

"GRUMPY" WANDERS IN MOVIELAND AND SEES STRANGE SIGHTS

Letters From the Distinguished Actor Telling All About the "Yellow Faces" That He Found There on His Second Voyage

By CYRIL MAUDE

Mr. Woolcott, the enterprising dramatic editor of the New York Times, has from time to time printed letters from Mr. Maude, which show he can wield his pen as cleverly as his make-up stick.

"It is quite time we had some food," I said the director, the all-powerful ruler of my movie destinies the last three weeks.

We had been working hard and with appropriate gravity in a graveyard (no subtle joke intended, please) all the morning. As we bowled down Broadway I had succeeded in avoiding the public gaze most successfully by sitting with one hand covering the side of my face and with the other holding down the brim of my hat. Occasionally, though, I would see some poor lady give a jump as she caught sight of a weird old yellow face peering sideways out of the window, but we sped along so swiftly that I imagine she merely thought her fever was a bit worse. As we crossed the ferry I couldn't help wondering what sort of strange old thing people would imagine they had got on board if I attempted to get out of the car, so I cowered inside it. At last we got to our destination, a cemetery near some amusements and explosive factories, and filed with the graves of dead Germans.

Am I hypersensitive this morning or is it, after all, any wonder that I, an Englishman, half Irish, should feel something uncanny in the place I had to work that moment and its strange juxtaposition to the explosive factories? Occasionally we would hear the deep booming of guns, and I was informed that it was the noise of the trials of the explosives destined, many of them, to aid in defending my beloved country, my wife and my children. And here was I doing my best in a strange sort of way to make enough money to pay the fearful taxes which loom before us in the mist of anxious war clouds. Here was I, doing my morning's work in a cemetery literally crowded with dead Germans, Germans who had died for their Fatherland, and not Germans filled with the amazing doubt, like so many nowadays, as to the wisdom or the righteousness of the war lords who have their former country under their thumb.

Oh, the irony of it all! I, the picture puppet, have to walk down the avenue of Brichsteins, Hechtsteins, and then hand in hand with my little granddaughter of this morning, kneel down and weep and pray over the tomb of a Schlickenhutenshausen! Over and over again we come sorrowfully down that melancholy path and kneel down. The mother of the child has moist eyes. I wonder why? The baby girl tells me in an interlude while we are waiting for the producer to think out some even more touching way in which I can show my movie feelings in mute appeal to heaven, that "we have got two graves in our family somewhere here, where gran'pa and gran'ma is buried, and our baby, too." And as I approach the mother after my work is over, for the first time I feel touched and sorrowful for her. She tells me quite simply that her husband was a German, but the

hypphen seems to have quite slipped away since Lusitania day. "He is against 'em now, but he thinks that the war could be easily stopped by the States refusing to supply ammunition to the Allies."

Big booms in the distance punctuate her remarks, and I set her wondering by telling her that I have this morning been informed by some one who knows that only a tenth part of the ammunition used at the front came from this country!

But even graveyard work does not stop hunger, and away we all speed to the luncheon room of a group of the great picture-producing studios of the world. We feel we are approaching something strange as a cowboy or two gallop past. Is it my fancy that the cowboy suddenly gets J... a trifle more debonaire and perhaps a little more wild and woolly as he sees he is being observed by the occupants of a smart car? And is it my fancy again that he seems to lose his Western look when he sees merely yellow faces looking out at him?

We drive up to the door of the luncheon room, and as I enter I must confess to a feeling of shyness at my strange appearance. But I find myself surrounded by such a remarkable crowd of weird-looking people that I soon feel completely at home. Every possible kind of character is having lunch there, and the yellow paint makes us all look none too desirable as acquaintances, I can tell you. Every imaginable kind of costume is there, too, and one soon learns to feel no possible kind of surprise in turning from a table where is seated an old Irishman of the most broken-down type to a table where very calmly with Marie Antoinette, and again contemplating the frail Camille discussing the latest success in the picture line with the magnificent-looking Mexican and a parlor maid and a Dutch peasant. Of course, you have seen all that kind of thing at the fancy dress balls, you will say, but believe me, it all assumes a different proportion in the sunlight among the Yellow Faces.

