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Wonderful Growth of the Stock

An Experienced Stage Director Explains the Many Advantages of the New Regime and Makes Some Predictions-Oscar Hammerstein's Assignment.

A good deal of more or less sensible matter has been written recently about the "trend of the drama" in this country, and almost every manager of prominence in the larger cities has at some time or other delivered himself of a learned statement as to what hampers the progress of true art, of which, by the way, many of them know about as much as a huckleberry pie knows about pumpkins. The desire of the newspaper man to make his theatrical column occupy the usual amount of space in the Sunday edition affords the manager who is constantly on



JACK C. HUFFMAN. the lookout for a little free advertising the opportunity to gratify his heart's desire, with the result that much has been printed on this subject which would be all right in a humorous publication, but is woefully out of place in the average newspaper, which is supposed to be taken seriously.

It is a strange circumstance that no one of these amusement caterers has ever seen fit to discuss the undoubted tendency toward the old stock company idea which is observable on every hand. Last season, outside of the three so called stock companies in this city, there were probably not more than a half dozen of these organizations worthy of the name in this country. Now there are more than 40 of them. Then, too, there are a number of repertory companies which, being unable to pirate plays now because of the recent amendment to the copyright law and finding that the "chestnuts" no longer have the necessary drawing power, present dramas and comedies either by new authors or by those whose names stand in the top roll of American playwrights. The tendency of all this is naturally to make the life of the dramatist more worth the living, and it is also serving to develop versatility in our actors, something in which, since the old stock and repertory days, they have been notoriously deficient.

Last season in Brooklyn the Park theater was not the most successful place of amusement on the western hemisphere Edwin Knowles found that the Brooklynites would not patronize it sufficiently to make it a paying investment, and he gave it up. Hyde & Behman, than whom no shrewder theatrical purveyors exist any where, set everybody to talking about their lack of judgment, in one instance at least, by promptly taking the place. When later they announced that they purposed running the house at popular prices, and that they would maintain there a permanent stock company of well known and high salaried actors, and, fur ther, that they would present recent successful plays, as well as some new ones, the wiseacres shook their heads still more. They have not only done all this, but they have made special scenery and properties for each of their weekly productions which would compare favorably with most of the pretentious traveling organizations, and, what is more, they are still doing it and will continue to do it, for they have found that it pays handsomely.

When Hyde & Behman determined to change the policy of the Park theater, the first thing to do was to find a man who was a capable stage director. Nowadays there are no stage directors in the ordinary companies. There is, of course, a so called 'stage manager," who is usually a sort of pretentious property man, and who gen erally knows nothing of the technique of the drama, but when you have a real stock company it is necessary also to have a man who shall be a stage director in everything that the word implies He must hire the proper actors, select the plays, cast them, direct the rehearsals, instruct the scene painters and carpenters as to their portion of the work, give orders to the light man, supervise the drilling of the "supers," when the s are any, and make suggestions to the layers as to the costumes to be worn, and, werst of all. he must do this once every week under the system now prevailing at the Brooklyn

Park theater. Mr. Jack C. Huffman was at last selected for this difficult post, and that he has filled it acceptably is best evidenced by the fact that the company has been a success Mr. Huffman, although a young man, is what is generally spoken of as "an old actor." because his stage experience has been a very varied one. He was once a star for a couple of seasons, and Miss Julia Arthur was his leading lady. Last season Mr Huffman was the stage director at the Avenue theater, Pittsburg, the stock com puny attached to which house was perhaps the most successful in America. The resuit of the experiment there is undoubted ly largely responsible for the recent remickable growth of the stock company

I asked Mr. Huffman the other day whether or not the stock company was a good thing for the actor, and he unhesitatingly answered in the affirmative, explaining that the actor was thereby fitted for playing a wide range of characters instead of being confined practically to one part a season, as is the case with a traveling combination. Thus the actor, when he happens to be out of employment, is not abliged to look for one particular sort of a

rose, but because of his sersatility is qualffled to take almost any one that may happen along. Any performer will tell you that he has often failed to get an engagement for the reason that as he had never played anything just like it the manager was unwilling to let him try it. If he had been a stock actor, the chances are that objection would not have prevailed.

