



Photos White Edna Baker Ethel Von Waldron  
Myrza asks not to be sent away



Edgar Selwyn Edna Baker  
Jamil ordered to carry the basket



Mission Children  
Noon hour at the Mission

SCENES IN EDGAR SELWYN'S ORIENTAL PLAY, "THE ARAB," AT THE ASTOR THEATRE

## America the Melting Pot of the Stars

THERE is no danger of a Turkish invasion of the American theatre, and the Polish or Danish influence is not likely to make itself felt before American footlights; but there are a Turk, a Pole, and a Dane, as well as the representatives of several other nationalities who have risen to stellar prominence on the stage of this country. This is, perhaps, not remarkable in a land that has become the melting pot for the fusing of the races, but compared to the scant recognition accorded foreigners on the stages of other countries, the condition here becomes geographically and historically unique. America has always been most democratic in this matter. The custom of receiving English entertainers with evidences of affection, as well as artistic admiration, long ago established a precedent for the horde of actors who visit America every year and also paved the way for the spectacular careers in this country of such stars as Helena Modjeska, the Pole, and Francesca Janauschek, the Bohemian, both of whom were such cosmopolites as to belong to the great world of art, irrespective of geographical boundaries.

It is notable, however, that after stellar careers abroad, each of them ventured into American territory as an experiment, later in life studied the English language diligently, and finally called America home, becoming definitely associated with the stage of this country.

The history of Janauschek has been duplicated in all essential

details in recent years by Madam Alla Nazimova, who first came to New York with a company of Russian players. There was something about her personality and art that attracted admirers from Broadway to the theatre in the Bowery, where she played the Norwegian characters of Ibsen and the other cold-blooded authors of the European north. Nothing, unless possibly the rude theatricals of the Orient, could have been more exotic to American theatre-goers, yet Alla Nazimova gained new friends with each performance. This great democracy of art rallied to support her when she first announced her intention to learn the English language, that she might become more intelligible; and

when, after a remarkably brief period, she had conquered some of the Ibsen characters in English and appeared on Broadway, she was immediately received into the big family of American artists, and is now everywhere recognized as one of our own, although in reality she is a foreign flower in alien soil, quite as much so as a Chicago actress, for example, would be upon the stage of St. Petersburg.

The theatre in European countries is an institution stamped indelibly with nationality. Each country has its own "school of acting." What

is praised and enjoyed in Germany is not to the liking of the French. The Italian "school" is as far apart as the two poles from that in favor at Copenhagen and Stockholm. With opera it is a vastly different matter. Generally speaking, there are only



Armstrong Flora Zaballe (Armenian) Bangs Alla Nazimova (Russian) Reutlinger Anna Held (Polish)  
FOREIGN ACTRESSES WHO HAVE MADE FORTUNES ON THE AMERICAN STAGE

a few pre-eminently great singers; they must travel around the world, and "seasons" are arranged in various countries for their accommodation. But the drama is stamped with certain prejudices that, like the laws of Medes and Persians, cannot be changed. The people resent intrusion by foreigners who cannot easily subscribe to their artistic demands. Futile will be the search of European capitals for an American actress, outside of the operas, who has abandoned her native language for the foreign, and who has been as acceptable to continental peoples as to her own. Yet there are dozens of foreign-born women on the American stage in various capacities who have accomplished that seemingly impossible feat. Several of them have risen to stellar prominence and tour the country annually, meeting with as cordial reception as could possibly be accorded to a native daughter.

This proves not only the democratic and cosmopolitan taste of the American audience, but also that this country possesses the most interesting stage in the world, because it has slowly and carefully gleaned from all of the others just what American people desire.

Anna Held, recognized as one of America's most successful stars in musical comedy, is a native of Poland. She appeared with Jacob Adler at small theatres in London, later went to Paris, and then came to America, where she speedily caught public fancy by a clever blending of Parisian chic and American whimsicality; and to-day she is considered an American actress, abroad as well as at



White

EDNA BAKER

Lately seen as Mary Hilbert in "The Arab"



White

ESTHER BISSETT

seen in Chicago in a farce entitled "Dear Old Billy"

home, because she has met with greater artistic and financial success here than perhaps any vaudeville or musical comedy star abroad.

Flora Zabelle, wife of Raymond Hitchcock, the comedian, is one of two Armenian actresses who have gained recognition outside of their own country. The other is in Paris, and her popularity is not in any way comparable to that of Miss Zabelle. The daughter of Mangaras Mangasarian, now a resident of Chicago, Miss Zabelle was born on the banks of the Euphrates river, and spent the early years of her life in a small village, from where she went to Constantinople before coming to America. Perhaps there is in this country no better example of the quick transformation and evolution of woman than this beautiful Oriental comedienne. For several years after Miss Zabelle's birth, her mother wore the veil; her relatives still adhere rigidly to this and similar customs, looking to man as their lord and master, and content to remain in semi-captivity, having their friends among the women of neighboring harems. But within a period of fifteen years, Miss Zabelle has not only discarded the veil, received an English education and married a Yankee comedian, but she has become an actress herself and attained to the distinction of joint star with her husband in such typically American confections as the musical comedies devised by Mr. George M. Cohan.

News of her progress reached her foreign rela-