And we take ourselves very seriously, why Yellow Faces! And, please, why shouldn't we? I am only an amateur at the game, and feel always I am regarded as some amateur would be on an adventure into stage life. It isn't how long have you been on the stage, or how many theatres have you owned, or how many hundred plays have you yourself produced, that is the question now. It is how many pictures have you appeared in?

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GRIFFITH, PRODUCER, MAN AND ARTIST

A Personal View of the Wizard of the Motion Picture

There is a human-interest story in Griffith, who has achieved an American epic. His work is known to millions, but the man himself is not known. He has kept himself back of the camera, out of the picture, but now that he has made America sit back and look at the films of Broadway prices, and has got the so-called classes to drop their venerated classics and join the masses at a "movie" exhibition, the blue stockings and men of books rise to inquire what manner of man is he.

Griffith was born in Lagrange, near Louisville, Ky. He is 35 and has a strain of the Celt. The blend of the canny Scot and the bubbling Irishman that came down to him from his overseas ancestry shows at times in his chinax. His father served under Lee in the Civil War, and the man who now stands at the head of the profession in this country, and perhaps the world, has not lost the spirit of the old Southland.

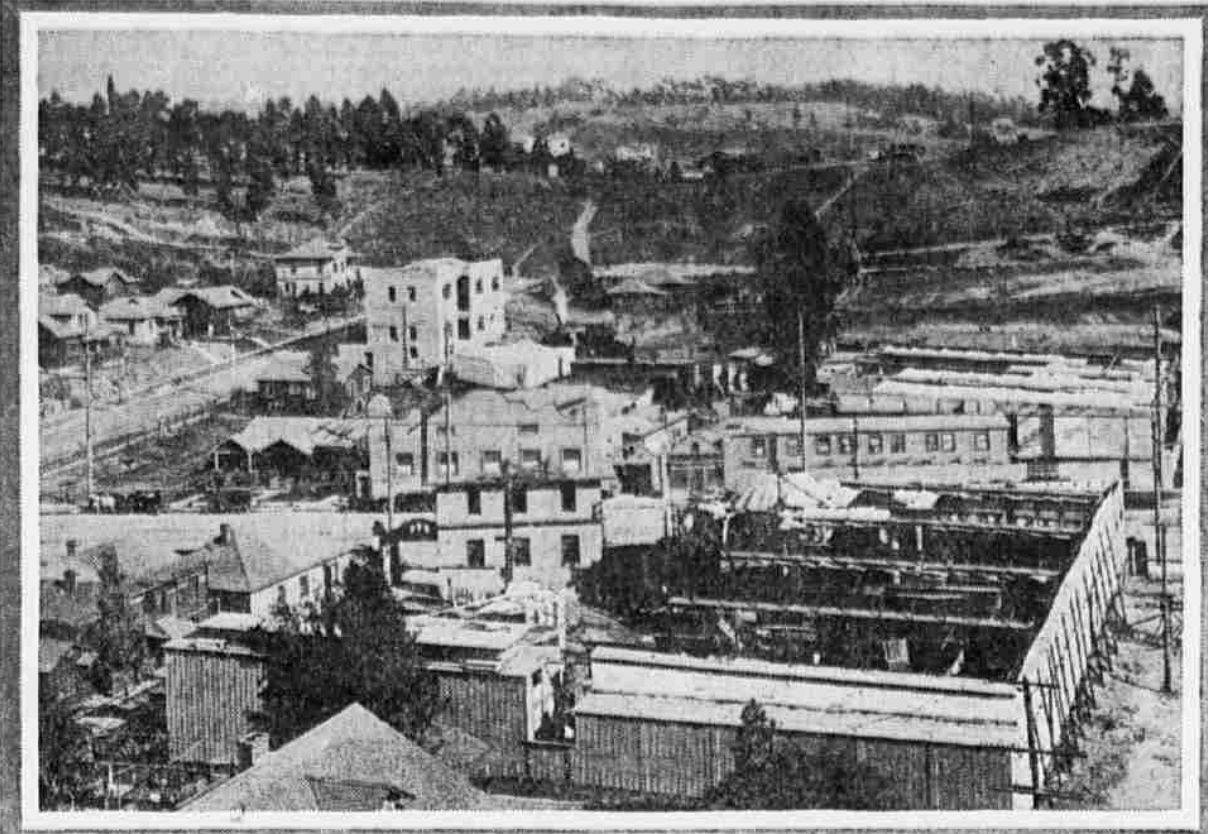
It's an old story now that Griffith was a failure as a road actor, a barnstormer even in tank towns. That doesn't matter so much. Today he stages the great outdoors and blends the purr of a kitten with the crash of artillery; runs the whole scale of emotion in his film portraits of life, and he gets the heartbeats of the poet and the orator. He had designs on grand opera when he looked about for a career, but he found his voice suited for the speaking stage, even if the manager of the road company failed to agree with him. Griffith's friends say he was better than the average as an actor, but he stuck to the stage for two years and quit for a place with a film company. Here is where he began to develop his talents and get his grip on the psychology of the world's make believe.