From the standpoint of the public, Mr. Huffman is of the opinion that there is also a benefit. His reason for this is that as the actors become more versatile they necessarily broaden in their methods, and the inevitable result is better performances. Then the player in a stock company, being known to the frequenters of the house, who see his name on the bills every week, acquires a sort of personal following. He is anxious never to lose his grip on these people, and he is also constantly on the qui vive to add to their number. It is but natural, therefore, that he should take the greatest pride in his work, and the actor who is always conscientious is seldom a bad actor. Then there is another point which, while perhaps it does not reflect much credit on the average performer, is none the less a good one. No player who is obliged to give a matinee and evening performance every day and to rehearse a new piece every week besides is apt to be so familiar with his lines and business as to be "slouchy." He may know them perfectly, and with Mr. Huffman must, but he is not so tired of them from nightly repetition for an entire season or more that they simply roll off his tongue when he opens his mouth, making such a thing as thought a superfluity With him he must think of what he is doing, must have his head about him all the time. This serves to give to the performance a snap and go which are frequently lacking in the representations given by the "one piece" traveling combinations and the so called stock theaters which put a play on in the fall and expect it to run throughout the season. In other words, there is spontaneity, which is, after all, the keystone of dramatic success.

Mr. Huffman is of the opinion that within a couple of years there will not be a city of any importance in the United States which will not maintain at least one first class stock company. That there is a trend that way may be seen in St. Louis, which now has three houses devoted to this "new-old" idea. Many theaters which have not paid the interest on the money invested in their erection for years have been converted into stock houses, put in charge of thoroughly competent stage directors and have immediately become paying investments. It is but natural that the example of these places should inspire others to tread in the same pleasant path. At the present time there are no less than nine houses in large cities now devoted to combinations which will certainly have stock companies next season-and "there are others." A couple of years ago, an actor of any repute was ashamed to admit that he was a member of a "popular price" stock company. He would never take such an engagement if there was anything else to be had, and he knew that his friends knew this. Now, however, the best of them are proud to tell that they have played "an entire season" at such and such a house. The high priced leading men and women are many of them now members of these organizations, and many more have graduated from them into positions of greater prominence and larger salary.

It is possible that Mr. Huffman may be wrong in his deductions, but there can be no mistake about his facts. They exist, as any one may learn who has the time and inclination to inquire. The future may not be as rosy for the actor as he thinks, and the stock system, in its true sense, may not develop as rapidly and extensively as he predicts, but there is no doubt that he is more than warranted in all that he says by the present trend of things theatrical and the further fact that the people are tired of paying \$1.50 to see a performance not one whit better than that which they may witness at a stock theater for one-third that price. If Mr. Huffman's hope should become a verity, it would do more to advance the standard of the American stage than the efforts of a thousand speculative charlatans such as now largely control the theatrical business of this country. Let us hope that this dramatic millennium may be near at hand.

The assignment of Oscar Hammerstein will prove much more than a nine days' wonder along the Rialto, for it is doubtless true that the theatrical world has not seen a more striking and commanding figure in many years, and everybody who knows Hammerstein is confident that he will bob up serenely in the near future If his fortune had been dissipated, it is possible that he might drop out of sight But when a man is worth something like \$750,000 above all indebtedness he can scarcely be called a pauper Hammerstein is too restless and positive a figure to long remain dormant He dearly loves the show business, and as he has more good ideas in a week than the average manager has in a month he will be heard from again without a doubt. The real cause of the trouble at the Olympia is that the people do not eem to want a music hall and a theater under the same roof. Each in-



OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN.

jures the other, and it is not difficult to understand why Then things have come to such a pass here in the variety business that in order to attract any patronage to the high toned music balls it is necessary to have performers from abroad who demand enormous salaries and who seldom 'make good." as the Rialtoite would put

it. Hammerstein told me last June that it was impossible to make money without these people, and it was equally impossible to make money with them, as even if they succeeded they took pretty much all that came in at the box office. He even then said that he was seriously thinking of quitting vandeville altogether OCTAVUS COHER.

