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The Theatre

By FRANCIS R. BELLAMY

ONE thing can be said for Earl Carroll's new revue "The Sketch Book." It is genuinely a dream of beautiful women come true. And in these days of bare-legged flappers, one piece bathing suits and gowns cut low in the neck, this is saying a good deal. Certainly more and more the old illusion of the universal beauty of the feminine form has been dispelled. "The Sketch Book," however, is a beautiful picture of what all women, physically, may some time be. For sheer beauty of face and line, it is the most ravishing spectacle we've ever witnessed.

Nor is this an accident. Mr. Carroll is a specialist in such things, and in the words of the old side show barker, he has "spared no expense" in finding beauty and giving it the proper background. To say nothing of the lesser lights, here are Miss Cleveland, Miss Toronto, Miss Broadway, Miss Boston, Miss Alabama and even Miss Universe. Just where Miss Universe differed from the others, we are unable to say, but we record the fact that she was there.

As for background, as all the world knows now, this is where Earl Carroll shines. Without any ifs or ands or buts, he is a genius of the first order in his perception of color, artistic effects, and the beauty of fabric and movement. After the usual run of Broadway shows, the costumes and lights and scenic effects of "The Sketch Book" are like a cool, refreshing glimpse of genuine art. Even repose and the restfulness of nature itself are in some of the scenes; showing forth in contrast to the mad efforts of the ordinary jazz producer to entertain and delight humanity. In fact, the whole "Sketch Book" is a series of paintings, unfortunately interspersed with vulgar jokes—and rather old ones at that!—dramatized each one with a boisterous climax put over in the most crude fashion of cheap burlesque; but with the paintings lingering in the memory.

It is a shame, in a way. For the paintings are worthy of the most delicate humor imaginable. They cry aloud for the kind of skits offered in the "Little Show" this year and approached in "The Grand Street Follies" of past seasons. One cannot help wishing for a partnership of Clifton Webb, Gertrude Lawrence and Earl Carroll.

We are assured by the talkie which opens the entertainment, showing Earl Carroll and Eddie Cantor on the screen, that Mr. Cantor wrote the book. If he

did, the only thing we can say is that he has a good memory. So far as we are concerned, there isn't a new jest or a single ingenious, novel twist in any one of the dozen sketches by which the beautiful scenes of the revue are marred.

Only one approaches the slightest subtlety—the speakeasy scene in which the policeman on the beat enters the scene of revelry and reprimands one of the patrons for parking his car on 44th Street, and proceeds to read everybody, between drinks, a lesson on observance of the law; ending with taking away the patron's flask and going out in a halo of legal sanctity. This is genuinely funny. Otherwise, the ghost of Harold Atteridge and of the old Winter Garden shows seems to lurk in the quips and gags of Mr. Cantor's sketches, making up with noise and slaps for the banality of the ideas. Even the face slapping episode from "A Night in Venice" is present, only much weakened by its transplantation and offering only a feeble imitation of the side-splitting original.

There is an excellent jazz orchestra, garbed in artists' smocks and distinctly gaining thereby, except where the intellectual glasses of the pianist add a touch of incongruity.

As for the mechanical effects, we are assured by Mr. Carroll that he has spent much time on them and some of them are good.

In fact, for expert showmanship this revue would be hard to beat. Dreams of beauty float down from high hill-sides, they enter from unexpected Gothic doorways, they emerge from under the footlights, never once repeating but offering always endless variety and surprises. Carroll uses his rehearsal much as a painter does his palette. Nobody else can get the effects he can—not even Florenz Ziegfeld.

If only he would secure for himself a specialist in humor who would counterbalance his absorption with beauty, he would be one of the greatest producers of any age.

Isn't "The Sketch Book" funny at all, then? Well, yes, it is—mainly because of Will Mahoney and his terrific struggle, when he dances, against the law of gravity; and partly because of the presence of several vaudeville teams, notably the three Sailors, who do their stuff regardless of any stage. If you find it funnier than we did—well and good. You will find it beautiful, anyway.

Forecast

The Outlook and Independent Announces

"WHAT MAKES MEN Democrats is their desire to use the party to express their opinion."

"The business of the Republican Party is that of saving the country," writes Mrs. Emily Newell Blair, vice chairman of the Democratic National Committee, in our next leading article. In "The Dilemma of the Democratic Party," Mrs. Blair analyzes the causes underlying the repeated defeats recently suffered by the Democrats, and traces the history of the Republican "Salvation Complex." We think you will find this a brilliant study of the psychology of American politics.



THE DISTINGUISHED contributor to the editorial page of the next issue will be Professor James T. Shotwell of Columbia University. In his editorial Professor Shotwell, a trustee of the Carnegie Peace Endowment, discusses the outlook in the field of international affairs. It is interesting to note that he thinks we are at the dawn of a new era of liberalism.