Griffith is about five feet ten inches in height. He carries no superfluous flesh and he is clubby when off duty. He has written several short stories, but he is committed absolutely to the silent drama. He looks upon it as the youngest sister of the fine arts, and he hates censorship.



PHYLLIS NEILSON-TERRY The charming young English actress of distinguished parentage, who comes to Keith's next week in Shakespearean studies.

WE LOOK DOWN ON KEYSTONE COMEDY



A birds-eye view of the famous studio, showing at the back the hill which was partly cut away to allow for enlargements.

"AND LO! A SOUND FELL UPON MY EAR"

ANY ONE who has seen one of William Gillette's performances of "Secret Service" at the Broad Street Theatre this week cannot, if he is observant at all, have failed to note the wonderfully effective use that is made of noises off stage.

Just for example, the wailing of the church bells at the beginning of the last act of the play. Richmond has been attacked by the Northern army and the citizens are in a panic. The church bells are ringing to call out the reserves. It is marvelous the way those bells tell the story and make the audience feel that the sound comes from the many spires of a great city and that they voice the terror and haste of the people. Mingled with them and heightening the effect come the tramp of hurrying troops, the clash of arms, the dull rumble of cannon over the streets. Another dramatist might have had his characters talk about it, but he could not possibly have made his audience sense the situation as these sounds do.

Once in "Clarice" Mr. Gillette wanted to make his audience feel that the room shown on the stage was in a house remote and isolated. He did it by this same use of sounds off stage. A character left the room. A moment later the audience heard the heavy outside door close with a muffled bang. Then came the sound of carriage horses pawing at the ground and eager to start. Then the crunch of the wheels on the gravel driveway, growing louder and different in tone as the wheels moved faster and at last



"SHERLOCK" GILLETTE

going away altogether in the distance. A little later came the sound of a train entering a far-off station, and then its departure. And these sounds, never too loud, never obtrusive, never interrupting the action on the stage, brought home to the minds of every one in the audience the desired feeling of remoteness and isolation far more effectively than any amount of dialogue could have done it. In "Sherlock Holmes," the detective

play which Mr. Gillette will do at the Broad next week, there is another instance in point—where in the famous gun chamber scene the audience must be made to feel that the place is remote from the outside world, a prison cell from which no cries could escape to the passer-by in the street. And the effect is produced by the sound of the bolts on the outside of the door, by the clanking of chains and by the footfalls of persons approaching or departing along long corridors.

Again in "Sherlock Holmes," when Professor Moriarty pays his memorable visit to Sherlock Holmes' rooms in Baker street after he has had all the streets in the neighborhood made "safe" and lured all companions away from his prospective victim. Here it is a wonderful stillness that makes the audience feel the loneliness of the detective. But when Moriarty appears in the doorway he finds Holmes prepared for him with a nervous finger on the trigger of a revolver in his dressing gown pocket. The two men are seated on opposite sides of a table, Holmes now with the revolver held openly in his hand, Moriarty remains quiet, the gun is quiet. Let him move, though, and the gun moves too, scraping across the table so that it seems almost "safe," a growing menace to the trapped criminal.

When one speaks of stage mechanics which raise the illusion to the highest power of effect, the theatre-goer of today naturally thinks of David Belasco. In some ways he may surpass Mr. Gillette in this respect, as for instance in his scene at times of the footlights. But "Sherlock Holmes," "Secret Service" and "Clarice" will always remain striking examples of the fact that their producer stands in the front rank of those who know the value of noise which is not vocal in the painting of an illusion not complete when it is merely optical.

