





TABS



*Published by The Strand Electric and Engineering Co. Ltd.
in the interests of the Amateur Theatre*

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EDITORIAL

The letters which we have received commenting on "TABS" are most interesting and inasmuch as they are fulfilling a public service, we are sure that we need not apologise to the authors if we print some of the ideas conveyed.

* * * *

We have been asked to print lighting plots for well known stage plays, though which these were to be was unspecified. We do not think that it is up to us to decide what is or is not a play likely to become popular with amateurs, but we hope to have something more to say on this subject in a future issue of "TABS," as we are already in touch with those "in the know."

* * * *

It has been suggested that when we mention colours by name, we should also specify the appropriate equivalent numbers, and vice versa. While the shortage of colour cards persists this is quite understandable and will certainly be done.

* * * *

We have been asked for a glossary of stage terms. This will be concocted but it takes time to prepare. For the moment therefore, as an appetizer, we are dishing up a "goulashe de glossary," served pre-war, and now reheated and regarnished. This should be taken with several pinches of salt. Our serious glossary will be printed separately, and we will announce its completion at a later date.

It would seem that the supply of literature on the technical side of the theatre falls far short of requirements. We are compiling a bibliography on the subject, and would be glad if readers would help by sending us details of books they consider suitable for inclusion in such a list. If they can, they should quote in addition to the title, the author publisher and price, but even the title alone is well worth having. When our list merits it—we hope by the time we next go to press—we will publish it in "TABS."

* * * *

One man's meat is usually another's poison and we are therefore not altogether surprised by the following. We are patted on the back for our notes on the history of Battens but at the same time we are taken to task for "Puzzle Corner," both of which appeared in our last issue. These were both of a historical nature but the latter item was too short to form the subject of an article by itself, although we were fortunate in being able to illustrate it. The treatment of "Puzzle Corner" was more flippant than that of the Batten article but the historical aspect was common to both.

* * * *

We are told that the article entitled "Stage Manager's Must Manage" was uninformative and did not merit inclusion in "TABS," but at the same time we are asked to repeat articles similar to "Meanderings of Monty" which was, if you remember, a little piece on the pros and cons of constructing Stage Lighting equipment out of biscuit tins.

* * * *

We are asked for details of new Lanterns and recent Strand Electric installations, but at the same time we are asked to "soft pedal" our Company within the pages of "TABS." To comply with both these requests would certainly involve considerable ingenuity. We have, however, decided to be "bloody, bold and resolute" and on page 11 we give a resumé of the functions of certain of our Company's departments and how they are best approached.

* * * *

We recently read a paragraph in a well-known daily paper, in which a learned American is reported as having said that England leads America in the use of hypocorism. We don't at all mind being accused of that, as long as nobody knows what it means; but we understand that this is officialese, medicalese or call it what you will, for "baby talk." Our conscience demands that we overhaul our wisecrack department and we may therefore, out of sheer fright, produce forthcoming issues of "TABS" on the lines of an Income Tax return or some other official document wherein the humour (if any), is so subtle that it is apparent to the author only.

* * * *

While on the subject of finance we particularly liked a remark attributed by the press to the worthy Professor C. E. M. Joad, when speaking at a Schoolboys' Exhibition in London. Money, he said, would not make his audience happy, but at least it would

let them be miserable in comfort. While the present fuel shortage persists we are not so sure about the "comfort," but it is to be hoped that dramatic performances of all kinds will not have to be unduly interfered with. We must be patient as a mussel waiting for the next tide, and hope that ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

* * * *

Under the sub-heading "A Foolish Rule" the following recently appeared in the Day to Day Diary columns of a London evening paper:—

"The Covent Garden Theatre is enforcing a foolish rule that people arriving late for the ballet cannot be admitted to their seats until the first interval. Result last night was that some 60 people had to stand in discomfort at the back of the stalls for half an hour.

Late-comers, of course, are a nuisance in every theatre. But, in the majority of cases, it is not the fault of the customers in these days of traffic hold-ups and shortage of taxis.

The Covent Garden rule is an inexcusable and arbitrary relic of pre-war days. It should be thrown aside and forgotten. Instead of inflicting further hardship on travellers to the theatre Covent Garden would be better advised to add its voice to those already urging the Government to get something done about the traffic jams."

"Punctuality is the politeness of princes"—or is it? "Manners Makyth Man"—or do they?

* * * *

We recently noticed in the mid-day edition of an evening paper a statement to the effect that coloured shadows were going to be used for the first time in the decor of a forthcoming production in London. The idea being anything but new, we contacted the newspaper concerned thinking that they might wish to withdraw or correct their statement. It was explained to us over the telephone, however, that such was not the case as the statement had not been written by one of the paper's staff but had been sent in by the theatre concerned. Quite regardless of where the statement emanated, we should have thought that if it had been worth printing in the first place, it would have been worth correcting, but apparently not so.

* * * *

While on the question of official versus unofficial information we might point out that we have adopted the following policy in connection with "TABS." Articles by outside contributors are always signed either by the author's name or if he prefers it by nom de plume. Articles which are initialled only, are contributed by members of The Strand Electric or its associated Companies, but represent a personal point of view or experience, and do not necessarily represent the official view of the Company. Articles which are neither signed nor initialled may be taken to represent the official view and policy of the Company.

Messrs. Samuel French announce that the following plays are now available to amateurs:—

WISHING WELL. A Comedy in three Acts. By E. Eynon Evans. One Interior Scene throughout. Six males, five females. Price 3s. nett.

MADAME LOUISE. A Farce in three Acts. By Vernon Sylvaine. One Interior Scene throughout. Eight males, seven females. Price 4s. nett.

CRYSTAL CLEAR. A Comedy in three Acts. By Falkland L. Cary and Phillip King. One Interior Scene throughout. Three males, three females. Price 3s. 6d. nett.

THEATRE GLOSSARY

We have been asked to continue publication of a glossary of stage and theatre terms of which two instalments were issued in 1939. Our glossarian (or whatever the word is) has now submitted a revised version of which the first instalment is published with the warning that the editor does not accept any responsibility for the authenticity or implications of the definitions.

ACTOR—Actors speak louder than words . . . but frequently demand aid of "mike" to ensure audibility.

ACTRESS—Any female specimen of genus *homo sapiens*: many are paid handsomely for being themselves.

ARTIST—Term loosely applied to actors and actresses but not necessarily true.

AMATEUR—One who acts for the love of it . . . and loves it.

AUDITORIUM—Part of theatre occupied by audience who often pay for privilege of not seeing and hearing what might or might not be worth seeing and hearing.

ACTING AREA—Part of stage within limits to which scenery may be set; the part in which actors may move freely while theoretically observed by audience.

ACTING AREA LANTERN—Sort of cross between Spot and Flood suspended above acting area and having intense beam of narrow angle; invented solely to make life difficult for the stage manager with only half as many sets of lines as he normally needs.

ACT-DROP—Main curtains which, at end of each act, drop (sometimes) or trail (often) or do both (rarely); also known as "main tabs" meaning *tableaux curtains*.

AMPS—Something watts related to volts . . . you know, "watts divided by volts equals amperes"; being measurement of electrical energy passing through any circuit at any given moment.



Actor or Actress . . . ?

APRON—Portion of stage extending outside proscenium arch; much favoured by amateur societies whose committeemen cannot be prevented from making interval speeches; should be as wide as possible to prevent such bloke from putting his foot in it . . . "it" being the footlight.

ARC—An intense spotlight whose brilliance fails to satisfy most comedians; light source derives from positive and negative carbon electrodes maintained in more or less proximity; still referred to as "lime" (an obsolete lantern, supplanted by the arc, in which were cylinders of lime fortified by jets of gas . . . hence "lime-light" and "lime-boys.")

BAR—Large counter at which it was once customary to obtain a now obsolete beverage called "beer," which induced high spirits in low persons during intervals; for Bar (stage term) see "Barrel" (obviously!).

BAR TURN—Music Hall act which induces thirst rather than tolerance.