Durcyville News. DARCYVILLE, Dec. 3 .- His grace archbishop Cleary, Kingston, came on last Sunday to St. Bridget's church, Stanleyville, to baptize the new bell. The congregation were glad to see him again. An eloquent address was read by P. C. McParland, one of the committee of the church. The bell now be raised immediately. James Dowdall is around again finishing threshing. A heavy snowstorm fell on Dec. 1st and bob sleighs are now out continually Water is very scarce and rain is badly needed. Patrick Kelly is able to move around after his long illness.

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desire. Thanks to Munyon. Munyou's kneededic Cure settom falls to re-lieve in one to three hours and cures in a few days. Price 25c Munyon's Dyspepsia Cure positively cures all orms of indigestion and stomach troubles.

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Professor of French Language, Will take a few pupils at his home. 23 Sydenham Street, near Earl Street. Call between 2 and 4 P.M.

How the Wisest Theories Often Fail to Fetch.

SKILL MAY WIN AGAINST STYLE.

Influence of Leads Upon Adversaries. Short Suit Openings Not Necessarily Signs of Weakness-Instructive Example of a Short Trump Attack.

It was well that the friends of the "invitation" game didn't go wild with delight when the New Jersey Whist club team, playing "invitations," won the American Whist league challenge trophy from Baltimore and defended it once against Brooklyn, for since these notable victories the Jerseymen have lost the cup to another club in their own state—the Park club of Plainfield, N. J.

And I must state with all candorthough I am one of the most enthusiastic friends, backers and promoters of the "incitation" game-the Park club team played plain, "fourth best" whist-plain as it can be with American leads and subechoes and all the refinements of latter day conventionalism.

I have never claimed the winning of any match at whist to be due solely or even mainly to "system," so that I am free to say, without prejudice, that the defeat of the New Jersey Whist club by Park was due, not to a superior style, but to superior skill on the part of the victors. The Park club team is unquestionably one of the ablest in the country. Its members have fought side by side for several years in local and national matches. In their state tournaments they have shown themselves facile principes by permanently winning two New Jersey Whist association trophies, and in the national field they have before held the A. W. L. challenge trophy through a victory over the famous Hamil ton club"big four" of Philadelphia. They are experienced, clever players, amalgamated into a hard pulling team by constant practice together. It will be surprising if they do not maintain their recently acquired supremacy in a series of challenge matches to come. Though I am in sympathy with the New

Jersey Whist club team in their capable efforts to play the "invitation" game, I cannot wholly indorse their position in playing also "a strictly long suit game," as they and close observers of their style say they do. In "Whist Openings" I am on record in opposition to the long suit game with "frills." If one tries the true invitation game, he must be untrammeled by strict long suitism, and if he chooses to abide by strict long suitism he would better let generally informatory leads alone. If your adversaries know that you invariably open your longest suit and at the same time can tell from your card led whether you are strong or weak, particularly in trumps-which seems to be the New Jersey Whist club system, like "modifled" whist-you simply give your adversaries the advantage of compulsory trump showing leads, which are an old story and time and again have been proved fallacious.

My theory of the game is quite different. I never open a long suit with a small card unless I am strong enough all round to make the bringing in of the long suit a reasonable probability, but, on the other hand, I don't aim to show weakness by my original lead. The short suit opening is not necessarily an indication of weakness, nor is the top of nothing opening form a weak suit. I recollect a case of recent occurrence in which I opened with a plain suit 8 spot from the lead of 8, 6, 8 and 2, and in the end I won a trick with my 6. The adversaries didn't know it until it was too late, but I had four trumps and other good cards. The 8 led was not an indication of weakness, as they learned to their cost.