A MAN OF TWENTY-TWO WHO WROTE HIS FIRST PLAY BACKWARD

Elmer Reizenstein, Author of "On Trial," Talks About Himself and His Work—The Remarkable History of a Remarkable Play



ELMER L. REIZENSTEIN

"IF A ONE-LEGGED MAN or a one-eyed woman writes a play, why that's all very interesting, but it doesn't make the play itself any better. Even if I am only 21, I don't see what that's got to do with my play."

The New York reviewers once having caught him, the lanky boy author of "On Trial" exploded thus with a mild sort of wrath. The way you see, then, he subsided again into bashfulness. A voluble lady whom he had encountered on his "first night" had steadily refused to believe him the author of the drama that had taken New York by storm, and referred persistently to "his father's story."

For Elmer L. Reizenstein is nothing short of an infant prodigy. Over night he became the subject of Broadway chatter. Over night he could be accomplished what many a seasoned playwright cannot hope to accomplish with a single magnum opus in a lifetime—the awakening of the critic's curiosity.

"There's not a new thing in the whole play—everything there is as old as Aristotle," explained the precocious Mr. Reizenstein with an embarrassed little grin.

Funny. Eh, What?

"The only thing that is different is the way I wrote it."

"Backward."

"But why backward?"

"Practical." Mr. Reizenstein smoothed his already smooth red hair and twiddled his derby hat nervously. He isn't spoiled yet.

"Last winter I was reading a criticism by Clayton Hamilton in which he said the plays then on Broadway were so poorly done they could be acted backward as well as forward."

"It occurred to me that it would be an interesting experiment to try a play backward just to see how it would work. To make it analytic instead of anti-theatrical—instead of inductive—to make it break down instead of build up."

This he said quite calmly as if it were nothing to upset all the conventions of playwrighting that have obtained since the days of the stagerite. More important conventions, too, are violated in "On Trial"; conventions the disregard of which Broadway has strictly forbidden. For instance, there is no comedy whatever. There is no trade full of noble and generalizing sentiment to bring a volley of applause. There are no quotable epigrams. There is, on the other hand, no ever. The conversation is simple and direct.

"I just wrote it backward, you see."

"1916"—FUTURE OF THE PHOTOPLAY

Is There a Pinero of the Screen Just Over the Horizon?

By OLIVER MOROSCO

President of the Oliver Morosco Photoplay Co.

As New Year's Day appears to be the proper time to make resolutions, it seems to me that it would be an excellent idea for producers, and others as well, to resolve to imagine every day a New Year's Day and start each new 24 hours with the same progressive spirit that the first day of each year seems to generate—momentarily.

The solid bedrock foundation of the successful photodrama of tomorrow will be the scenario or play itself. Without such a groundwork stars and directors will topple, but with such a foundation directors, stars and players in general may build worthy skyscrapers of artistic achievement before the camera.

Tomorrow must, and surely will, produce imaginative geniuses whose fame will rest wholly on their photodramas. It is not enough that they descend to "come over" from other branches of literary or theatrical endeavor. That "condescension" is an insult to a great and established medium of human expression. You and I will live to see the day of a Pinero, a Jones, a Bernstein and a Thomas of the screen—men who will become world-famous for the depth, power, sincerity and compelling truth of their photoplays. But they will be specialists; they will not do pictures on Thursdays and Saturdays and literary and theatrical work the rest of the week. And when we have reached the stage of great screen authors we producers will cast their parts just as carefully as the legitimate manager of today searches the stage world for suitable players and personalities to breathe life and reality into an author's written pages. Another year will find the photoplay developed to an even greater and finer degree of art, and tomorrow people will look back on present productions as admirers of Curnutt, Genthe and Hill now look back on their early tintypes.

reaffirmed Mr. Reizenstein, as if that explained everything.

"It's the novelty of it that made it successful. After last year's season of nauseating plays, there was a tremendous demand for novelty. This play happened to fill that demand, that's all."

"Funny how it all happened, too. I had worked for about three months on it. Then I took it to Arthur Hopkins, because I said to myself that the man who put on 'The Poor Little Rich Girl' was just the kind who would see the possibilities of an idea like mine, if there were any possibilities. I sent it to another man, too."

"That was on Monday. Two days later I had notes from both of them asking me to come to see them. I saw Mr. Hopkins first and closed with him after we had talked it over for a few minutes."

Not the First! Oh, No!

"On Trial" isn't the play I sold to Mr. Hopkins, either."

"It isn't the play?"