BARREL—Not the container so frequently rolled with vocal gusto; length of metal piping hung from wire cables or rope lines and from which are suspended scenery, lighting equipment, etc. Also "Bar" . . . as in "Spot Bar."

BATTEN—All things to all men; term applied to any length of timber used on stage or in scenery construction; more particularly, a length of timber which carries rigidly a suspended cloth; sometimes two flat or half-round pieces screwed together with edge of cloth between . . . a Sandwich Batten; may also mean strip of overhead lighting due to practice of using length of timber with lamps attached in defiance of considerations of safety; such battens still exist but should be replaced by metal troughs with mirrors and partitions, known as Compartment or Magazine Battens (for further particulars see Strand catalogue).

BORDER LIGHT—American for lighting batten; one more example of their utilitarian and our traditional habits.

BORDER—Any length of canvas, velour or other material suspended to prevent audience from seeing what is above the scene . . . and not always succeeding; varieties include Sky Border, Cloud Border, Foliage Border, Beam Border,—whose meanings are obvious; Swag Border,—one draped in folds and loops or festoons; borders should not be referred to as "flies," "pelmetts" or "valances" but often are by earnest innocents.



"Lime — an obsolete lantern"

- BACKING**—Piece of scenery set behind another piece having door, window or other aperture; intended to prevent audience from judging whether what happens behind ditto is funnier than what happens before ditto.
- BARRIER**—Corded rope with knobs on, hooked across gangways to preserve class distinction; moveable at discretion of management if success of show permits sale of Pit seats as Stalls.
- BEGINNERS**—Those actors who bear the heavy responsibility of starting it at all. The shout “beginners please” is leading man’s cue to start something quite different.
- BLACK-OUT**—Extinguishing of all scene-lighting simultaneously (we hope). A “D.B.O.” (meaning Dead Black-out) is a more emphatic rendering of same to distinguish from occasions when certain circuits are deliberately omitted from the general black-out, (*e.g.* fire, moonlight through window, etc.).
- BLINDERS**—Light directed into auditorium to blind audience temporarily and so avoid their knowing what is happening on stage during black-out; some audiences manage this feat without aid of blinders or black-out.
- BOOK-WING**—Two scenery flats hinged together and capable of standing unsupported like an open book; many amateurs could well emulate its virtue instead of clinging for support to every stick of furniture within reach.
- BOOMERANG**—Has no resemblance whatever to the celebrated Australian missile; (for benefit of Yorkshiremen, said missile is *not* a cricket ball); is a length of barrel fixed upright at side of stage with lanterns attached; a sort of multiple stand or vertical Spot Bar.
- BOX OFFICE**—Cubicle in or adjacent to main entrance; seat of judgment from which death sentence is often pronounced on worthy subjects. Subject to slight formalities here, the Public may enter any theatre.
- BRACES**—Suspension gear worn by stage managers . . . usually pale lavender or rich magenta in colour . . . to maintain trousers in vertical position; also pieces of wood or metal with hooked tops and flat feet, former being attached to scenery by inserting hooks through screw-eyes and latter secured to stage by large stage-screws (which make lovely holes in new stages) or held down by heavy weights (if stage hands include champion weight lifter); extending Brace is variable in length, being in two pieces which may be locked together; French Brace is tall wooden triangular frame hinged to back of scenery.
- BUSINESS**—Physical trimmings added by actor to words of author, *e.g.* slipping on imaginary banana-skin, or realistic eructation after drinking imaginary whisky and soda; remark “No funny business” usually implies rebuke to amorous swain, who judges from intonation of delivery, extent to which rebuke must be heeded.

BRAIL—Not to be confused with any aid to the blind; stage hands are never blind, having unbelievable alcoholic capacity; to brail is to deflect any suspended piece of scenery or equipment from normal position and retain in abnormal position by line or rope tied to whatever happens to be handy.

BRIEFS—Quite adequate description of articles of clothing intermittently worn by ladies of the chorus; also obsolete term, with less obvious justification, for complimentary tickets for a theatre show.

CALL—Time announcement for any assembly of company, e.g. rehearsal, performance, train or pay parade; latter very popular; to "take a call" means making a bow to audience in response to applause—if stage manager is quick enough to get curtain up before applause stops.

CAST—List of performers appearing before audience; is frequently printed with a final "e" which is just too frightful; a cast might or might not have caste.

CHAIN BRIDLE—Chain attached in centre by ring, eye or shackle to grid line, the two ends being attached to barrel supporting lighting batten etc.; effect is to spread the purchase; unlike effect of "bridal chains" which invariably confine the purchase.

CHECK—To operate dimmer on switchboard in such manner as to reduce brightness of light (unlike "cheque" which usually enhances brightness in somebody's eye); "half-check" means that dimmer should be operated to half its travel although light may be reduced by more than half.

CLOTH—Any piece of canvas on which some scenic artist has tried to convey some idea of something or other; "Back-cloth," curiously enough, is usually suspended back-stage; when suspended front-stage same cloth becomes "Front-cloth";

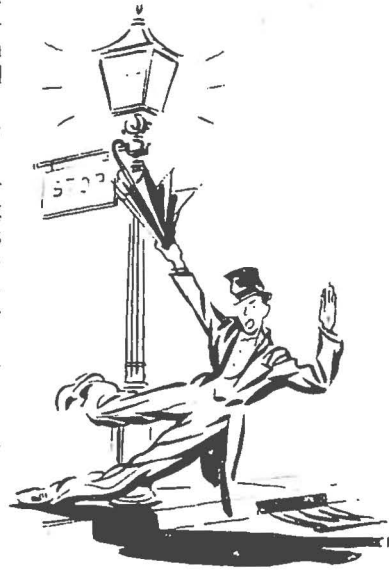
Cut-cloth: has parts cut away;

Sky-cloth: painted blue because an artist once saw the sky looking blue, probably in a railway advert.

Star-cloth: painted dark blue and has small electric lamps inserted so that on a particular cue they may fail to light up and twinkle like stars.

Ceiling-cloth: framed or stretched taut and resting on top of scenery.

Stage-cloth: covering for stage floor; in posh sets painted to represent marble tiles.



"... retain in abnormal position"

COMIC (NOUN)—Not to be confused with Comic (adjective); is trade name in Vaudeville for Comedian.

COUNTERWEIGHTS—Slabs of iron or lead placed in container known as a cradle which is attached to ropes or cables by which scenery and equipment are hauled up and down, the weights balancing the weight of what is hauled; such weights are not "counter" weights as in shopkeeping, not having any theoretical standard weight, but usually about 28 lbs.

CUE—Any signal for somebody else to do something or say something, e.g. actor's cue is usually last word of another actor's speech but might be that actor's exit through gap in hedge; chief art of acting is to snap up cue without pause if continuity is to be preserved; stage manager has Cue Board from which he operates lights, bells or buzzers as cues to fly-men, electricians, orchestra, etc. who, if well trained, will jump to it.

CURTAIN—Almost any piece of fabric not coming within the meaning of "Cloth" (q.v.), usually suspended in folds or festoons;

Leg Curtain; one used as side-wing; Trailer Curtains; two curtains drawn on and off on a suspended track and overlapping in centre; Screen Curtain; Trailer Curtains fixed immediately in front of cinema screen for no particular purpose except to make it difficult to



read title shots: Safety Curtain; or Fire Curtain; affectionately known as "the iron" but is sometimes only a sheet of asbestos fabric; "Curtain" often used as word of command meaning "up with the rag (slang term for Act-drop or main tabs.) and let's get it over" or "down with ditto, thank God" or "get on stage quickly and take a bow"; latter often referred to as "taking a curtain."

CUT—Any opening in stage floor, hence Staircase Cut, Grave Cut, Carpet Cut, etc.

