Always talk at the top of your voice, the way Hall Caine writes."

David Belasco—

Phæton of the Theatre

One never-ending satisfaction in all David Belasco's productions is his handling of the lights. It may not be quite what the German stage has accomplished, but it still sits a little too much to that glaring row of subterranean suns the footlights. But it is so far above anything the American stage knows that he deserves far more credit for his reforms in this direction than he gets.

"The Phantom Rival," at the Broad, is an excellent example. All through the play scenes he might draw more "bloods," or bunches of lights, in the wings, than upon the "foots." In the dream-scene particularly, Mr. Belasco's use of light and color triumphs. He has achieved a warm, diffused glow far finer than anything the average producer ever reaches. It is amber, not the glaring white of the average stage light. It fails far more from above—when it would

naturally come—from below. The whole hall of the Van Ness mansion is bathed in the radiance. It does its very considerable part in giving the scene a distinction that its place in the drama demands.

And Mr. Belasco has such a refreshing realization that a few well-shaded wall brackets can't be expected to light up a whole room brighter than the sun. "Grumpy," on the other hand, supports that favorite quotation of the American stage electrician "How far that little candle throws its beams."

Belasco's "Phantom Rival" and Its Hungarian Original

Joseph Remenyi saw "The Phantom Rival" at the Broad Street Theatre Thursday evening. This, in itself, is not startling. But he also saw it in Vienna and in Budapest and in Pressburg (where Leo Dritschel comes from). And Mr. Remenyi, who is a Hungarian novelist of some note, compared the original performances in Hungarian and German with the Belasco production—and pronounced for the American acting, staging and artistry.

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