CAST-OFF COMIC OPERA COSTUME FOR THE HEATHEN

His Loud Clothes Saved His Life

LONDON, January 9.

THERE is a big surprise in store for the next American who gets shipwrecked on a cannibal isle in the Pacific or is pounced on by the chocolate soldiers of some dusky monarch in the middle of Africa, or becomes stranded in the wilds of Siam or "bushed" among the man-eating Papuans of British New Guinea.

As like as not, the first lot of aborigines he encounters will be attired, not in the garb of Nature which used to be their wear on weekdays, and Sundays, too, but in the dress of the male members of the chorus of The Pink Lady or The College Widow, while the belles of the native village will be found arrayed in the frills and furbelows of the famous Florodora sextette, or, maybe, in filmy ballet-skirts that once enveloped the graceful forms of the coryphees of Covent Garden Opera House or the Metropolitan in New York. And when the traveler is lugged into the presence of King Mumbo-Jumbo, it's dollars to doughnuts he will find that monarch sporting a gorgeous stage costume that he last saw across the footlights of an American musical comedy, unless by chance his sable majesty happens to be dressed up as Macbeth or Don Caesar de Bazan or arrayed in the trappings of some other stage character—more or less the worse for wear after having done duty in many "productions" after the original one.

For this is the latest use that has been discovered for the discarded tinsel and spangles of the stage. Today, when theatrical costumes have been worn on "the boards" until they can be worn no more, or when they are going begging as the result of an untimely frost which nipped the show in which they figured, they go neither into the ragbag or to the "old clo'" man, but are sent instead to gladden the heart of the heathen in his blindness who loves dressing up in the gaudiest raiment he can get hold of and is tickled half to death with the dress of a comic opera hero and sent into rhapsodies by the lugs that Bluebeard wore in the pantomime or a suit of second-hand stage armor.

That is how it comes that the population of one African village now strut proudly about in the entire wardrobe of a London musical show that passed away after a few nights of agony, and why at the present moment a big consignment of theatrical costumes, including one "lot" that came from the United States and includes a complete set of King Dodo costumes, is being got ready for shipment to a native tribe in Siam. Under the same roof shelves and counters are piled high with the castoff garments of queens and columbines, kings and jesters, knights and mountebanks of the stage which eventually are to deck the persons of kings of the jungles and their dusky consorts who have grown tired of leading the simple life.

Life Saved by Loud Clothes.

Up to date the whole business of passing the discarded raiment of the stage on to sable swells and belles is in the hands of one man, who does business in London and has a hustling branch in the United States, too, and the story of how this unique and highly picturesque industry came into being is entertaining. It may sound almost too good to be true, but was told to the writer by the outfitter of cannibal kings and queens himself. His name is John Hyman, and aside from his business as the Worth of West Africa and the Paquin of Papua, he is one of the best-known of the stage costumers.

"The beginning of this department of my business," he said, "dates back about five years, when a queer and pretty exciting adventure befell a friend of mine. He's a great traveler, and, incidentally, a great swell—what they call a 'regular nut' in London now—and at this time he was the only passenger on a tramp steamer that was working its way from Beira to Chinde—if I remember rightly—on theEast Coast of Africa. Well, the ship was wrecked and my friend was cast up on a cannibal island whose inhabitants were eager to sample some real white meat. All that kept this chap from figuring as the principal dainty on their bill of fare next day was his extremely saucy clothes. As luck would have it, he was wearing a something choice in the way of a fancy vest, besides a real Bond street suit of mixed tweeds, and underneath he had some pink underwear that cost $7.50 the garment in Piccadilly.

"This raiment made a big hit with the cannibal chiefs, and it saved my friend's life, for he told the chiefs that they might have every rag he had on if they would keep him out of the casserole pot, and this they agreed to, it not seeming to occur to them that after he had been sent along to the chef his clothes would be theirs anyway. Anyhow, they spared him for the sake of his togs, and my friend, wrapped principally in a reverie, was taken in one of the catamarans that they use out there to a neighboring island where he got in with a consul, and eventually was put on board of another ship. On the way back he did some hard thinking, and when he got home he told me that if natives were as pleased as all that with jus ordinary things like vests and underwear they would trade most anything for really showy stuff like theatrical costumes. I saw the point quick, and that's how it started."

Hyman smiled and bit off the end of a long, black cigar. He is a man of fifty-odd, whose nationality may be guessed, and he has been one of London's leading costumers for 20 year or more. Today he can trick you at a minute's notice as anything from an Indian prince to an American cowboy, and when the writer called on him was busy getting up a lot of the costumes for a fancy dress party soon to be given by the wife of the prime minister, Mrs. Asquith. Meanwhile, he directed attention to a gorgeous field marshal's hat with a white plume which had just come in from a local hatter who had been enlarging it by order to fit the head of a savage chieftain in West Africa.