CYCLORAMA—Is supposed to be plain cloth or plaster screen extending sufficiently high to dispense with need for borders and curved round to hide side walls of stage; more frequently is back wall plastered and painted off-white or pale blue, or a Sky Cloth stretched taut; often referred to by old hands as "the Pam" which is intended to abbreviate "Panorama"; a cyclorama is a thing of beauty and joy for ever to producer and electrician with flair for colour-mixing. **BUSKER**

PENNY PLAIN, TWOPENCE COLOURED

TO THE EDITOR

My Sir,

Your Tableaux Paper has reached me and I am glad there is at all times the occasion to write of the Little Theatres. Models we have in Holland but must I speech of these things which are in England.

In England you have the models of the Little Theatres. In times gone by you have the plane and painted—a good thing—with books made with the words of this play. These came from Allemand first so to start. Then came to England the big models but no so. *Mr. Stevenson your author when I read in essays and works has of this development, this model business he says is first in his head.

Many years gone by under my father I play with the English model. After the labour of cutting out the men and girls I go to make the *Millar and his Men* with the conspiracy at the Mill. Here I do a big effect. He says "Ravenna! Fire the train." This is the gunpowder thing which is done. In our kitchen with the kettle boiling steam I do the effect. All the actors fall down on their wires.

Here is again for which I write to your papers. Never to have these wires. They are not good. Since a boy I have never had believe in those wires.

The models I want, much can be had with the Model Theatres. If the figures are made with an iron plate and some thin woods for the stage, a magnet can take them in movable by under. So taken by underneath they never over fall but are come in and out and exit.† Always easy. But the model must be done for this. Room beneath the stages is for the hands and magnets. Also there must be conversancy with the play words.

Some said the model can be lighted for the big theatre. This is true but each scene is another thing. In Holland I had all of this. In no way can one say the grand stage has in proportion from the model. A man in Amsterdam has tried this thing but his alive girls make shadows when he worked it. He was foolish to see. On the stairs of the stage his shadows fall and the womens made a darkness which he was not foresighted to have. Littel bulbs are not good for this before looking.

I am glad again of your paper and you sending more but I cannot see practical the liveliness of lighting a model for the instruction of the grand theatre. So to paint the scenes and to have in your brains the thing of lighting.

I am, Ever yours, Daan can Steldt.

68, Laan van Rustenburg, Voorburg, Holland.

*Robert Louis Stevenson must have been one of the first to write on the Juvenile Drama—Ed.

†Some readers may even have arranged their figures to turn about face between entrance and exit, by means of magnets. Always easy!—Ed.

COLOUR MEDIA

REDUCED RANGE

In view of the present manufacturing difficulties only the following colours of Cinemoid will be available until further notice. Even with this restricted range of colours, supplies are very much curtailed and all concerned are requested to purchase no more than is absolutely necessary for their immediate requirements :—

No. 3 Straw	No. 17 Steel Blue
No. 4 Medium Amber	No. 18 Light Blue
No. 5 Orange	No. 19 Dark Blue
No. 6 Red	No. 32 Medium Blue
No. 7 Light Rose	No. 29 Heavy Frost
No. 13 Magenta	No. 36 Lavender
No. 16 Blue Green	No. 39 Primary Green

SHEET PRICES

In our issue of September 1946, we gave the prices of colour media for outright purchase and use with hired equipment. Cinemoid has unfortunately undergone a price increase and the revised figures are quoted below. Please note that in the case of Battens, Footlights and Groundrow, the prices are for 6ft. lengths of equipment, and *not* for 6ft. lengths of colour medium. The maximum sizes and prices for uncut sheets are:—

Gelatine colours size	22in. × 17½in.	22/6 per dozen
Gelatine frost size	22in. × 17½in.	30/- „
and pro rata for smaller quantities.		
Cinemoid size	48in. × 20in.	9/- each
Cinemoid size	24in. × 20in.	4/6 „

PRICES OF CUT PIECES

	GELATINE	CINEMOID
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Battens, Footlights and Ground Rows (per 6ft length) ..	per set 4 4	per set 7 4
Floodlights—	(per doz.)	(per doz.)
Patterns 30, 60, 50A ..	12 6	1 10 0
Patterns 35, 49, 49A, 49B, 55, 56, 66	1 2 6	2 1 0
Pattern 32	5 9	9 3
Pattern 237	6 6	11 0
Spotlights—		
Pattern 27	2 0	4 4
Pattern 45	2 3	5 2
Pattern 44	3 0	6 3
Patterns 22, 23A, 43B, 63 and 73	4 0	10 0
Patterns 70, 75, 102 ..	12 6	1 9 2
Smaller quantities pro rata.		

The MUSIC GOES ROUND & AROUND AND IT COMES OUT . . . WHERE?



In spite of the heading of this article and the illustration alongside, this little piece is not intended to be a piece of trumpet blowing on our part. On the other hand, we want to try to explain to you why some of the notes *you* blow our way go round and around before they eventually reach the right place.

There can be few people in this country to-day who have not had some experience of "official channels of communication." Very lengthy and tedious they may sometimes seem, but the fact remains that once an organisation has reached a certain size or complexity, rigid methods of communication whether written, verbal, telephonic or otherwise, do become an essential to smooth running. Just as the bagpiper lubricates the bag of his instrument with treacle, whisky or suchlike, so we have cleaned up and lubricated our rather busy little set-up to make things as easy as possible for all concerned.

To present a rough idea of the situation we should explain that in central London alone (i.e. excluding our Works and Exhibition folk) we have over thirty sections and departments working on 70 telephone extensions and these are not housed under the same roof or even in the same street.

It can readily be appreciated therefore, that the "notes" which you send us whether they be little *piano* trills on a postcard or *fortissimo* blasts by telephone or telegram, if incorrectly addressed or containing inaccurate or insufficient information can only too easily go round and around wasting precious time before we can ultimately "get cracking."

The same thing applies of course (but even more so), when you address your correspondence to the wrong area office.

Julius Caesar, if we remember correctly, divided old Gaul into three parts. We have gone one better, and divided the British Isles into four parts, each handled by a Branch or Agent. Almost every day there is an exchange of customers' correspondence between London and branches, forwarding letters and so on which emanated from one area but have misguidedly been sent to another. Don't forget that it was for *your* benefit and in order to give *you* better service that we set up branches in Manchester and Dublin and appointed a distributor in Glasgow for the whole of Scotland.

A glance at the map on page 13 should make it clear in which area you lie, and for your sake as well as ours—but particularly for yours—do write to the area office concerned. You will get precisely the same service from your local branch as you would from London, even if London is the Head Office and the Works are situated just outside. All our areas order their materials from Works in exactly the same way as London Office does, and there is no reason whatever to suppose that London holds better stocks of any particular article than one of the areas. In fact it does happen that owing to a little bit of extra cunning in stock-ordering our areas are better off for certain types of equipment than are we in London. So as a start, please blow your little note in the right direction at any rate, and use that area office.

If you have a look at our notepaper sometime, you will see there is a space for “our reference.” Unfortunately correspondents have so seldom troubled to copy this reference on to their letters when replying, that we have adopted a little coloured slip which is stuck on to our letters in order to attract your attention.



