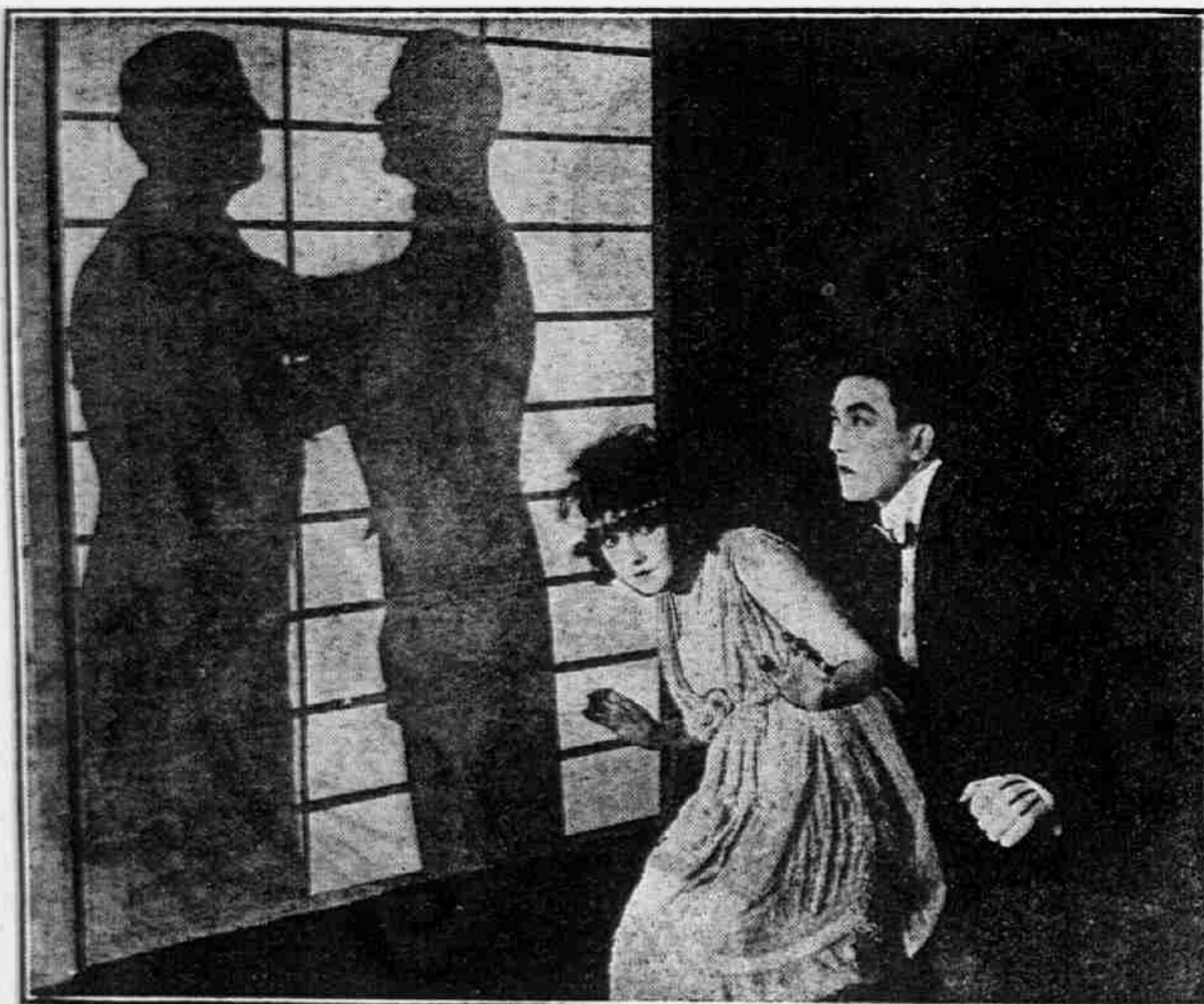


ANOTHER SORT OF SILHOUETTE



On the first page appears a story about the new silhouette movies of C. Allan Gilbert. Here is as clever a use of shadows in "The Cheat." The figures of the two men are cast on a Japanese paper window. Fanny Ward will be seen in the leading part at the Stanley next week.