"No," returned the amazingly candid youth, who, for all his bashfulness and hesitation, expresses himself with a simplicity and directness that explains the straight-from-the-shoulder dialogue which is one of the outstanding features of his play.

"No. The idea was the same—a man on trial for murder, and the story worked out from the end to the beginning. But in that first play I had backed up a whole generation and gone back to an old Kentucky feud in the boyhood of the hero's father—mixed identity and all that—it was quite a complicated plot."

"Mr. Hopkins bought it, and then he told me it was a good idea, but that I'd better get a little more human nature and a little less plot into it. So I went home and wrote an entirely fresh play—new characters, new plot—merely using the same framework. I wrote it in six days."

"This second play stands virtually as it came from Mr. Reizenstein's pen—something which probably does not happen to one playwright in a hundred."

"They blue-penciled it a little," he observed.

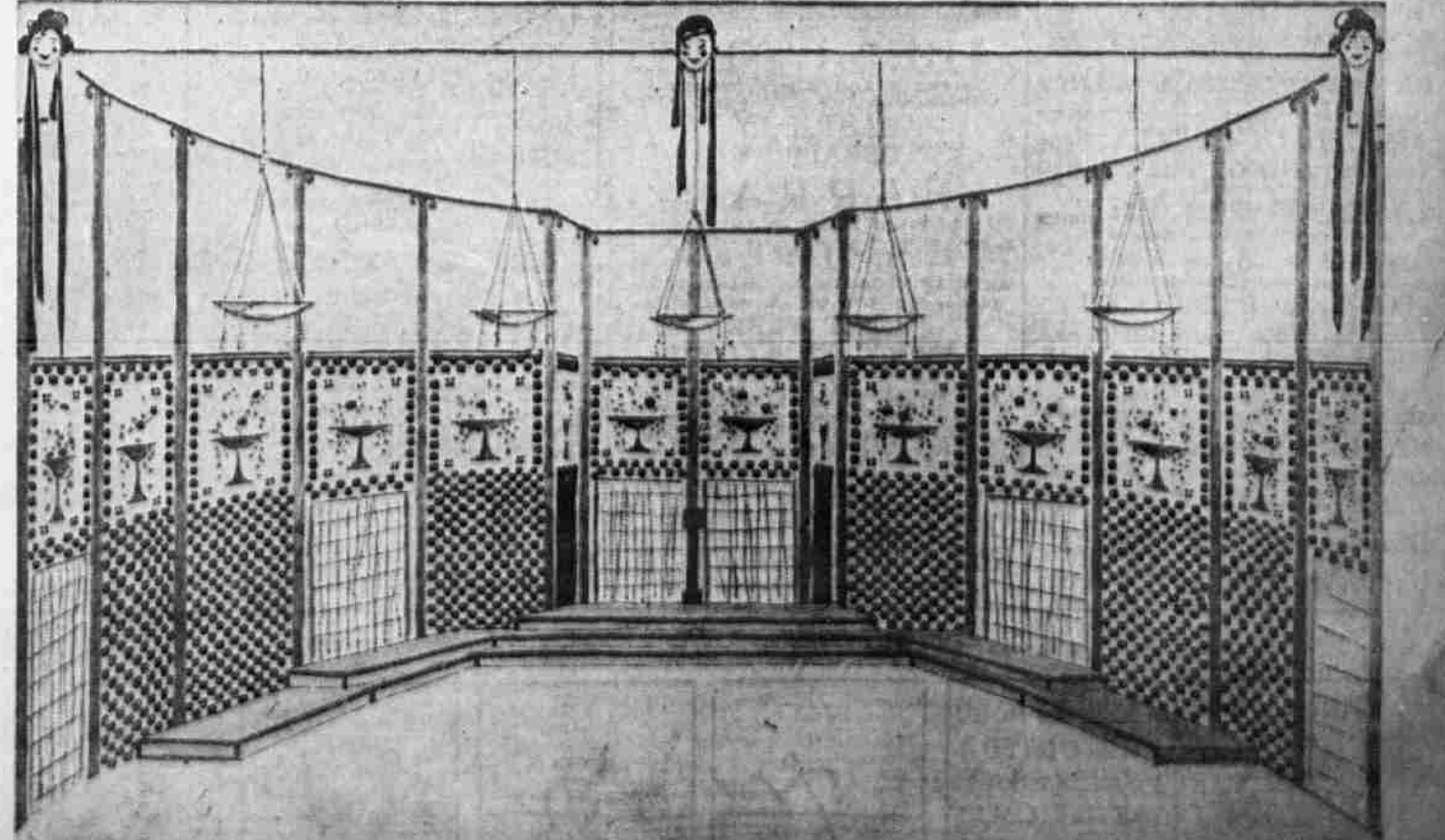
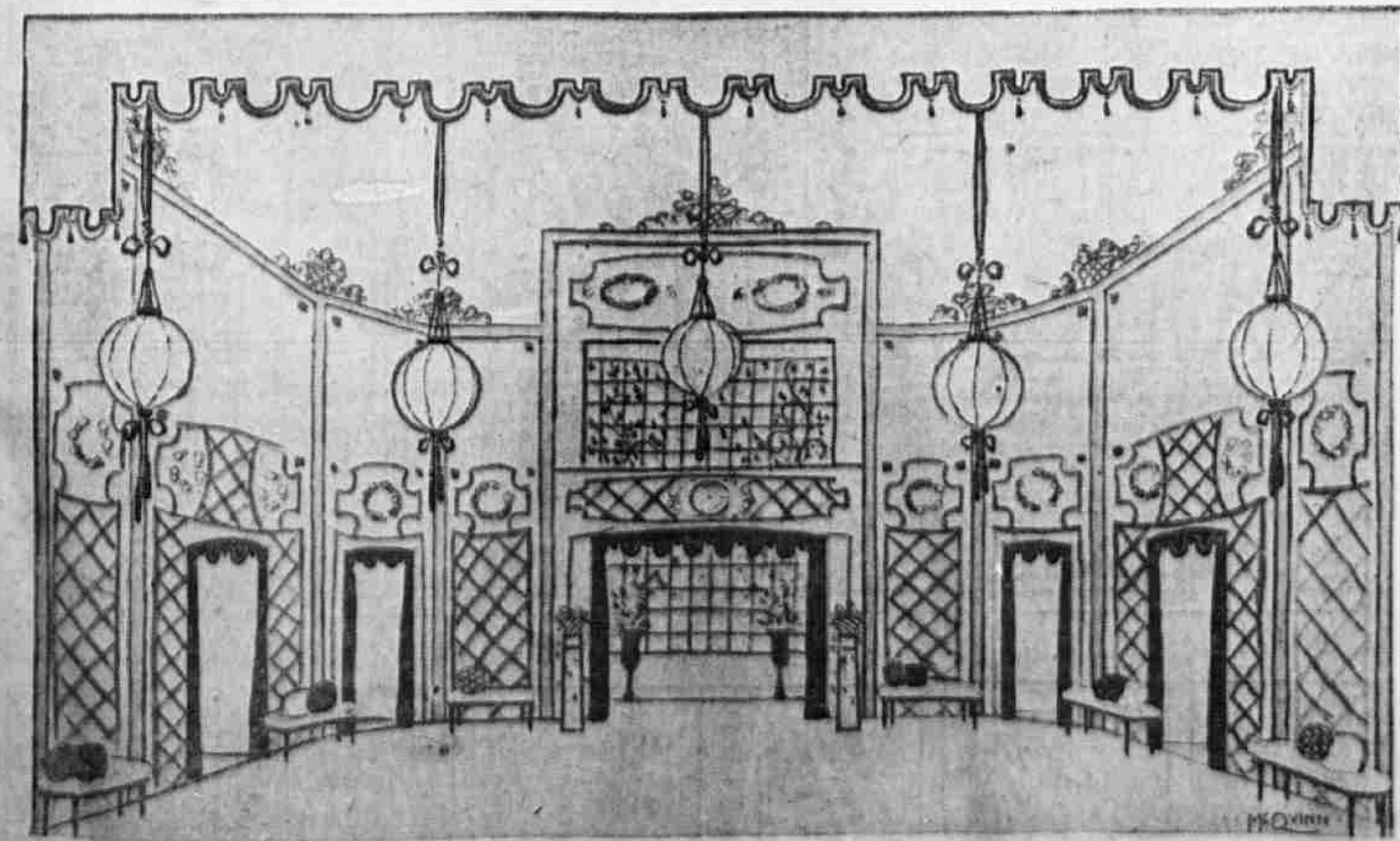
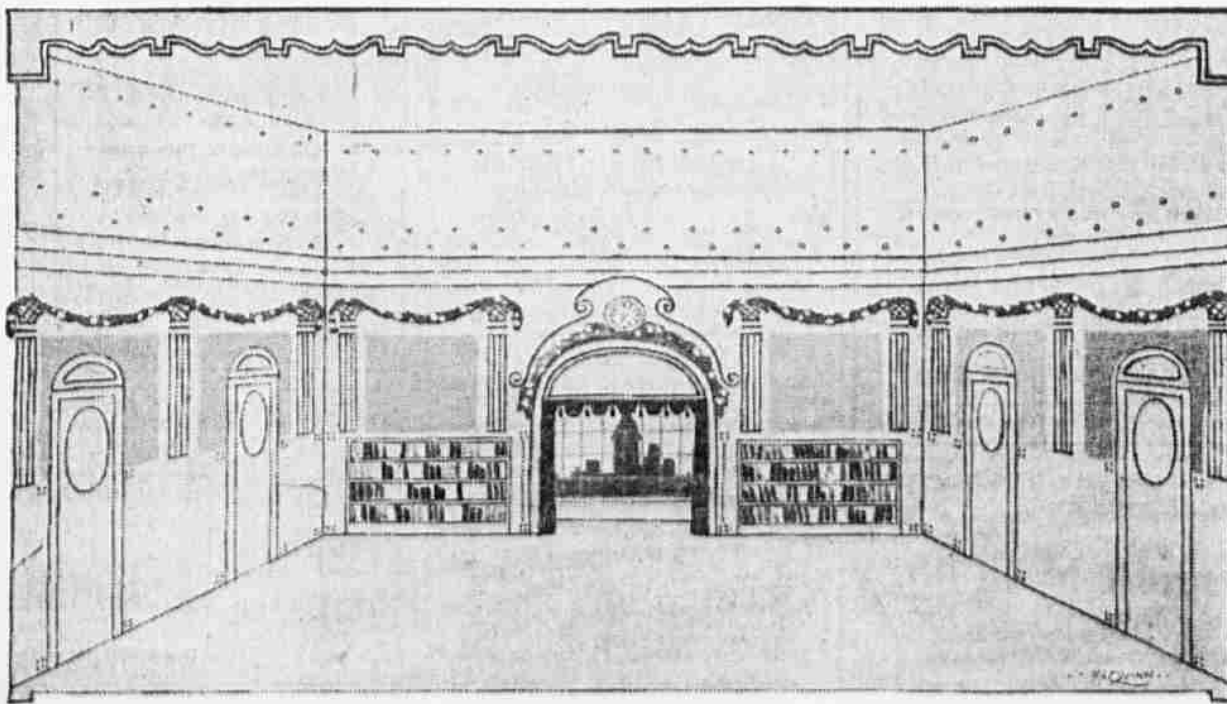
"But they didn't put anything in; they cut a bit."

