

Evening Ledger

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 5, 1916

PHOTOPLAY THEATRES DANCING MUSIC

SPORTING WITH THE MERMAIDS



Which is simply the business of carrying the actresses in Annette Kellermann's new Fox film...

MRS. FISKE WINS COMEDY SUCCESS IN PENNA. DUTCH

America's Most Distinguished Actress Scores in Version of Helen Martin's Novel

By WALTER PRICHARD EATON

THE return to the New York stage of the most versatile and most brilliant actress...

BETWEEN THE BATTERIES



At work on "The Lure of Heart's Desire," Edmund Breece, Virtus Scott, John Mahon, Evelyn Brent and Director Francis J. Grandon...

SCREEN SUBTLE AS SHAW

By SHELDON LEWIS

If there's any one thing above any one thing that gives me an excessive pain in the region of the well-known neck it is the assertion that the screen is an inadequate medium for delicate expression.

The trouble with such critics is that they are not clear as to just what kind of expression the screen pretends to...

"An intelligent man and woman might discuss the most urgent question of their joint lives," they rant on...

It wouldn't make any kind of screen drama, I tell them. But that's just where they muff the big point. Motion pictures do not pretend to take the place of the legitimate stage...

Clean Native Farces vs. Naughty Importations

The Author of "Baby Mine" and "Twin Beds" Tells Why, as a Business Woman, She Likes Clean Farce

By MARGARET MAYO

I WRITE clean farces because I'm a business woman and because I like big audiences and long runs. And I know that the only way to reach the large public is by giving them something that amuses them...

Naturally enough, I have watched audiences—sometimes with my heart in my mouth, but always as closely as I could. I was an actress before I tried writing plays...

"And why not?" asks O'Hara. "Why our leading light opera composer, Victor Herbert, is an Irishman, Arthur Sullivan is the son of an Irishman, and the leading composer of Great Britain today is an Irishman born—Sir Charles Villiers Stanford..."

"Since this is the case, why can't we again be in the lead? There is no reason at all and, by the way the art of music is now progressing I look for a characteristic Celtic school of music within a very brief period of time and for greater operatic works. Ireland has the greatest treasures of folklore in the world, most of which is still untouched and which would make the most magnificent grand opera or music drama libretto..."

I don't know whether to laugh at them or to cry over them. They are so pitifully deluded. They are so unaware of the deadly "special public" which has wrecked more playwrights than anything else since the world began. They never dream of that great, unpretentious, wide-spreading public that stays out of "cliques," lives and loves normally, laughs joyously and at clean things—and makes a long run. The psychology of all this is very simple—people recent being made uncomfortable in the theatre, and

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Life Is a Stage and the World Its Setting

Director of the Famous Players Talks of the Work Which Is Necessary to Nature's Wonderful Backgrounds

By HUGH FORD

ALTHOUGH the stage and the motion picture are inevitably linked together by many common ties, there is at least one point at which they diverge widely—the obtaining of settings. When the motion picture was new and naturally looked to its older brother for guidance, the studio played a very important part in the staging of picture plays. Borrowing the scene painter and the stage carpenter from the theatre, the motion-picture producer proceeded to build and to paint the greater portion of his backgrounds.

So, as in the theatre, the painted drop represented everything that the stage had ever called upon it to portray, from the village street to the exterior of a house of the very reason themselves. There were two reasons for this failure of the filmman to take advantage at once of the realism in settings which was offered by the mobility of the motion-picture camera. One was the fact that the technicalities of moving picture photography did not develop to that point which permitted the use of the camera in natural sunlight for some time after the actual taking of moving pictures became a commercial possibility. A great deal of the early experimentation had taken place with artificial light and the newer development was not matured at once.

The other reason was the fact that a great deal of trick work was indulged in during these early stages of the photography. Men were shown climbing up and down the fronts of houses with great ease and gusto. This sort of work must of necessity be carried on in the studio. The process was very simple. A canvas replica of the front of a building was painted and erected in the studio. Then, when the scenes on the sidewalk had been photographed, the canvas was taken down and laid upon the floor of the stage, the camera being shifted to a platform from which it was tilted downward to focus upon the canvas. The man who was to be seen crawling up the front of the building would then proceed to crawl on hands and knees across the canvas, his only peril existing in the possibility of setting splinters in his palms.

When the finished picture was shown, the public gasped at the sight of this man raking his neck by the daring feat of ascending the face of a building. You can fool the people some of the time, but the trick work began to pall on the most glib of persons learned to realize that it was far from a fact that "you see it in the films it is true."

These many trick comedies continued in peace, the manufactured thrill ceased to thrill. Meanwhile exterior photography, which first manifested itself in the picturing of express trains, race horses and automobiles, became more and more important and the use of natural settings rapidly increased in vogue.