WALTER PRICHARD EATON SEES NEW "BUNTY" IN FIRST NEW YORK LETTER

"Hobson's Choice," Manchester Comedy, Full of Two Sorts of Bustle and All Sorts of Fun

By WALTER PRICHARD EATON

With this issue of the Saturday Amusement Section of the Evening Ledger begins a series of New York letters by Walter Prichard Eaton, easily the most distinguished as well as the most popular of the younger generation of American critics.

IN NEW YORK just now is a little comedy called "Hobson's Choice," written by Harold Brighouse, and brought over from Miss Horniman's Manchester theatre, to be produced here by H. Iden



Payne, for some years an actor and stage manager at Manchester, but now working in America to good purpose. Any one who liked "Bunty Pulls the Strings" will like "Hobson's Choice," for the two plays have much in common. Both are folk plays, with the humor and the oddity of provincial dialect and provincial little-nesses. Both, too, have for the leading character a girl of brisk determination and "masherful" ways, as Grizel would say. The likeness is all the closer because Miss Mollie Pearson, who played Bunty with a rich Scotch accent, is now playing Maggie Hobson with a Lancashire dialect, and both plays are laid in the bustle period (we refer to the article of feminine wearing apparel, not the pace of modern life). But Lancashire is not Scotland, and so "Hobson's Choice," even if a later work, has the stamp of originality and genuineness. We are taken into the interior of Henry Horatio Hobson's shop, a shoeshop, in Salford, and when we finally leave his premises we feel that we have come to know Lancashire folk a great deal better, as well as having had a very good time.

Henry Horatio Hobson is not pious, like the father in "Bunty." Far from it, for he loves only too well to visit the near-by tavern, where he is entered as the best debater of the district. When he goes, he leaves the shop in charge of his three daughters, especially trusting the eldest, Maggie, who is a wonder as a mislady. Nor does Mr. Brighouse ask you to take that on faith, as Edna Ferber does in "Our Mrs. McChesney." You see Maggie sell to her sister's beau a pair of boots he didn't want. Now, Henry thinks he is a very shrewd man of business, and he also thinks, po-fellow, that he is master of his menage. But he isn't; Maggie is. Upon papa's getting a bit too uppish and refusing to allow any of the daughters to get mar-

ried, Maggie takes matters into her own hands.

The first thing she does is to call William Mossop up out of the cellar, where he is making shoes. William is a fine shoemaker; it is his shoes which have given Hobson's its trade with the "quality." But on manners and social poise he is very short. In fact, he is a yokel. Maggie proceeds to tell him she is going to marry him, in a delicious scene that would do credit to any folk drama. His reply is the ejaculation, "Well, ba goom!"—an ejaculation he uses through the play. It seems he is already plighted, but that doesn't trouble Maggie. She knows what is best. The other woman is packed off, and Maggie's plot begins to work.

It includes not only her marriage to William and their establishment of a business of their own—the manufacturing and sales end thus united in holy wedlock—but the marriages of both her sisters and the prying of a marriage portion for all three of them out of Papa Hobson by a trick. It is all rare fun, played with rare unctious and seemingly faithful local color, in no part being funnier than when, after the wedding, poor William is left alone with his bride in a helpless terror of embarrassment.

In the last act we see poor old Hobson, his business gone, his body sick with too much alcohol, forced to take Maggie and her husband back. He offers Maggie a salary as saleslady and William his old wages as shoemaker, and thinks he is doing well by them; but William, put

up to it by Maggie, suddenly blossoms out as a man of eloquence and business parts, and insists on a partnership, no less. The old man yields and goes out at the end on Maggie's arm to the lawyer's, but pathetically declaiming still that he is master in his shop, and there aren't going to be any modern innovations.

Maggie, from this description, might seem to be rather a heartless little wench, but she isn't. She is shrewd and calculating, and not far from the peasant type, as are all the characters. But she has a good heart and she is fond of her William and sees all along the man in him under the yokel, and she has heaps of Mr. Barrie's "dom charm." We are sure she would have, even if Mollie Pearson didn't play her.