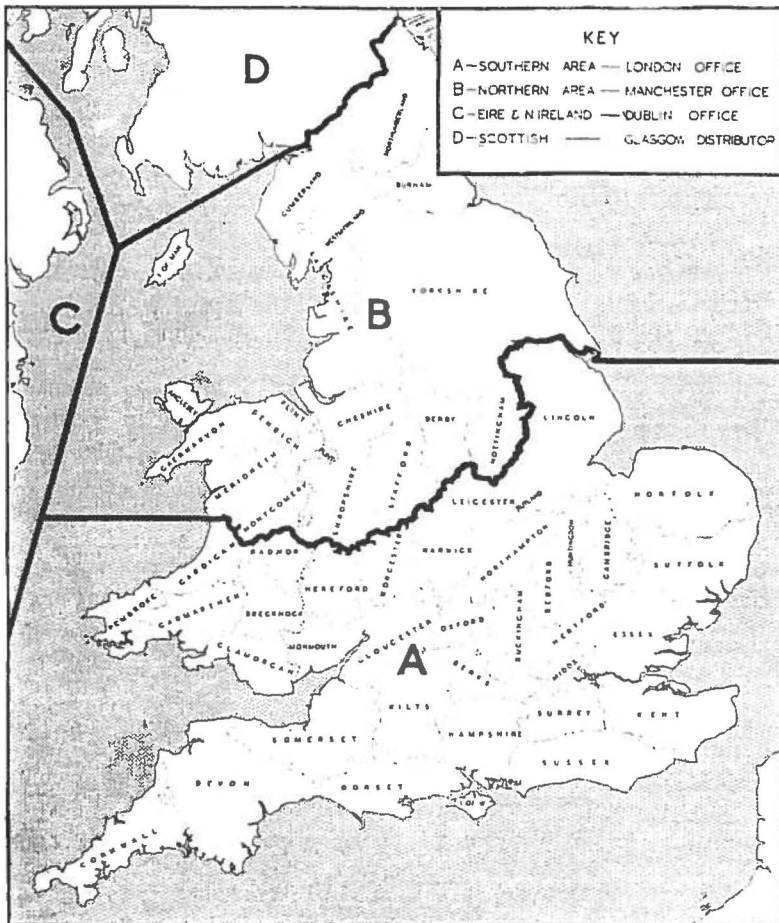
Typed on the front of this is the writer's reference, and on the back is some sticky substance which doesn't taste nearly as nasty as you might imagine. You can't think how much nicer your letters to us would look if they always bore one of these little slips. If, however, you are writing to us for the first time—not, that is to say, in reply to an earlier letter of ours, then you will have no pretty little blue ornament with which to decorate your letter. This is a pity because these slips not only tell us the department but the actual individual who is looking after your job. However, as second best—and a very good one too—we would ask you to indicate at the top of your letter (and not hidden half way down the second paragraph on the third page) the department for whom your letter is intended. To give you a clue we have drawn a little picture showing the various departments and what they are paid to do. The same general layout (as far as Hire and Sales departments are concerned at any rate), applies equally to Area Branch Offices but owing to its rather greater complexity we have modelled the diagram on the London (Southern area) office.

However, before we go on to describe the departments in detail, you will note that departments dealing with Hire are not concerned with Sales and vice versa; and it is, therefore, most important that only one kind of transaction should be dealt with in one letter. We understand that the practice of putting more than one letter in a single envelope has been in use for some time north of the Tweed, and that the G.P.O. have raised no objections.

The only occasion when it is safe (and indeed advisable) to combine matters of hire and sale in one letter is in the case of

colour media and fireworks. In the old days pre-war we used to include colour media free of charge with all equipment sent out on hire. To-day that is not possible and colour media has to be ordered separately and purchased outright. In order to make your life easier however, we have arranged for our Hire Dept. to accept orders for the purchase of Colour Media *when these form part of a Hire order*. The same applies to smoke and flash powders, maroons and so on, required for hired smoke or flash boxes etc. These are, however, the only instances when Hire and Sale should be mentioned in one letter.

Do you ever have to spend a night or two away on business or perhaps go abroad for the same reason? Have you ever been away sick from the office for a few days? Do you ever have a holiday? Strangely enough so do we. In your own interests do not, there-



fore, address your envelopes to individuals. If the addressee happens to be at his desk on the day in question he will not get your letter a minute earlier that if it had been addressed to the Company. If he is away, the letter is liable to be treated as private correspondence and left unopened for a period of time which will only be determined by the degree of illness or extent of plausibility of the individual concerned. We are very particular



“ . . . away on business.”

about work in hand being passed over to another member of the same department before an individual intentionally absents himself. These precautions are, of course, quite useless if business correspondence appearing to be of a private or confidential nature arrives for him during his absence. So please address your envelopes to the Company and to the Company only.

Now let us take a look at the map of departments on pages 15 and 16. As already explained this has been drawn up with London in mind but the general set-up of our branches is the same on a smaller scale. Before getting down to detail, three general points first. You will notice that we have not shown anything like the number of departments and sections that we mentioned earlier. This has been done for the sake of clarity. Secondly, you will notice that there is no apparent means of approach to certain departments housed in the central “chateau.” That is because you are normally not supposed to have any dealings with them—as far as you are concerned, these departments do not really exist but we have simply put them in to help fill the picture up, and to give us the opportunity of impressing upon you that they are unapproachable. Thirdly, you will notice that certain departments are perched up in the clouds. They aren’t really as airy-fairy as all that, as they are the schemers and planners of the organisation—the inspiration outfit in fact.

Now let us join Dick Whittington in the foreground and go on a short personally conducted tour. Taking the first turning to the right we find the Hire Dept., (Correspondence reference H.) This title should be sufficiently clear in itself so, suffice it to say that they deal not only with Stage Lighting Equipment but Decorative Lighting Fittings, Fires and other practical props and effects. If you are writing about hire matters these are the people to approach, but when calling in person a course should be set for the Fittings Showroom. That is if you know what you want; but if not, you should steer for the Amateur Hire Advice Section. Here you will be helped on the choice of equipment, colours, fittings and all the rest. The Showroom people will of course help you all they can, but the Advice Section have usually rather more time to spare with a more comfortable chair and (usually) an unlimited supply of cigarettes. If you start getting down to too much detail in the



DUB DUBLIN

NORTHERN AREA
MAN MANCHESTER

ADM. ADMINISTRATION
WORKS

DESPATCH

PACKING

Amateur Hire
Advice

THE STRAND CASTLE

Debtors' Dungeons

Fittings Showroom

...TING & INSTALLATION

HIRE DEPT

SALES, STORES & COUNTER SERVICE
S/S

THE STRAND

Showroom you may find that a small queue has collected behind you, all champing and swearing under their breath at that so-and-so in front who is holding things up.

Returning to the main road and taking the first turning off to the left we find Sales Stores. (Correspondence reference S.ST.)

Here they sell Lanterns, Lamps, Colours, Colour Frames, Cables, Switches, Fuses, Carbons for Arcs and even domestic details like Electric Irons, Fires, Kettles and so on. They also deal with the straight forward enquiry or order which comes in through the post, just like any mail order business. This department, however, has neither the time nor resources to demonstrate or discuss the relative merits of this Lantern or that for any particular purpose. That is, of course, except in a very minor kind of way.

If you want to have more than a few minutes natter on part or the whole of an *installation* then the people you want to contact are Theatre Lighting Sales. (Correspondence reference S.TL). To get there on the map you return to the main road, and take the turning on the right before the castle and then first left. Don't be worried about the journey—they're only on the first floor in actual practice.

Provided you are interested in Sales rather than Hire this is really your Advice Bureau. These people handle lighting installations complete or in part, professional or amateur, large or tiny. They are no more interested in Drury Lane than they are in the local School or Village Hall with a Batten, a few Floods, and a couple of Spots in the Auditorium. So don't feel coy about approaching them. You will be getting the very best professional advice. And if you've only got twopence halfpenny to spend do tell them because it saves both time and disappointment all round. A large proportion of their time is in fact spent in working out the best schemes for the minimum outlay. Don't think that you necessarily have to buy everything at once. Having planned their lighting installation as they wish it to be, many Societies are now simply purchasing one or two extra pieces of equipment year by year as funds permit; but you really ought to get your final scheme worked out with S.TL., before embarking on haphazard purchases.

The foregoing are the departments which you are most likely to be concerned with but, while we are on the job it might be as well to mention one or two others just in case. Also up in the clouds alongside S.TL., is Sales (Other Than Theatre). Their correspondence reference is S.O. This department covers Cinemas, Dance Halls, Dog Tracks, Floodlighting Churches and in fact everything except a Stage which was primarily designed for the live actor. It also handles all the Firm's export business.