"You must have had some training to be able to write 'clean copy,' as they say in the newspaper room?"

LIZZIE

Lizzie Kelly is perhaps the best-paid performer of her type on the American stage. Of course, Jasper Taylor earns more money, but Jasper doesn't get to keep it and Lizzie does. Lizzie is the canine actress who scores an individual triumph in "Watch Your Step," at the Forrest, every night. Her only blue is attached to her collar, at one end, and Harry Kelly, her boss, at the other. Lizzie is drawing her \$5 a week. She has a contract with Charles Dillingham, and Mr. Kelly is meticulous about keeping her money inviolate. He has opened a bank account for Lizzie, and keeps a set of books for her, so that when she needs a new sweater or a box of dog biscuit it comes out of her bank account and not her master's. After the war Lizzie is to be sent to a finishing school at Frankfort.

THINGS TO WATCH AT THE FORREST BESIDE YOUR STEP



Some of the remarkably charming settings designed by Robert McQuinn for "Watch Your Step." All three are treated in flat clay tones, principally the light yellow, greens and reds. They give just the fantastically gay air that suits such a revue as "Watch Your Step." The one at the top pictures the office of the tangoing lawyers, the one on the left hits off in more elaborate fashion a "Palais de Fox Trot," while the last is a Fifth Avenue cabaret in gold checkerboard design upon yellow walls, set off by blue pilasters. The three together are worth at least half the price of admission.