Some of the actors are from the Manchester Company, notably Whitford Kane, who plays William Mossop. He was over here two years ago in "Hindie Wakes." A better performance than his could scarcely be imagined. His "Well, ba goom!" alone is an eloquent revelation. In the scene of embarrassment after he

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IN FIRST SHOWING "THE LABYRINTH"
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Tues. Evg., 1st Time Here
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Seats 1109 Chestnut St. Walnut 4424. Race 67.

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FANNIE WARD in "THE CHEAT"

LYRIC LAST MATINEE TODAY
LAST TIME TONIGHT
The Season's Most Distinctive Novelty
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RALPH HERZ With Music
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Last Matinee Today—Last Time Tonight
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ACADEMY—Seats at Heppes', 1119 Chestnut.
Philadelphia Orchestra
Tonight at 8:15
Soloist: ERNEST SCHELLING, Pianist

UNIVERSITY MUSEUM New Auditorium
Sat. 3:30 Illustrated Lecture by C. W. Herbe, "Travels in Tibet and Farther East." Free to Public, 35d and Spruce.

NIXON Today Amy Lesser: Victoria Four; "The Real Mr. Q."; 10 Wild Moors; Fred Norman; Sylvan Six; German War Pictures.

Knickerbocker THEATRE PLAYERS
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"The Gamblers" THURS. SAT.

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Next Week—"A Little Girl in a Big City."

TROCADERO 10TH & ARCH
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Dumont's Dumont's Minstrels, 9th & Arch
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is left alone with Maggie on the marriage night he keeps the situation so beautifully within the bounds of folk comedy, so utterly free from sophistication, that the most ribald Broadway rounder could not fail to feel the authentic picture of a simpler people, and would be ashamed to give it anything but wholesome laughter.

The part of Hobson himself, however, is played by A. G. Andrews, who was born in Buffalo, though he may be of English parentage. For many years he was a member of Otis Skinner's companies. Yet so perfect is Mr. Payne's stage management that whether an actor comes from Lancashire or not is quite immaterial to the American auditor at any rate. They all seem to speak the same speech, to belong to the same race, to be units in the same picture. Neither do they hurry and fuss about, crossing stage right at every fifth word and back again at every tenth. They let their characters and the words they speak hold the attention of the audience now and then, and only move enough to preserve the illusion of reality. Not only is the humor of the play refreshing in its simple, homely richness and faithfulness to an odd racial nook, but the performance is refreshing for its simplicity, too. Compared to a play staged by Mr. Cohan, it is like springs of water in a thirsty place, like the shadow of a great rock in a noisy land. Perhaps that is misquoted. We got the habit at the play. Even a New York audience seemed to be aware that something was wrong when Papa Hobson declared that somebody "skipped like a calf by the cedars of Lebanon."

Theatrical Jottings

The old Walnut Street Theatre will reopen on Christmas afternoon, with Andrew Mack in "The Irish Dragon." This engagement will continue through the following week.

The present plan of Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson is that he will make his last appearance on any American stage in Sanders Theatre, Harvard University, Monday, April 24. He will play "Hamlet," the performance being on the 300th anniversary of the death of Shakespeare.

Burton Holmes is to give next week an extra travelogue on "West Point and the Yellowstone" on Wednesday evening, and "California and the San Diego Exposition" on Friday evening and on Saturday afternoon.

B. F. Keith's Theatre
Chestnut and Twelfth Sts.

2—SHOWS DAILY—2
MATINEE, 2 P. M. NIGHT, 8 P. M.
NEXT WEEK

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Sam Chip & Mary Marble
Presenting "The Clock Shop"

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Maggie Cline
Some Old and Some New Songs

The Distinguished Dramatic Star
FLORENCE ROBERTS & CO.
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HARRY GILFOIL
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BROAD MATINEE TODAY
Tonight at 8:15

Next Final Week Nights at 8:15
WEEK MATS. WED. & SAT.
Charles Frohman, Knaw & Erlanger Present

ELSIE FERGUSON

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THE VITAL, THROBING, HUMAN PLAY
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A New Play by Lottie M. Meaney,
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NEXT LAST WEEK Nights at 8:15
WEEK MATS. WED. & SAT.

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"FIXING THE FURNACE" The Gardeners,
The Beauty Shop, Harry Rose, The Song
Booth, Herbert's Dogs. PICTURES.