Perched on an adjacent pinnacle is the Signs Dept. (Correspondence reference SGN). These people look after all our Sign business whether interior or exterior, illuminated or not and whether Sales or Hire. Practically every Sign you see outside a West End Theatre or Cinema, whether it is in 6-inch or 6-foot letters emanates from this department and is changed under contract as often as the programme demands. In the old days (and we hope once again

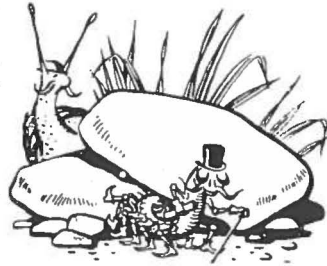
before so very, very long) these Signs were neonised and we had a small fleet of men on bicycles going round to see all was well and altering titles overnight.

Almost alongside is (or rather used to be) our Exhibition Dept. This no longer exists as such, having been formed into a separate Company known as Beck & Pollitzer-Strand Electric Ltd. This is in effect our Exhibition Lighting Dept., in new guise. By arrangement with Messrs. Beck & Pollitzer the well known Exhibition Stand Fitters, this Company can tackle the construction and lighting or construction only or the lighting only of single Exhibition Stands or complete Exhibitions in any part of the country. Communications should not be addressed to The Strand Electric but direct to Beck & Pollitzer-Strand Electric Ltd., Iverson Road, West Hampstead, N.W.6. Maida Vale 1182.

Let us now retrace our steps to the Central Castle. Upstage right you will see Administration (Reference Adm.) There are as far as we know three functions which this department fulfils:—

1. It is a stronghold wherein lurk Directors and other forms of life usually associated with the under-side of flat stones.

2. It approves the credit of all orders before they are passed to the department concerned for action. The people handling this work have exceptionally good memories and they very seldom let us down. We venture to hope therefore that it is very seldom indeed that they insult a customer of some years standing by asking him for money in advance.



“ . . . directors and other forms of life usually associated with the under side of flat stones.”

3. They act as debt collectors for all other departments. All sections which are engaged in selling or hiring are what the Services call “self accounting,” that is to say they send out their own Statements, Invoices and so on. It is only when payments become overdue that the case is passed to ADM. for further action. They of course start off with the usual polite ones about “this small amount having escaped your notice,” ending up in due course with the nasty one starting “Dear Sir, Unless . . .” Unless you get caught up with para. 2. above it is most unlikely that you will have any dealings or communications with Admin.

Leaving the Castle behind us and returning towards the foreground of the picture we turn off to the right (the left as you look at the map) where we find the Contracts Dept. (reference C.). Installations large and small, theatrical or otherwise, permanent or temporary are carried out by this section. It may be the installation of a new Switchboard, the wiring of a complete Theatre or Cinema or perhaps even a Factory, block of Flats or Offices. That is, of course, on the permanent side. They also deal with temporary “fit-ups”

for example a performance of *Hiawatha* at the Albert Hall or a dress show at the Mayfair or Dorchester.

That is as far as we can take you on this tour. We have purposely omitted Works, Packing and Despatch and Research and Development as they are not directly approachable by you. If you want to know about deliveries you should approach the department with whom you first dealt, whether Hire or some section of Sales. If you want to know about new lanterns—we have a number of new designs coming along and as soon as they are ready we shall tell you about them, until then let us leave R & D at work with their slide rules and log tables, photometers, tintometers, Avometers and all the rest.

As we leave this rustic scene we can just discern on the horizon the three areas presided over by Manchester (ref. MAN.), Dublin (Ref. DUB.) and Glasgow respectively. These offices are at your service provided you live in their area.

MANCHESTER BRANCH

399, Oldham Road,
Manchester, 10
Telephone: Collyhurst 2736

DUBLIN BRANCH

62, Dawson Street,
Dublin
Telephone: Dublin 74030

SCOTTISH DISTRIBUTORS

Stage Furnishings Ltd.,
417/9, Sauchiehall Street,
Glasgow, C.2.
Telephone: Douglas 6431

EXHIBITION STANDFITTING AND LIGHTING, ETC.

Beck & Pollitzer—Strand Electric,
Iverson Road, Ltd.,
London, N.W.6.
Telephone: Maida Vale 1182

* * * *

PASSED TO YOU FOR ACTION, PLEASE!

It is desired to draw attention to the fact that the following goods can neither be despatched per post or per passenger train, owing to the inflammable or explosive nature of same.

Ultra Violet liquid	Red or Green transformation fire
Lamp Lacquer	Electrically detonated maroons
Flash Powder	Electrically detonated smoke puffs
Smoke Powder	Flash paper

Where such goods cannot be collected personally from our premises, we have no option but to despatch per goods train, and for consequent delays in transit ten to fourteen days should be allowed.

MUST WE PAY THE AUTHOR ?

Protection against unlawful performances of plays is afforded to dramatic authors by means of copyright. Under the copyright law, an author, in exchange for his or her licence, is entitled to collect a fee for every public performance of a play, whether in its entirety or in the form of excerpts. Exactly at what stage a reading or other representation becomes a public performance it is sometimes by no means easy to determine. It is always advisable, in any case where there can be the slightest possibility of doubt, to consult the owners or agents for the owners of the copyright.

From the point of view of copyright the opposite of a public performance is not, legally, a private performance. A private performance is generally taken to mean one that is given before the members of a club or society or before a specially invited audience of friends. It may be organised to avoid certain technical and other formalities, but, whatever else it may avoid, it does not avoid the need of the author's licence and the payment of the appropriate performing fees. In so far as they are concerned, it is a public performance. That the performance has or has not been given in a theatre or hall for which a hire fee has or has not been paid makes no difference; no matter where the performance has been given, even in the privacy of a private house, provided someone from outside has been allowed in to witness it, it is a public performance. Whether admission money is taken at the door or not; whether or not a collection is made during the performance, or whether the audience is invited to come without charge or bribed to come with the promise of free refreshments, the performance can still be a public one.

In some cases performances can be deemed legally to be private and domestic. Performances that take place in one's own home (and, under certain circumstances, in hospitals and institutions) can be domestic: although it is by no means safe to assume they are always. For a purely domestic performance the author does not claim need to issue a licence.

The Standard Case on the subject of whether a performance is public or whether it is private and domestic is *Jennings v. Stephens*, the judgment in which was given in the Court of Appeal on March 11th, 1936. Since then this Court and the lower Courts have relied upon the decisions reached in that case and, until a decision in the House of Lords reverses the conclusions reached in *Jennings v. Stephens*, it can be assumed that the directions given in that case by three judges represents the situation.

People are apt to assume that the mere purchase of a printed copy of a play confers on the purchaser the right to perform as much or as little of it as may be chosen and when and wherever desired. This is very much in error. Unlike the novelist the playwright does not rely for his bread and butter on the number of copies of his work that are sold. Relatively few printed copies of a

play are sold and the playwright looks to the performance of his work and the accruing royalties for his living.

Copyright in a dramatic work does not only mean protection from plagiarism but also from any performance of the play without the consent of the owner of the copyright. And that consent must have been obtained before the performance is given.

The life of a play is a delicate thing and is very dependent on when and where it is performed and by whom. The owner of its copyright will therefore endeavour to arrange the sale of the various touring, provincial and amateur rights in such a way as to preserve the live value of the play for as long as possible. He may, for example, have given an undertaking in his contract with a professional company that no amateur performances will be allowed in a certain town before a certain date. It is therefore obvious that any performance without his prior knowledge and consent may cause him considerable embarrassment.

Because it is intended to give a performance in aid of Charity it does not follow that the owner of the copyright will consent to reduce or waive claim to the usual fee. He or she may not wish to contribute to that particular charity. Certainly to give the performance without licence or without paying the fee on the grounds that it was in the cause of Charity does not excuse infringement of copyright.

It is worth noting, that in the event of an infringement of copyright, not only does the person who organises the performance, however innocent his intentions, expose himself to possible legal proceedings and the liability to damages, but also all those taking part in the performance or having anything to do with it at all. Nor does it matter that none of them was aware of the fact that no consent had been obtained.

LEGALITE.

STRATFORD TO-DAY

By a Governor and Member of the Executive Council.

I feel it will be of interest to readers of "TABS" to know something of the Post War Policy and difficulties which are being encountered at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre.