In short, I believe in the small card invitation game, when the hand is plainly strong enough to defy the adversaries. Otherwise let them look out for pitfalls. In the system of play truly known as the Howell game-which phrase I do not relish, but accept as inevitable for a time -we depend on the short suit, supporting card plays in the ordinary run of hands

more than we do on the long suit, small

card invitations. And, after all, with a strong all round hand the trump attack, from short or long trumps, is far better than the invitation. I append a pretty example of the short trump attack, in which a substantial gain was made by the trump leader over other methods of opening in a big tournament game. The king of spades was turned. South and West had "all the advantages that appertain unto the original lead.'

Here is the way the play ran:

East. South. North. 2 8 Trick 1...... 3 S Trick 2 J S 5 C Trick 8.. C 7 C 4 H Trick 4 2 H Trick 5 J H Trick 6 9 8 2 D Trick 7 6 D 3 D Trick 8 7 8 Trick 9 10 C Trick 10 5 D 6 C Trick 11 9 D Trick 12,......10D 8 C 7 D Trick 13......Q D

Trick 1 .- West has every plain suit protected, and a powerful tenace in his long est one. Why not start with the high trumps, which do not threaten to sacrifice anything in partner's hand, and at the same time clear the road for the advance of the plain suits?

Trick 4 .- Forced, now, to open his tenace suit. West adopts the quickest method of clearing it-namely, from the top. It matters not that he wins only one trick in the suit. The point is that the adversaries take not a single plain suit trick. It is not worth while for me to follow the play to its conclusion. The reader may do that for himself. Let him notice how North and South's preponderance of trumps melts away until, at the eleventh trick, East and West at length have the field to themselves. It is an extremely pretty deal for those who admire bold strategy rather than the counting of hands to a standstill. I may be pardoned for adding that the

opening was made by one of the youngest of my disciples, who, in the arena of chess, has a worldwide reputation and in the card games has caught the right spirit. E. C. HOWELL

Guaranteed Stakes.

The Saratoga Racing association has declared off its list of stakes for the ensuing three years, announced to close this month Horsemen have apparently made up their minds that the best way to get rid of these so called guaranteed stakes is not to enter

Joyceville Jottings.

JOYCEVILLE, Dec. 4. - Nearly every per son is taking advantage of the little snow that fell recently; it is of special benefit to the farmers for drawing firewood. The Lord's supper will be observed in Sand Hill church on Sunday, Dec. 12th, at the hour of 11 a.m. W. Greer, St. John's Island, is visiting at John Trotter's.

CARRIED THE LARGEST CARGO.

Kingston Built Boat Made a Record in Her Day.

When the propellor China was built by Capt. Frank Patterson in the sixties, ale carried the largest cargo-22,000 bushels at ten feet draught-of any craft sailing throught the Welland canal. The steamer was designed by Capt. W. l'ower, and built in the Kingston ship yard. She only lived six months, when she was des troyed by fire, but during that time she cleared for her owner \$12,000 above all expenses. Capt. Boyd, of the tug James A. Walker, was mate of the China, and had charge of her the trip on which she was lost. The China was a pretty boat, and attained great speed for a craft of her build. Fire destroyed her one night on the lake between Nine-Mile point and the Ducks. She sank near Hickory island with 300 tons of pig iron and two hundred crates of German lamp chimneys.

Calabogie Clippings.

CALABOGIE, Dec. 4. - Master Ray Deline is visiting at his uncle's, Richard Lillie. Miss Laura Lillie returned home after visiting friends at Harrowsmith. Mr. and Mrs. John Kerr, Arnprior, paid a flying visit to friends here. Mr. and Mrs. Moran and little son paid a flying visit to Douglas last week. Johnnie Dwyre, Whitney, is visiting at Calabogie. Mr. and Mrs. McIntyre and family, Amprior, are visiting at Mr. McIntyre's father's. Rev. F. W. Bailey has returned to his circuit after helping Mr. Beamish, Lockeley, with special services. Mrs. John Bullock has returned home from Whitney. The new pier under the foot bridge was completed to day and is a great improvement to the bridge. They are preparing to lay the new iron bridge at the railway station. William McKerrow, sr., and George McKerrow, his nephew, have gone to the Crow's Nest Pass, where they have secured a position. Quite a number of our young people attended the city ball. The snow has spoiled the skating. Rev. Mr. Fee, student of Queen's, occupied the pulpit in the Presbyterian church, Sunday. The Sunday school of the Methodist church are practising for a Christmas arch to be held Christmas eve in the Methodist church. We are glad to hear that little T. C. Mann is recovering from a severe illness. Miss Mary Bridges has recovered so far that she was able to go home on Tuesday. We wish for her speedy recovery. We are pleased to hear that Mrs. James Bailey has fully recovered.