That was the parting of the ways, so far as backgrounds are concerned, between the theatre and the motion picture. Here realism stepped in, in the one case, and filled a gap which must ever remain unfilled in the other. But the step was by no means taken in its entirety. At this time New York and New Jersey were as yet undeveloped from a motion-picture standpoint. As a result



The Jack is John, the Barrymore lik, and he has just received his first royal snub in "Nearly a King," a Famous Players production, due at the Stanley the last half of next week.

the Jersey woods served every conceivable purpose and were made to represent everything in nature but the ocean itself. A curious influence of the stage still manifested itself in the penchant of many producers for building false fronts of houses out in the country rather than use the real thing.

Of course this method of obtaining atmosphere is still essential in some cases. Where one is reproducing some familiar tavern or a building which would undoubtedly have been seen by the audience.

PERSONALITY IS THE MAKING OF A STAR
By OLIVER MOROSCO

Some of the stars who have been the greatest favorites on the stage may fall entirely when put into film. No matter how popular a star may have been on the stage, nor how great her success, she may be a flat failure in motion pictures. We may put her into one picture, believing that her stage popularity will remain with her to the end; but as soon as that picture is released, we may learn, to our sorrow and heavy financial loss, through the efficiency of the criticism blank system with which the Paramount Pictures Corporation obtains through their exhibitors the opinions of the picture-going public, that this star will not do for motion pictures.

On the other hand, some girl may come along who never has had any stage or screen experience whatever, but who has a pleasing personality and a natural aptitude for acting. She may score in a picture from the very first, and spring into national popularity within a year. Such a girl we call a decided find.

It does not apply to men as much as to women. As you know, there are far more popular women on the stage and screen than there are men. There are a few men who may class as "matinee idols," but for the greater part popularity clings to the women performers. Only occasionally does a man get into motion pictures who ranks high as a favorite. Dustin Farnum is one of the very few, and that is why so many of the plays are built around women stars.

One of the prime reasons why the movie dramas have such a general level of trashy mediocrity is because the manufacturer, so far as we could figure it out from the files of the leading trade journals, were producing in America last autumn at the rate of about 6000 films a year.

There are not good story-writers enough, there are not good directors enough, there is not daylight and time enough in all the world to turn out half of 6000 movies in a year which can lay any claim to narrative skill and original charm. The sooner the movie manufacturers wake up to this fact, the sooner we "highbrows" will stop telling them they are making pictorial dime novels.

It is safe to say that not one movie in 50 is written with sufficient care, rehearsed with sufficient care, directed by a man who isn't fagged physically or at least whose brain isn't buzzing with the idea of a new gimmick.

MY BRAIN-CHILD MARIE-ODILE

By FRANCIS STARR

Just how our stage portraits are created is always an interesting mystery to the layman. To conceal the "means" so completely that an illusion of truth is so gained is the perfect art of acting. But how does the actor know so many sides of life? He cannot depend upon "inspiration" or a mastery of the a b c's of his art, known as "technique," to carry him into these different recesses of character. Does he live the role when he plays it? How many absurd things have we read about "living" roles. Let us dispense with that immediately.

Imagination is the principal factor in the creation of all things artistic, but if a painter were going to make a sketch of Norway, he would, I dare say, have seen what Norway was like. The painter might not paint a moonlight at night while the moon was shining, but he has looked hard at it and remembered it the next morning. With the accuracy of his memory, stimulated by his imagination, he creates the illusion of truth that we admire in his canvas. So the actor should know his "Norway" or see his "moonlight" and remember.

When "Marie-Odile" came into my hands I imagined what a convent was like, but I was consumed with a desire to see it, so I journeyed into the sholsters and stayed there, all too short a time, for I found peace and happiness with the wonderfully human and kind sisters. I did not go there to imitate, I wanted to absorb their life, their ways, to store in my mind an impression, to remember. I lived their life as nearly as a visitor can. I must confess that it appealed to me strangely and I dreaded the day of departure. The content, the simplicity of the sisters, the beauty of their faith, the concentration of their souls, made an irresistible appeal not only to my religious sense, but to my love of the beautiful. It is the memory of that impression, stored in my mind, that I use in my acting of "Marie-Odile." How accurately my memory served me, in what degree my imagination stimulated it, can only be judged if an illusion of truth is felt by those who view it. Alas, the actor cannot step back from his canvas and see his picture. All he can do is "feel" and trust to the other fellow's opinion!

WHEN SPARTA CRIED, "WE AND ZEUS!" AND TORE A SCRAP OF PAPER

LAST Friday Philip Moeller's stupendously amusing satire of Sparta, Troy and Berlin, "Helena's Husband," arrived at the Little Theatre via the Stage Society. It shared the same fate that followed its production by the Washington Square Players in New York, immediate fame and unending laughter. Portions of the playlet have already been printed in Vanity Fair and the Boston Transcript. Here is the final scene with the introduction supplied by the latter publication.