In pre-war years the Director was appointed to run the Shakespeare Festival only, and the Winter Season and administration of the Theatre was under the General Manager. This led to overlapping of work and dual control. Last August, the Council resolved that in order to create unification of control which the Governors feel essential for the future policy of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, the Director shall, subject to the approval of the Council, be responsible for the whole of the Summer's management of the Theatre as such. This was a big step forward, and the next is the Petition to His Majesty's Privy Council of suggested alterations to the Charter. Incidentally, no action outside the Charter can be entertained. In previous years, a donation of over £100

was a qualification for a Governor—there was no age limit, and a Governor could resign his appointment and nominate a successor. The suggestions for amendment which were approved at an Extraordinary Meeting on Jan 3rd are as follows:—

1. An age limit of 70 unless a majority of three-quarters of a Governors' meeting authorise an extension.
2. A monetary gift of any amount is no longer a qualification.
3. Any person who, in the opinion of a Governors' Meeting, would further the progress of the Corporation can become a Governor.

Once this amendment is law, it is hoped that we shall be able to co-opt several personalities who, although they have done work for the Theatre and Shakespeare at Stratford or elsewhere, have so far been unrecognised.

It is hoped that Stratford will soon hold an even greater international position than at present. Apart from the production of Shakespeare's plays, the British Council and the Shakespeare Memorial Governors are again collaborating to provide lectures on Shakespearean subjects, particularly on the plays being produced during the season. These will be delivered by eminent critics, authors, and scholars, at the British Council Centre, Masoncroft, Stratford-upon-Avon.

Twelve concerts of classical music will also be given at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre on Sunday evenings during the Festival Season. The City of Birmingham Orchestra will give at least three of these concerts. Celebrated solo artists will also appear.

Under the charter we are also empowered "To advance and approve the dramatic art, by the establishment and maintenance of a school of acting and other means."

A few years ago we purchased a house and grounds just outside Stratford, and a special committee is being set up to form a school. It is hoped that such a school may be operative within eighteen months.

There are many difficulties to be overcome, the greatest of which is production overheads.

It is the aim of the Governors to present Shakespeare in the best possible manner. There is never any question of "stinting" on individual productions and any reasonable expense is carried, in order to procure the best decor and scenery. We have always aimed to please the general public, to present either seven or eight plays in any one season, so that a visitor to Stratford who is only there for, say a week, can see six entirely different plays. If you work out the full length of one of our summer festivals, you will find that the total number of performances is 240, including matinees. In effect, this means that an individual production is seen only 30 times in any one year, and even if carried forward for a second year, a maximum figure of 60 is reached. I now ask you to compare this number of performances with the average run of a play in London. I think you will agree that any show in London doing less than 3½-months can be considered a "flop" financially, but

even taking this period, it means that the play is presented at least 120 times. It is therefore obvious, that the overhead of our production costs is at least twice as heavy per performance as that encountered in a normal West End Production.

I cannot at the moment, see in what way this can be overcome, unless we reduce the number of new presentations in any one year, which we are reluctant to do because of the views I have already expressed.

The only way, until we can make a comparable adjustment, is by sending our Festival Company on Autumn tours to America and elsewhere, which I may say we have very much in mind.

There has been a lot of talk that the Stratford salaries are ridiculously low. I cannot agree with this argument. The salaries paid to our artists are very competitive, compared with a normal West End engagement—especially taking the view that a minimum of nine months certain work is guaranteed. What is overlooked is that the artists concerned can only be in receipt of this one form of remuneration. Owing to the geographical situation of Stratford, he or she is precluded from taking part in any film work or direct radio broadcasting, whereas an artist playing in a West End theatre can fill in with filming at Denham or Pinewood, or recording for the B.B.C.

An interesting point mentioned by Sir Barry Jackson at a Press interview recently, was that last year we lost a very considerable sum of money in spite of playing to capacity houses. So far there has been no rise in seating prices since the war, but this year all seats except the Gallery are being slightly increased.

Our leading artists this year are Miss Beatrix Lehman, Mr. Robert Harris and Mr. Walter Hudd. The total cast is over 50, the biggest ever assembled at Stratford.

Our whole aim is to expand, and this year the restaurant will be on a bigger scale than ever before, our library is also being entirely overhauled, but all projects cost money and on the two I have mentioned catering profits must pay for the scholars' books.

I should be interested to hear from any readers as to what they personally feel should be altered or done at Stratford, as I can assure you all that the Governing body is only too welcome to listen to new ideas.

L.S.R.

Correspondents should address Mr. Stokes-Roberts personally c/o Editor of Tabs, 24, Floral Street, London, W.C.2. Letters (of which the following is an example) will only be published with the prior written approval of the sender and recipient.—Ed.

SIR,

I do not know whether it is your intention that "TABS" should become a forum for discussing Stratford policy, nor indeed whether the Editor would be agreeable, but I personally have no objection to my humble comments being printed if all concerned should see fit.

Now you are concerned with "selling Shakespeare." (You will note that I have not suggested you are selling Stratford.) You are, no doubt, guided by the most altruistic and artistic motives but can you, I wonder, afford to disregard the commercial aspect. You say that you wish to please your public. Just

where is your public? No one will dispute that Stratford has its Shakespearean associations but does Shakespeare belong exclusively to Stratford? If you please Stratford, (and by that I include any temporary population who may be visiting for any reason whatsoever), have you pleased your public?

You are providing Arts Council lectures and concerts as part of your propaganda—but always at Stratford. Without raising political or other extraneous issues, may I ask you to consider where money now lies (and, of course, with money goes spare time). What proportion of your potential Shakespearean audience have the time, money or inclination to go to Stratford? (And here don't forget that Shakespeare has been not unsuccessfully presented in London more than once.) It is indeed nice to learn that the visitor to Stratford can see a different Shakespeare play every night of the week and hear a first class concert on Sundays but don't forget that the majority of people of a theatre-going age are married and—like it or not—such people tend to have family ties (*vide* birthrate).

You must I suggest, adopt a more realistic outlook and bring your goods to the public. You are not selling tailor-made suits—let's face it—you are selling an article which is mass produced in the sense that its shape, form, design and what-have-you is fixed and predetermined before the public buys it. Therefore it is not necessary for the public to visit your shop. You can take your wares to the customers. What is wrong with the various towns in the British Isles which are normally visited by "No. 1 Tours." Can't you face the competition? And wouldn't it be cheaper for you to tour the British Isles rather than to tour overseas countries? Or are you receiving a financial grant for an overseas tour which you could not receive for a British tour? Are your overseas tours not in effect a form of propaganda directed at people who will never (or at least very seldom) come and pay their dividend—or shall we say homage—at Stratford?

Now these Sunday concerts. Are you producing these as a bribe to persuade people to come and see Shakespeare acted at Stratford? Or is it just another way of getting extra revenue into the theatre—in which case I can fully sympathise. If you feel that good music sponsored by the Shakespeare Memorial, Stratford is a means of popularising Shakespeare, seeing that you are already importing an orchestra why not let that orchestra perform in London. And what pray is the connection between an orchestra that hies from Birmingham and Shakespeare or perhaps Stratford? I am no concert-goer personally, but if I were I do not suppose that I would be interested in who presented any particular orchestra or concert, any more than I am interested in who presents a play or who is the lessee, licensee and so on. I am certainly interested in knowing the producer, author and cast of a play in the same way that I would be interested in knowing the conductor, composer or orchestra, but that is something very different because these gentlemen play a constructive part in the performance which I am about to see or hear and I can form an opinion as to whether that performance is likely to be one which I shall enjoy or not.

It is not, I imagine, part of your policy to breed Stratford musicians or conductors, but you could perhaps associate Stratford with a particular concert by choosing music which was itself in some way associated with Shakespeare. Let it be a concert of incidental music to Shakespeare through the ages, or music written about the time of Shakespeare; but if you can do none of these things, might you not just as well sponsor a film programme (albeit highbrow!) for all the publicity you will derive?

If by producing concerts and the like you aim to produce some general intellectual uplift, are you not a rival to the Arts Council?