Trafficking With the Heathen.

Within a day or two of hearing his friend's story, it seems, the costumier had "laid pipes" both in this country and in the United States for getting hold of cast-off stage clothes, particularly the disused habiliments of musical comedy and pantomime performers, and as soon as these began to pour into his London establishment he started organizing a staff of "travelers" to dispose of them to the dusky denizens of the region in which his friend had had his adventure, as well as a lot of other queer corners of the world. At present he sells his picturesque wares in both West and East Africa, as well as in Siam, the islands of the Malay Peninsula and in Australia and New Zealand, and day by day the business of arraying the untutored savage in the trappings of the footlights is being carried further afield. Only this week, in fact, Hyman's son, George, who is the champion pusher of his father's retinue of salesmen, started for Marseilles, where he is to sail on the steamship Maloja for Bombay. With him he has taken a "special line," consisting of most of the costumes used in three English pantomimes of the season of 1910-11, to wit—Dick Whittington, Cinderella and The Forty Thieves, the complete trappings of an American musical comedy that gave up the ghost at Penobscot, Me., and all the leftovers from the last tour of the No. 2 Waltz Dream Company in the English provinces, together with other sartorial confections that are expected to make a strong appeal to the swarthy henchmen of the Gaekwar of Baroda and the murky myrmidons of the Maharajah of Kapurthala.

Few of the natives on whom Hyman works off his second-hand stage finery have any real money, of course, so the costumier lets them settle in "kind," most of his African customers "stumping up" with oil and rubber, and most of his Siamese ones in ivory. The business must be a regular gold mine, for, while these old theatrical castoffs can be had for a mere song, what Hyman's agents extract from his cannibalistic and other clients in exchange for them is more like the price of an aria by Tetrazzini. But the costumier is only moderately happy over his big dividends, being harassed by thoughts of the conquests that might have been his had he only got into the field sooner, or before, as he expressed it, "the meddling missionaries spoiled the natives by half-civilizing them."

"Why, for a thing like that," he said, pointing lovingly to a gorgeous (stage) crown fashioned in gilt and encrusted with imitation diamonds and rubies, which reposed under a glass case in his showroom, "I could have had their whole blooming country."

Savages the world over, Hyman says, are attracted by gaudy colors, red and yellow being the favorite hues, and all have one characteristic in common, which is a strong dislike for covering their legs. So the lovely spectacle is presented in many a native village on the Gold Coast and elsewhere of a swarthy chieftain clad as Cardinal Richelieu in The Three Musketeers, or as the Mikado, or maybe as the king in The Sleeping Beauty, with a pair of naked black legs spoiling the otherwise dazzling effect of his gorgeous plumage. The denizens of Northern Zululand have a regular passion for tin stage armor it seems, and they insist on wearing it even on the hottest days. He declares, too, that the fine feathers of stage heroes and swell chorus men have a distinct psychological effect on their dusky wearers. Native soldiers fight better when dressed in gaudy uniforms, and Hyman says he has found that gold lace and brass buttons will make a henpecked Ethiopian brave enough to "sass" his mother-in-law.

He has some queer stories to tell of the parts that his secondhand actor-clothes have played in the life of the jungle, and the strangest of the lot might have seemed too "steep" to be related in print as a fact had it not been confirmed in all the essential details by an English missionary who was seen by the writer on his return, the other day, from a lengthy exile in the Dark Continent.

Wardrobe of a Chief.

The scene of this happening was a district in the Canicage region—Portuguese territory—which is ruled over by a chieftain who has been one of Hyman's best customers. This chief's extensive wardrobe now includes one complete British First Lord's uniform, as worn by Sir Joseph Porter in Pinafore; the costume of a Spanish toreador that formerly figured in Carmen, and the complete livery of an English flunkey in a Drury Lane melodrama, beside other ornate getups that must look weird enough in an environment of mud huts and juj-ju.

The chief ruled in peace until a comparatively short time ago when a pretender arose in the land in the shape of an ambitious nephew of the king's. He began to foment a revolution and attracted so many adherents among the "have-nots" of the Chicago region that things began to look uncommonly black for the reigning monarch. It certainly appeared as if the crown was going to change heads, when the astute old king tried bribery as a last resort. He sent for the pretender, and without mincing matters proposed to buy him off. The inducement he offered was nothing more nor less than the costume of Hamlet, which the king had bought from one of Hyman's traveling men. Maybe it was worn originally by E. H. Sothern or Walter Whiteside, or perhaps it was the one that Sarah Bernhardt wore when she played the melancholy Dane in Paris and caused a duel between two dramatic critics who disputed as to whether Hamlet was fat or lean. Anyhow, it proved too attractive a bait to be rejected by the aspirant to the throne of Canicage. After hesitating a while—possibly soliloquizing "To be, or not to be?" after the fashion of the Prince of Denmark himself, he capitulated to the lure of the costume and agreed to call off the revolution, and the old chief muttered "Saved!" and went back to the throne room to receive a "Votes for Women" deputation that was due at the palace at 3:30 P. M.