At the beginning of the play, Helena of Troy, being beautified by her Nubian slave, Teuma, a lady of much personal efficiency and wide knowledge of life, who has "been so busy having children that she hasn't had time to get married." Helena speaks patronizingly of her Moo-Moo, officially known in state documents as Menelaus, King of Sparta-Moo-Moo. It seems, fairly to understand her, and has taken of late to much reading and study with the royal librarian, Analytikos, who serves the kingdom also as a sort of unofficial prime minister. When her royal husband enters, Helena "convinces him in a thousand words that she is a silent woman," and pettishly goes off to her bath. "Will no one rid me of this pest?" cries the king in agony. But his simple brain gradually generates an idea—namely, that he would be rid of his wife if she were to run away from him. It becomes his royal aim to introduce some handsome stranger into her apartments and "manage to leave them alone together."

Then, as from the gods, a young shepherd leaps over the battlements. Analytikos is about to make ready the boiling oil which the law prescribes for such as enter the queen's apartments, but Menelaus restrains him, wishing to hear the stranger's tale. Having lately come down from the hills—the shepherd recounts—he was munching an apple when he was stopped by three alpsies. Each begged the apple of him, and one offered him money, another wisdom, and the third a pretty girl. "Having been a long time in the hills, I chose the pretty girl," the youth explains. And now he is here, hoping for one glimpse of the beautiful Helena. The matter can easily be arranged, Menelaus replies, discreetly withdrawing with the librarian. And when Helena enters, Paris needs but a few soft and well-turned lines to convince her that she is all wisdom, beauty and truth, spiritually choked in this stuffy atmosphere, a misdirected and misunderstood woman. Helena scribbles a few lines on a piece of papyrus and pastes it on a nearby shield. Menelaus enters, rejoicing in the success of his ruse, and has newly gained freedom. Forthwith the sheik Teuma, rushes in, bursting with the happiness of evil news to tell. The play then continues.



FISKE O'HARA The popular Irish singing comedian who returns to the Walnut next week in a new play, "Kilkenny."

Traum points to the shield. Analytikos tears the piece of papyrus off the shield and brings it to Menelaus. Menelaus (reading)—"I am not a bad woman. I did what I had to do. How dare you blame me for what I did? Trauma prides himself before the king. Teuma—A rumor flies through the city. He'll Analytikos (taxation)—Well? Well? Analytikos (curiously to Analytikos)—Rid me of this wicked man! Trauma—Kil! Trauma—Kil! Trauma (in a rage)—Out of my sight, you pernicious Nubian!

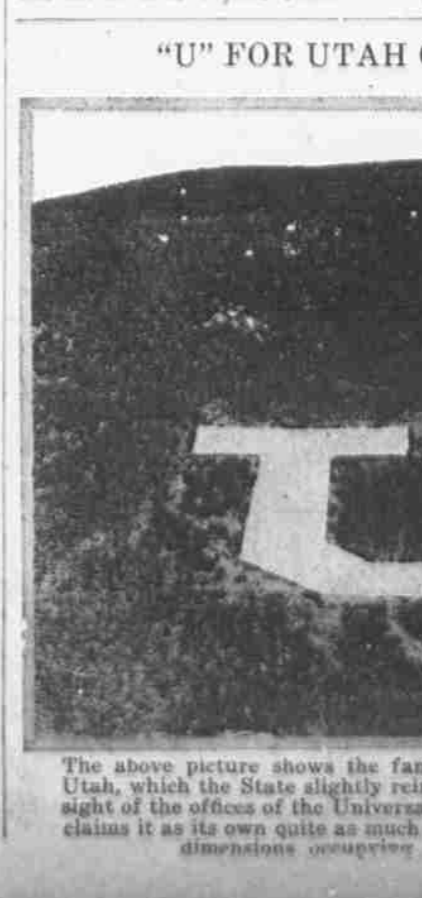


ALEXANDRA CARLISLE The distinguished comedienne, who will support E. H. Sothern, at the Adelphi, when Alfred Sutr's new comedy, "The Two Virtues," is shown there February 14.

IRELAND UBER ALLES IN MUSIC, SAYS FISKE O'HARA

Dublin will be the mecca of musicians at no very distant date, is the prophecy of Fiske O'Hara, who comes to the Walnut in Augustus Pittou, Sr.'s new play, "Kilkenny." It is the belief of this young Irish tenor that before long our orchestras will be filled up with Irish musicians and most of our operas will be written by composers educated in the tight little island.

"Why our leading light opera composer, Victor Herbert, is an Irishman, Arthur Sullivan is the son of an Irishman, and the leading composer of Great Britain today is an Irishman born—Sir Charles Villiers Stanford. If you want to go back to first principles, since most of my critics will say that these men were educated in Germany, who was it first taught the Germans musical art? Look up ancient history and you will find that it was the Irish monks who went over to Germany and not only taught the Teutons music, but how to read and to write. So all the boasted musical culture of Germany is due to the Irish."



"U" FOR UTAH OR UNIVERSAL? The above picture shows the famous natural "U" in the State of Utah, which the State slightly reinforced with concrete. It is within sight of the offices of the Universal Film Corporation that, naturally, claims it as its own quite as much as the State's. The "U" is of huge dimensions occupying the face of a hillside.