APPARENTLY THE Federal Government has made rumrunning in the immediate vicinity of Detroit more precarious than ever. Mr. F. L. Smith, Jr., a Detroit newspaper man, discovered, however, that he had only to move eighteen miles down the river to find things going full blast. In his article, "War on the River," in our next issue, Mr. Smith describes how he saw speedboats loading whisky in broad daylight. "It is," he writes "virtually an immense game of hide and seek played upon a hundred mile front."



WE HAVE ALL heard of the tremendous advances made by Germany in commercial aviation. In an article, "Icarus Incorporated," appearing next week, Mr. Frank Schoonmaker, author of numerous travel books, shows to what an extent passenger transportation has been developed there. Strangely enough Mr. Schoonmaker thinks that the Versailles treaty, which crippled Germany's military aviation, is largely responsible for her commercial superiority.



THE SECOND installment of Mr. Herbert Asbury's "The Background of a Crusader," which will appear next week, relates the story of Carry Nation's two marriages. We think that this account of her tragic love for her first husband and the subsequent hardships of her early married life with David Nation will soften the judgments of those who think of her only as an embattled hatchet.

Ivory, Apes and Peacocks

By W. R. BROOKS

IF MOSQUITOES LURK in the tall grass around your cabin door, why not invest a dollar in a little hand scythe we know of, which folds up like a jackknife when not in use and can be adjusted to any angle for cutting? The blade is made up of old razor blades, and so when one section gets nicked, all you have to do is to slip in another blade. It makes a good sharp scythe, and has a special advantage in that it provides a use for, and a safe place to dispose of, your old blades. Indeed, the problem of old blades seems to us an increasingly serious one. In future ages our civilization will no doubt be chiefly identified by the immense deposits of old blades near all dwellings, just as those old lake dwellers—we think that's the name for them—whose life was apparently one long drawn out clam-bake—are identified by the heaps of fossil shells which they left behind them.

IF YOU'RE FOND of ice cream and have to crack the ice and turn the freezer yourself in order to get it, there is not only an electric freezer, but there is also an ice crusher which works with a hand crank, that will chew up big hunks of ice into freezer-size pieces quickly and efficiently.

FOR CHILDREN THERE'S a galvanized iron sand box, which, when you remove the sand, can be filled with water to make a miniature pond for floating toys. It is 42 inches square, stands on legs, and has a gaily colored umbrella, with elephants 'n' things on it, which shades it. There is also a very nice children's size outdoor hammock, with back and sides and a canopy above, all hung on a strong metal frame. Size—46 inches high, 40 inches long.

YOU CAN now send radiograms from New York, Boston and Washington, to San Francisco by the new radiotelegraph service recently inaugurated by RCA Communications. The rates are the same as those charged for regular telegrams. Through the photoradio service you can also send pictures, drawings, writing, printing, and similar matter.

NOW THAT razor blades have shrunk so that if you re-sharpen them they are too narrow to reach your whiskers if any, there seems to be only one possibility of giving them a little longer

life. You can make them stay sharp longer by stropping them or better—by stropping and honing them. There are two strop-hones for the Gillette type blades which we have seen, both apparently efficient. The only difference being that one strops and hones at one time and with the other these operations are separate. A workable hone will do much to reduce the mortality of your blades.

IF YOU ARE all for indirect lighting in the home there is a thing called the Luminator which stands up sort of like an old-fashioned piano lamp, only it has an inverted shade at the top which throws the light against the ceiling and thence downward in a mellow glow on to yourself and possessions. It plugs in like any other lamp.

THE E. Z. GOFKOR is the best device we have seen for keeping your golf score accurately and easily. It is the size and shape of a watch, and has in the dial nineteen windows, one which shows the score on each hole, and one to show the total score. It works simply, and should take a good deal of the strain not only off your memory, but off your honesty as well. We like everything about it but the name. Trade names are necessary, of course, for everything from carpet tacks to automobiles, but we are irritated by such combinations of descriptive misspelled words. If we should invent, say, a new and highly efficient sausage fryer, we'd prefer to call it in plain English Brooks's Sausage Fryer, rather than the E. Z. Dog-Fri or something like that.

The multiplicity of such foolish names in the advertisements we read fills us at last with an immense weariness. Having spent a number of years in trying to make friends with the English language, we are likely to be irritated when we see it wantonly tortured and insulted.

RONSON, who makes cigarette lighters, has turned out a small perfume sprayer which can be carried in a handbag. It looks exactly like a cigarette lighter, but when you press the plunger it shoots out a fine spray of perfume. We don't think this similarity in appearance is any advantage, however.

Suppose the lady fills her sprayer with lighter fluid by mistake, what then?