Laid To Rest.

BATH, Dec. 4. - The mortal remains of the late Peter Churchell Thomas, Ernest town, were laid to rest in the quiet little cemetery of St. John's church, Bath, Dec. 2nd. Mr. Thomas was well known throughout the country as a successful farmer and a man of sterling worth. He was universally esteemed and beloved by all who came in contact with him, naturally retiring, yet his gentle and kind disposition won for him the confidence and respect of all classes. The deceased, who was a bachelor, had reached the ripe age of seventy five, having been born July 18th, 1822, on the place where he dien Oct. 7th, and where he, and his parents before him, had spent all the days He was a staunch adherent of the Anglican church, and in him St. John's has lost a generous supporter and a valued son, though of late years he was not able, through increasing infirmity, to attend. His long and painful illness he bore very patiently. He has left an only sister and two brothers to mourn his loss.

Death Of an Aged Lady. CENTREVILLE, Dec. 3. - Nature has thrown off her dress of green and has clad hersel in the purest white, which reminds people of winter. During the past week death has came amongst us and claimed as its victim an old and an esteemed lady, Mrs. Joseph Rogers. She was ill about one week, when she was relieved of her sufferings. She was seventy-three years old and was preceded to the grave by her husband fifteen years ago. Her funeral took place on Monday from the residence of her son in law, E. H. Perry, to Centreville, where the sermon was preached by Mr. Mc. Mullen, then her remains were placed in

John Hinch, who has been very ill, is re covering. A Lapum is also recovering Miss Minnie Kennedy is visiting in Chip pewa this week.

Althorpe News.

ALTHORIE, Dec. 4.—Thomas Menzies has his blacksmith shop about completed A number of our young people attended the wedding at Christie Lake last Wed needay evening Raffles are numerous here. Miss Lillie Shellington, Miss A Maitland and Frank Anderson visited ac quaintances here.

Hepburn's Cough Drope wholesale and retail at R. H. Tove's.

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Write to the ERIE MEDICAL COMPANY, BUFFALO, N.Y., and refer to seeing the account of their efferin this paper.

MEDICAL.

He Was III-But Now is Well.

Mr. T. Sarchet, the well-known tailor, Court House Ave., Brockville, Ont., got a box of Doan's Kidney Pills sometime ago. He did this because he had been seriously troubled for over a year with pains in his



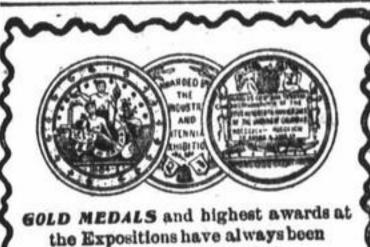
back across the kidneys, together with headache, dizziness, tired feeling and a general sensation of weariness and lack of ambi-

Referring to the result of the use of these pills, Mr. Sarchet says, "I can tell you that the pains in my back while sitting at work, made it almost impossible for me to keep on. I took a great many remedies, but they did me little or no good. . "When I started taking Doan's Kidney

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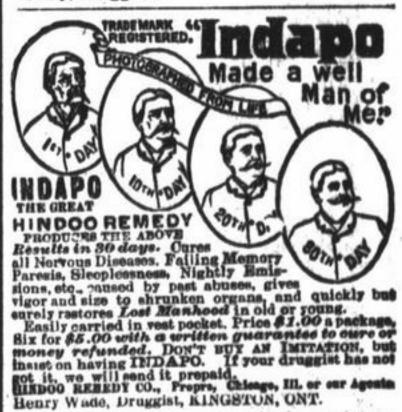
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