

BEFORE THE CURTAIN GOES UP

Melodrama Holds Main Interest in Philadelphia Houses—Two New Shows Coming and Ditrachstein Changes His Bill

By HENRY M. NEELY
AFTER a quiet week, with only one novelty, next Monday night will be more lively than the local theatres, with two new shows coming in and a third being put on by a company already here.

The visitors are "The Broadway Melodrama," which succeeds Elsie Janis at the Forrest, and Otis Skinner in "The Last Waltz" at the Adelphi. "Blood and Sand," which replaces "The East of Eden" at the Broad. The third novelty is "Face Value," which Leo Ditrachstein will substitute for "Toto" at the Lyric.

There will, of course, be the usual changes of bill at Keith's and at the Chestnut Street Opera House. The Chestnut remain as "The Bat," still crowded in at the Adelphi. "Blood and Sand" at the Adelphi. "The Emperor Jones" at the Adelphi. "The Last Waltz" at the Adelphi.

THIS week has given us an interesting illustration of the wide variety of appeals that the theatre can make. With comedy, drama, opera and revue representing the conventional fare at four of the theatres we have had, at four others, shows that represent the unusual.

These are not plays which almost anyone could act with success, one which scarcely any actor could act with success and another which doesn't act with success at all.

"The Last Waltz" is an excellent example of the wide variety of appeals that the theatre can make. It is a play which almost anyone could act with success, one which scarcely any actor could act with success and another which doesn't act with success at all.

And, by the way, wouldn't it have been better to have had the Bambergs appear in "The Bat"?

The Adelphi show and "Blood and Sand" typify the main line of the theatre. These are the plays which the theatre should be concerned with. It will have no success with a capital A, will have no success with a capital A.

You are never taken into the confidence of the authors of "The Bat." You become a part of the household that is so comfortable and so secure that you never feel that you are sharing their terror and excitement and their yearning to get out of the bottom of the puzzle.

In "Blood and Sand," there isn't a mystery. You are simply confronted by a gang of characters who are so real and so human that you can't help but feel that you are sharing their terror and excitement and their yearning to get out of the bottom of the puzzle.

From then on it is only a question of how close to death you will come, and of the brain and heavy eye will have to display to round them in the final scene. Of course you know you're going to do it in the end. But it's a lot of fun to watch.

"The Emperor Jones" at the Walnut is the one which scarcely anybody could act with success. It is an excellent play for reading in the quiet of your own room, but it is not a play which should be put on a stage.

But, transplanted to the visible stage, it becomes a melodramatic monstrosity, without any relief, with none of the relief which is the fundamental necessity for drama and with all the monotony of a long scene when one actor confronts another.

And even as a monologue it has the cardinal defect of exposing its whole scheme almost at the start.

After the Emperor Jones finishes his speech there isn't the slightest doubt in the mind of any intelligent audience of just what is going to happen thereafter.

The "silver bullet" idea has been "planted" with such exaggerated emphasis that even its final effect is clearly foreseen.

Psychologically the story asks too much of us. We can admit that supreme moment would play upon the mind of a ignorant Negro. Bullman porter as which he had ever known. But to ask us to believe that this terror would clear "history" being scenes from the ancient history of a man would never even have heard it to ask too much.

THE actor who doesn't have to act is, of course, Babe Ruth. He is, in fact, doing it in a rather well—or let us say he doesn't do it badly either. We should like to see these people for only a few minutes, in which they can see that they are not really interested in twenty minutes, in which they can see that they are not really interested in twenty minutes, in which they can see that they are not really interested in twenty minutes.

Finally, such acts do not directly repay their financial cost. Babe Ruth is getting \$20,000 a week. Individually, they do not attract as much money as we know as "Bully" does—it gets people talking about the theatre in which it appears and the newspaper in which it is mentioned (just as I am doing now) and the financial deficit can be booked as an expense for extra publicity. And it's worth it.

"The Broadway Melodrama" at the Adelphi. "Blood and Sand" at the Adelphi. "The Emperor Jones" at the Adelphi. "The Last Waltz" at the Adelphi.

STARS OF THE STAGE COMING HERE NEXT WEEK



THE CRITIC TALKS TO MUSIC LOVERS

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MUSIC NOTES

"Loving" will be the second opera of the Metropolitan season next Monday evening. The production will be directed by the composer, Richard Strauss.

MOVIEGRAMS OF THE WEEK

Pauline Frederick and Farnum Films Open—Four Feature Pictures Held Over—Notes on Photoplay Houses

THERE is quiet about Philadelphia's "Movie Row" next week after the influx of features which kept all the feature houses from home to home.

One of all the big specials which came in last week, "The Sheik," that triumphant best-seller, has had the longest queue outside the theatre.

Pauline Frederick's memorable "Bella Donna" had all the subtlety and beauty which "The Sheik" lacks.

"Desert Love" popular in "The Sheik" is another of the big specials which came in last week.

"The Last Waltz" is an excellent example of the wide variety of appeals that the theatre can make.

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Advertisement for Douglas Fairbanks' "The Three Musketeers" at the Adelphi Theatre. The ad features a large graphic of a sword and the text: "4TH AND LAST RECORD WEEK 4TH STARTING MONDAY 11 A. M.—CONTINUOUS—11 P. M. YOU WILL MISS THE THRILL OF YOUR LIFE IF YOU DON'T SEE DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS IN THE 3 MUSKETEERS THE GREATEST PRODUCTION OF THE MODERN STAGE OR SCREEN ACCOMPANIED BY A SELECTED SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA"

Advertisement for "The World's Sweetheart" Mary Pickford at the Chestnut and 19th Streets Theatre. The ad features a portrait of Mary Pickford and the text: "Next Attraction—The World's Sweetheart MARY PICKFORD in the Screen Classic 'LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY' PHILADELPHIA'S NEWEST AND CLASSIEST PHOTOPLAY HOUSE PRESENTING ONLY THE GREATEST IN PICTURES"

Advertisement for "The Mother and the Law" at the Ambassador Theatre. The ad features a portrait of Ethel Barrymore and the text: "AMBASSADOR THEATRE BALTIMORE AVE. AT 56TH ST. ENTIRE WEEK OF DEC. 5 D. W. GRIFFITH'S Dramatic Thunderbolt THE MOTHER AND THE LAW A Story of Today Founded on Facts LAUGHS!—THRILLS!—SUSPENSE! CAST INCLUDES MAE MARSH, ROBERT HARRON, MIRIAM COOPER, RALPH LEWIS, WALTER LONG, MARGARET MARSH"