In the hope of goading you into a reply may I sign myself

BACON.

[Mr. Stokes-Roberts has agreed that the above letter be published but neither time nor space will permit of his reply in this issue. Judging by the above letter, space will not permit us to print correspondent's replies to Mr. Stokes-Roberts in full, and it may be that he will be able to publish an omnibus answer to correspondents in our next issue. We do not, of course, associate ourselves with this correspondence.—E.L.]

NEWS & CUES FROM P. & O.P.

We were particularly impressed with the Reading Repertory Company's programme for their recent production of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*. *Rep. Tabs* as this little brochure is called contains in addition to the usual information expected in any programme, reproductions of the original Tenniel illustrations, a note on the books, the author and the play; a notice about their next production, a report on the visit—by coach—of some 130 subscribers and acting members to a neighbouring town to see a new play; a statement of the policy of the Company, a personal note on one of the cast, a notice of the Annual General Meeting with list of Officers for the current season, and—brilliant idea—details of a gift token scheme whereby recipients get all the privileges of membership including two free seats to three plays. The coach trip, the gift token scheme and indeed the programme itself all reflect the very great keenness and activity of this Reading Repertory Company.

★ ★ ★

We were interested to hear that a recent performance of *Cyrano de Bergerac* in Paris, was given entirely by understudies, in order to discover new talent. The audience were charged reduced prices. We hope the experiment was found to be justified and would like to hear of something similar in England.

★ ★ ★

The Southgate Theatre Guild recently staged a most successful Brains Trust. The "brains" were:—

Miss Janet Halliday	— Prof. of Drama, Essex Educn. Authorities
Miss Doris Hutton	— British Drama League
Mr. S. Earnshaw	— The Strand Electric and Eng. Co., Ltd.
Mr. W. Jones	— British Drama League
Mr. Peter Watts	— Well known Radio Producer
Mr. Bernard Whine	— Secretary, North London Theatre Guild
	<i>Question Master</i>
Mr. John Summers	— Prod. Director, Southgate Theatre Guild.

The evening was an unqualified success and was generally admitted to have had considerable educational as well as entertainment value. Believing that this is a feature which might well be adopted by many other amateur groups we give below some of the questions dealt with during the session:—

1. Do you agree that the producer should be solely responsible for choosing his cast, if not, what would be a suitable alternative, bearing in mind that the producer is ultimately responsible for the success of the production?
2. What benefit do the Brains Trust think can be gained by amateurs doing play-reading?

3. Does the Brains Trust think that J. B. Priestley will live as a dramatist?
4. In recent years bottom lighting (floats) has been considerably reduced or dispensed with entirely even for burlesque shows, i.e. *Piccadilly Hayride* uses no floats at all. Why is this?
5. Would the Brains Trust agree that it is not in the best interests of a drama group for it to have a casting committee of more than two and producer?
6. Has anyone considered the possibility of taking a small theatre and running continuous rep. using say 12 first class amateur societies, doing one show each every three months?
7. Given reasonable stage and lighting facilities, and provided that the standard of society is a good one, what would be the ideal play to present?
8. Is it desirable to employ professional electricians, or can amateurs fully cover the scope of this sphere?
9. Should plays in which dialect is essential be avoided by amateurs?
10. Could the Brains Trust give some definite lead regarding the very controversial subject of Front-of-House lighting?
11. Which, in the Brains Trust's opinion is more important, the cast or the producer?
12. What is to happen to the long list of dramatic aspirants who have great ability, having passed matriculation, and cannot enter the R.A.D.A. and like academies because of the priority given to service people? I believe they (civilians) cannot enter until at least 1948/49. In the meantime, frustrated, they take up other studies and will be, I feel sure, lost to the drama profession, for the stagnation period between matriculation and acceptance is a very dangerous relaxing period unless rightly directed?
13. Would it not be an advantage to drama in a broad sense, to put West End stages at the disposal of amateur club performances and festivals on Sunday afternoons?
- *14. Would the Brains Trust agree that the art of stage lighting in this country is at least 25 years behind that of say America, Germany and Russia?
15. In amateur productions is it considered best to cast actors as closely as possible to their natural character, or does it serve a more useful purpose to construct the character from the actor?

* At present we have orders in hand for such widely dispersed areas as Holland, France, Turkey, India, Egypt and South Africa, not to mention enquiries from Iceland, Scandinavia, Canada and South America.

"The proof of the pudding " ?

We have not recently had contact with Russia, but we hope in our autumn issue to give details of the American lighting scene, as the result of a first hand investigation to be carried out during the summer by two Directors of this Company.—EDITOR.

16. Has Shakespeare any "popular" entertainment value to the general public, or are the recent successes patronised by students and highbrows?
17. Could the Brains Trust give information regarding projected scenescapes as very widely practised in the Russian theatre?
18. If the Brains Trust agree that auditions are the best method of casting, should the choice of cast be left entirely to the producer?
19. Is it right to judge amateur stage presentations by professional standards, or is this unfair, keeping in mind that they are charging the general public for admission and are in fact challenging comparison with their professional brethren?
20. What quality in a play is to be looked for in choosing one for production by amateur societies?
21. Does the Brains Trust think that Thornton Wilder and the new American school constitute a worth while new art form and do they merit production by amateur societies?
22. In selecting plays, should amateurs give their patrons the type of play they ask for, or should they try to influence public taste by giving audiences what they think is good for them?

Bravo, Southgate Theatre Guild!

COLOUR IN THE THEATRE

Owing to illness of F.P.B. the next article in this series will have to be held over till our next issue. We have, however, received the following letter raising points in earlier articles, and below we give F.P.B.'s reply—necessarily in brief.—Ed.

The Editor of "TABS"

Dear Sir,

Thank you for the copy of "TABS" which I received just before Christmas. This is the second copy I have seen and I have found both very interesting.

I have always found lighting an absorbing topic perhaps because it is the main aspect of theatre work in which I have never had a chance to let myself go. The article, "Colour in the Theatre (No. 2)" therefore claimed my attention, and particularly the colour transmission graphs.

There are three questions I want to ask.

(1) Why is the log. of the percentage of transmission used for the scale instead of the plain percentage?

(2) What is it a percentage of? For example, take No. 6 Red. The shortest wave violet is shown as nearly 10 per cent. Is this 10 per cent. of the violet available from any source of light, or does the graph mean that you will get approximately equal strengths of violet and the shorter wave lengths of yellow from clear sunlight or a 100-watt lamp?

(3) This question is tied up with the last. On what basis is the colour scale allocated? The text suggests that it is divided according to wavelength. If this is so, I suggest that the graphs

will not be easily read pictures, and that it would be better to allot this scale on the basis of the percentage of each colour emitted by, say, a 100-watt lamp. Or am I being too theatrical and forgetting that these colour media may be used for other purposes than stage lighting?

JOHN HENDERSON.

The answers to the above questions are as follows:—

1. The Transmission curves in "TABS" were purposely drawn in a similar manner to those published by Messrs. Kodak in their book on Wratten photographic filters. It was considered that the comparisons would be of interest to those who wanted to carry out accurate colour experiments.

2. The percentage is of the particular wavelength (colour); thus a particular filter may transmit 90 per cent yellow of wavelength 560 $m\mu$. and absorb 10 per cent., whether the source of light is rich in yellow or not. The Transmission curves are descriptions of the filters and not of the filter plus the light source.

3. The colour scale horizontal axis is based on wavelengths ranging from 720 $m\mu$. to 400 $m\mu$. It is important to remember that each colour band is made up of a large number of wavelengths ranging, for example, in the case of red from 720 $m\mu$. to 620 $m\mu$., each wavelength being a different red. The eye cannot differentiate between close wavelengths but nevertheless would easily recognise a dozen or so separate reds.

