

# BEHIND SCENES, FACTOR IN PLAY

### Shows Work Necessary For Amateur Play

BY JESSIE ROYCE LANDIS

Editor's note: Accompanying is one of a series of articles concerning the production of amateur plays, Mrs. Landis, author of these articles, is director of the North Shore Players, and one of the best known dramatic artists and instructors in this vicinity.



Jessie R. Landis

The moving picture industry has brought one fact forcibly to our attention in late years that few folks in the audience ever properly appreciated. That is the amount of work and time and energy that is devoted "behind the scenes."

Moving picture magazines have shown us sets and locations and the other arts that go to make up a scene from the Klondike, the Riviera, the Saskatchewan or the Amazon; the whirling snow of "Way Down East" or the thunder, lightning and tropical hurricane of a shipwreck in the vicinity of the Isle of Yap.

When you stop to consider that all of these scenes are "shot" within a few miles of Hollywood, or wherever the studio is located, one begins to realize that there is an art behind the scenes as well as in front where the actors portray their parts.

Many of you recall the storm scene in "Peg O' My Heart" presented by the North Shore Players at several of the North Shore towns last season. There were almost as many people employed in operating the mechanical devices of this storm scene as there were actors on the stage in front.

The rain effect was produced by means of a small teeter-totter; the teeter part being built like a hollow box, the bottom of which was covered with wire netting. Inside of this box were several hundred of dried peas. By tipping this teeter-totter the peas were caused to roll along the screen thus producing the rain effect. Lightning was made by rubbing a file on a piece of carbon attached to an electric circuit. Two men were necessary in order to produce the thunder. One worked what is known as a thunder-sheet and the other a bass drum. The drum gave the crash while the thunder-sheet the roll that follows. Another man was necessary to work what is known as the dimmer. This caused the light to grow dim as the storm came up. And all of this phenomena had to be handled and timed to a nicety to co-ordinate with the movement of the play.

The bane of amateur productions lies in the unexpected comedy that is so often unwittingly presented. We see Hamlet stalking before the footlights in solemn majesty, only to trip over a mop handle carelessly left on the center stage by an overworked property manager. Or we hear the heroine say dramatically "This pistol shot will end all," the click of the hammer on an empty chamber and two minutes later the belated tap of the basedrummer waking up from a reverie. The work and the men behind the scenes have just as great an influence on the proper presentation of a play as the ability of the actors before the footlights and unless both are properly coordinated no play can be successful.

### State Congregational Head Speaks in Winnetka Sunday

Tomorrow morning at the Winnetka Congregational church the sermon will be by the Rev. Charles C. Merrill, state superintendent for the Congregational churches of Illinois.

Mr. Merrill has recently come to Illinois from the superintendency of Vermont, and before that was doing a national work on the Apportionment plan of the demonstration. He is one of the most sagacious church leaders in America, and Rev. James A. Richards, local pastor, states he is pleased that Winnetka is to have this opportunity to hear him.

### EMANCIPATING POWER OF TRUTH, IS SUBJECT

Winnetka men will find real interest in the topic "The Emancipating Power of Truth," the subject for the lesson and discussion tomorrow at the Men's Sunday Morning class meeting at 9:30 o'clock in the Neighborhood room of Community House. This is only one of a series of topics which the laymen of the community are finding of so much practical value and are doubtless responsible for the reflection one hears in remarks and earnest discussion on the trains and at the station each day.

These meetings are for all Winnetka men. The only responsibility attached is to try and bring a friend.

All men and their wives of the Congregation church are cordially invited to a social gathering from 6 to 8 o'clock in the Assembly room of Community House before church services this Sunday evening.

### WITH PERRIN, REALTOR

Mr. L. B. Sherman, Jr., 575 Sheridan road, Winnetka, is now associated with A. C. Perrin, realtor, in Winnetka.

### E. C. Weissenberg Basks In Sunny Florida Clime

Dear friends—permit us to announce that while we are shivering with February's snow and blow, our mutual acquaintance and townsman, E. C. Weissenberg, is basking within the sun-showered precincts of Miami, Florida. We glance at a post card view of the Urmev hotel where "E. C." is stopping in this balmy weather. And, oh, 'lest we forget"—Mr. Weissenberg is intent upon a journey to Cuba. Says so on his postcard.

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