Hyman says that a Congo belle has become the favorite wife of her lord through attiring herself in the spangles and laces that once adorned a member of the ballet at the London Alhambra, and he also told of a novel spectacle that greeted the eyes of one of his drummers who visited a native village on the Gold Coast for the first time. It seems that, in the meantime, the inhabitants of this village had done some bartering with those of another one nearer the coast where Hyman already had placed a fair-sized consignment of castoffs, and the first thing the traveler saw when he struck the second town was a local beauty who was sporting a huge Merry Widow hat and a sash of faded pink ribbon, but the remainder of whose costume could have been concealed pretty successfully under a postage stamp.

She Wore a Merry Widow Hat.

The ornate "second-hands" that this London costumer unloads on the untutored savage do not consist entirely of theatrical costumes, however. Pretty nearly every kind of showy apparel makes good with native tribes and on the groaning shelves in the underground storerooms beneath Hyman's Leicester Square establishment there are all kinds of British army and navy uniforms, and no end of flashy liveries that once adorned the powdered flunkies of Mayfair and Park Lane. Every year, too, it seems, the magnificent dark blue and gold-laced liveries of the Lord Mayor's servants are renewed and the old ones sold at auction, and most of them are acquired by Hyman and in the fullness of time bedeck the ebony persons of savage rulers in the heart of Africa and elsewhere.

Decima Moore, the English actress who married a British administrator in Central Africa and wrote a book about her travels there, tells of a potent chief who rules over many thousands of warriors entirely by virtue of possessing the gorgeous robes of a sheriff of the City of London, and it's even betting that he got them from Hyman. The latter says that in Siam, where Cheever Goodwin laid the scene of Wang, the natives will barter the last elephant tusk they have in the till for a second-hand Prince Albert coat, while in the islands of the Indian Ocean the kind of helmet worn by an English policeman is regarded as a thing of ravishing beauty.

HAYDEN CHURCH.

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Collaborators In a Chinese Play

WHO really wrote The Yellow Jacket? The question was put to George Hazelton, who, according to the bills, shares with J. Harry Benrimo the responsibility of the authorship of the Chinese play which comes to Baltimore this week.

Mr. Hazelton answered in the words of Tai Fah Min and Wu Sin Yin when they were planning the murder: "Let us pass into another room, where none may listen." This was offhand evidence that Mr. Hazelton knew at least one line of the play. Once in the "other room" Mr. Hazelton continued:

"Collaboration is an interesting proposition. Very often it results in 'the other fellow' claiming everything, but as the 'other fellow' proposition is two-edged and cuts both ways, the results are usually equitable.

"Collaboration is like matrimony, in that it is a big gamble. The only difference is that there is no chance of divorce. In France many of the greatest plays have been written in collaboration, but in France every one doesn't wish to be president. Some of the best plays in America have been ruined because two brains, each viewing a picture from a different light, have failed to work in harmony. To win success collaborators must forget everything but the result. It makes very little difference who wrote this line or that, or who directed this scene or that at rehearsal. In the case of The Yellow Jacket Mr. Benrimo and I get along so well because we have a system. When we are together with our friends each bumps his head to the other and tells the party that his collaborator did it all. When we are separated we tell our friends in the strictest whispered confidence that the other fellow didn't do anything. The system works perfectly with us and I would suggest it to other collaborators."

Mr. Hazelton is a lawyer, but he has been best known to the stage as the author of Mistress Nell, in which Miss Henrietta Crosman made her greatest success. He got the rudiments of his dramatic education before he was 20 years old, when he appeared in a small part with Booth and Modjeska. Later he lived for a time in San Francisco. His father, who was a member of Congress, had to deal with problems touching Chinese immigration, and Mr. Hazelton found plenty of opportunity to study Chinese, high and low, from Li Hung Chang and Wu Ting Fang down to the humble coolie.

When Mr. Benrimo, who lived in China when a boy and speaks the language, came to New York with The First Born, he and Mr. Hazelton became friends, and they agreed to collaborate on The Yellow Jacket. This play, by the way, was named in honor of Mr. Hazelton's friend, Li Hung Chang.

"I was interested in the subject," said Mr. Hazelton, "because it was universal in its humor and its philosophy; because it had the primal, symbolic forms of treatment similar to the Greek plays and the plays Shakespeare used in his old London days.

"I saw an interesting feature in the fact that the audience could enjoy the privilege of writing the play themselves as they went along. Every one in the world enjoys his own imagination, and I saw that when we put four stools on the stage, representing the love boat, and played the scene to music, the audience would have the pleasure of planning the love boat themselves and writing the scene to suit their own fancy.