Filament lamps emit a complete range from one end of the spectrum to the other (a continuous spectrum) though the larger wattage lamps will emit more at the blue end than the small; which explains why we can't tie any results to a 100-watt lamp. An old lamp or a lamp working on reduced voltage will give less blue—a fact which is demonstrated almost daily at present during electricity voltage reductions. Discharge lamps emit their principal light from a few narrow bands, the result is the line spectrum. Thus a mercury street lighting lamp spectrum shows a narrow bright line in the violet, one in the blue, one in the green and one in the yellow. As discharge lamps may turn up in the theatre at any time now it will be realised that descriptive methods used must not date. It is obviously wise to describe the filters and lamps separately, the one by transmission curves, the other by spectral energy distribution curves.

F.P.B.

MORE ABOUT BATTENS

TO THE EDITOR

Sir,—Your contributor, H.M.C., in the December issue of your admirable journal, writing of amateur claims to the use of Battens has, I suggest, drawn a tiny little red herring across the subject.

Of the word "herse" used by the French, more information may be derived from Larousse. Amongst other definitions he gives "harrow" and "portcullis." Gasc, in his Dictionary whilst admitting H.M.C.'s "triangular candlesticks" (in a church), en-

dorses Larousse but qualifies further, giving "(theatre). Gas Batten, Batten Light, Stage Lights."

The conception of a lighting framework suspended behind a proscenium arch and a portcullis hung behind a gateway is surely a reasonable identification, both as to mechanics and sight lines and the adoption of an easy term. It is interesting that the old French "porte coleice" (a sliding door) is superseded by "herse" although the sliding part is retained and even anglicized as "coulisse" (Oxford Dictionary)—the "side scene in theatre; the groove between two of these." Research on this Ash Wednesday, amongst a limited number of books, did not produce an answer to the query in H.M.C.'s title however. Yet some rather curious lighting facts have emerged.

John Timbs in his *Curiosities of London* (1867) states, page 371, "coal gas has been used for lighting by William Murdoch in Cornwall, Birmingham and Manchester as early as 1792, when F.A. Winsor, a German, after several experiments, lighted the old Lyceum Theatre in 1803/1804 . . ."

This had been recorded by Haydn in his Dictionary of Dates (1855), page 619, under the sub-heading

"ENGLISH OPERA HOUSE OR LYCEUM"

Built by Dr. Arnold 1794/5.

Winsor experiments with Gas Lighting 1803/4.

Opened at the Lyceum in 1809."

Then Timbs has another surprise, for he generalises on page 372 that "theatres were first lighted (by gas) in 1817/1818 . . . The Haymarket was the last of the London Theatres into which gas was introduced, the consequence of some absurd prejudice of the proprietor of that theatre who bound the lessee to adhere to the old fashioned method of lighting with oil. The change took place on April 15th, 1853."

One can trace this proprietor in Haydn, page 619. In a detail of the Haymarket he tables certain main occurrences.

"Built 1702.

Rebuilt 1767.

Rebuilt by Nash and opened July 4, 1821.

Mr. Webster's management (16 years) terminates with his farewell performance March 14th, 1853.

Mr. Buckstone's management 1853 to 1855."

A considerable degree of flexibility in gas lighting was obviously at the disposal of Mr. Buckstone. Writing of the Theatrical Booths which toured the fairs such as Southwark about the Waterloo period, Sherson in his *London's Lost Theatres*, page 335, writes:—

"There were twenty shows altogether, the chief of which, after Mr. Richardson's, appear to have been 'Clarke's from Astley's, lighted with Real Gas Inside and Outside'."

It does not appear what constituted this "real gas." Probably, for better illumination, it was rich in volatile hydrocarbons. "Cracking" oil or tar was a method in vogue, for Timbs has his final surprise, page 237.

"Gas made from oil and resin is too costly for street lighting but has been used for large public establishments. Covent Garden Theatre was formerly lighted with Oil-Gas, made on the premises. . ."

There is none of this which answers H.M.C. but in the period between the production at Wynnstay in 1760* and the work of Winsor at the Lyceum 1803 there existed—as attested by the conservatism ascribed to Buckstone's predecessor at the Haymarket—oil lighting. Were these lamps mounted in a "horse?"

I am sir, Your &c. . .

A. O. GIBBONS.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir.—If Battens are descended from Barbicans, I believe Mr. Gibbons will have us believe that there is a connection between dips and drawbridges, or between early footlights and the boiling oil which knights of old used to dispense from their battlements onto the heads of unwelcome visitors.

There is surely a closer and more obvious connection between Battens and triangular candlesticks than between Battens and portcullis. (This plural is my own and will not be found in Larousse). If the term "portcullis" had to be brought into the French theatre, it would—I should have thought—have been more likely to be applied to flown scenery, tabs, sky borders and suchlike. Surely a cut cloth would give a much better representation of a portcullis than would a row of smelly little lamps? And he admits the use of "coulisse" in connection with sliding scenery.

Mr. Gibbons' notes on early gas lighting are most interesting. I would refer him to a "Memoir on the Gas Lighting of Theatres" submitted by Giovanni Aldini to The Imperial and Royal Institute of Milan (in Italian) in 1820. Aldini had previously visited England in connection with this matter and he comments on the gas installations at the Covent Garden, Drury Lane and Haymarket Theatres.

He particularly mentions the Opera House in the Haymarket, as it was, he says, the nearest in construction to the Italian Theatres of the time. He describes the auditorium lighting in some detail and states that the same type of lighting (gas) was used in the orchestra and on the stage.

On the other hand no less an authority than Allardyce Nicholl in his "History of Early Nineteenth Century Drama (1800-1850)" refers (citing Clement Scott) to a play bill of March 1843 as dating the installation of gas in this Theatre, against Mr. Gibbons' date of 1853—a decade's difference.

There is so much conflict of evidence that I hesitate to take sides without further research, but perhaps some reader has trust-

*Vide Tabs Vol. 4, No. 2, Dec., 1946.

worthy information which would settle our gaseous differences.†

To return to Aldini, he remarks that the gas pressure at Covent Garden was unreliable, and observes how that theatre consequently made its own oil gas (on the premises), for the lighting of the orchestra—a precaution, he writes, to be adopted as a standby throughout that and other Theatres in the near future. As an alternative to oil, Aldini suggests pitch or tar drawn from wood, or other greasy substances as being suitable and more economical for distillation.

Even at this early date apparently, research was going on. Peckston in his "Theory and Practice of Gas Lighting" (London 1819) observed that owing to the lightness of gas, it rose to the jets situated in the upper parts of a Theatre to such an extent that they burned much more brightly than those at pit level. He believed therefore, that the diameter of the gas piping should be reduced pro rata to height, so as to maintain an even pressure throughout the building.

I am, Sir, Yours &c.,
H.M.C.

† *There appears to be confusion here as to the Theatre concerned. Cassell's "Old and New London" (1893) indicates that the theatre which Aldini saw must have been that standing on what is now the site of His Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket. The first Theatre on this site was built in 1705 for Italian Opera and was popularly known as the "Opera House" in the Hay Market, right up to the time the present building was erected, (at the same time as The Carlton Hotel—about 1891.) This, despite the fact that in 1730 it assumed the name of the King's Theatre and in 1837 became Her Majesty's Theatre in honour of Queen Victoria.*

The first theatre was burned to the ground in 1789 and was reconstructed in 1818 and this would no doubt account for the fact that Aldini saw a new gas installation in or just prior to 1820. The archives of the Haymarket Theatre do not go back sufficiently far, but again according to Cassells, one Benjamin Webster leased the Theatre from 1837 to 1853, introducing gas during his tenancy at the cost of £500 per annum, and ultimately presenting the central chandelier to the proprietors.—ED.]

ANOTHER CARDBOARD CRISIS

In common with certain nationally advertised goods of a somewhat more appetising nature, supplies of colour media may become even more restricted unless containers (cardboard postal tubes) are returned to us. These are at present charged for, but will be credited in full in future provided the name and address of the sender is clearly indicated. The cardboard shortage has also affected cartons for the lacquer dipping of electric lamps. We regret that these latter cartons are now quite unobtainable.

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The next issue of "TABS" will not appear until the late summer or early autumn.