"Our play presents the conventions of the Chinese theater, which have changed but little in hundreds of years. We have striven to show the customs, action and music as they are presented at Canton and Peking and Nanking bp the Chinese.

"You must give free play to your fancy if you would enjoy a Chinese play. Their drama is a rich playground for the imagination. No stage in the world is such a slave to convention as the Chinese, and these conventions are suggestive and delightful. We, Occidentals, feast the eye with scenery and the illusion produced is in proportion to the perfection of that scenery. The Chinese gladden the imagination with suggestion and symbolism. Their audiences are permitted to paint their own pictures and compose their own songs.

"All primitive peoples are guided by the same motives, love and laughter. They weep the same kind of tears and for the same reasons.

"The balcony scene that Shakespeare gave his fellows at the Globe Theater was probably not unlike the heaven that surmounts the stage in the Chinese tradition.

TWO WOMEN WHO OWN ONE-FOURTH THE NATIONAL LEAGUE

By A. ERNEST BOWERSOX.

THE fair sex, not content with monopolizing much of the spotlight in business and politics, is now breaking into the great national game with the usual fuss and feathers and a great hurrah. Think of the fact that two women now own and control exactly one-fourth of the staunch old National League!

Mrs. Elise Lombard Brush, widow of the late John T. Brush, who owns the controlling interest in the New York Giants, and Mrs. Helen Hathaway Robinson Britton, owner of the St. Louis Cardinals, are of peculiar interest to the baseball enthusiasts of Baltimore.

Mrs. Brush is a former Baltimore girl, and Mrs. Britton has stirred up quite a rumpus in the National League by firing Roger Bresnahan, a former Oriole player, when he had an iron-bound four-year contract. This lady magnate also accused Bresnahan, who managed her Cardinals, of not giving the club his best services and of aiding the Giants to win the flag.

While Mrs. Britton has endeavored to oversee personally the running of her baseball team, it is not believed that the former Baltimore woman owning the Giants will interfere in the management. She owns the controlling interest, but she named her son-in-law, Harry N. Hempstead, for the presidency and states that she will leave the business end of the game to him and the playing end to John T. McGraw, also an ex-Oriole.

Mrs. Brush understands the great pastime from A to Z. For many years Mr. Brush was an invalid, and on account of his condition his wife helped him in the conduct of club affairs, and so has become familiar with the business management of the New York Club.

Mrs. Brush Married in Baltimore

Mrs. Brush, before her marriage in this city 20 years ago, was Miss Elsie Lombard, a vaudeville actress. She is the daughter of the late G. W. Lombard, who was manager of the old Baltimore and Ohio Telegraph Company before it was taken over by the Western Union. The parents of Mrs. Brush have been dead for years, but she has relatives in this city, including an uncle, James K. Claridge. Mr. Brush met Miss Lombard while she was on the stage.

Mr. Brush was well known to the old school of local fans for the part he played in relieving Baltimore of big league baseball. Though Andrew Freedman, who was president of the New York Club in 1902, when John T. McGraw broke away from the old Orioles, causing the famous old aggregation that put Baltimore on the baseball map to collapse, has always been given credit for breaking up Ban Johnson's organization here, Brush was behind the plot. When McGraw packed up his trunk and went to New York, with him went Bresnahan, Gilbert, McGinnity and McGann, leaving the Orioles hopelessly in a rut.

When McGraw forsook an Oriole uniform to manage the New York club for $10,000 a year, which was then a record-breaking salary for a baseball leader, Brush was identified with Cincinnati. Soon after McGraw got settled in Gotham Brush broke away from the Reds and assumed the presidency of the present National League champions.

Mrs. Helen Hathaway Robinson Britton, the present owner of the St. Louis Cardinals, inherited control of the club through the death of her father, Frank DeHaas Robinson. Mrs. Britton has taken the business management of the club in her own hands, this being thoroughly demonstrated when she informed her manager, Roger Bresnahan, that he was no longer needed, though the latter appeared to be protected by a contract which was pronounced by lawyers as binding.

Bresnahan was released because Mrs. Britton became dissatisfied with his handling of the team. Roger's contract called for a salary of $10,000 a season for four years. In this contract there was a 10-day notice of release clause, which was taken advantage of by the club. Bresnahan, however, had another contract under the terms of which he was to receive 10 per cent. of the club's profits. The St. Louis Club offered to make some sort of a settlement, but their offer was far from satisfactory to their former manager.

The breach between the St. Louis Club and Bresnahan has been settled, however, and all concerned are happy. Roger has affixed his autograph to a Chicago contract, and "Chubby Charles" Murphy, the owner of the Cubs, thinks the joke is on Mrs. Britton, for with the former Oriole and Jimmy Archer the Windy City aggregation has the best backstopping corps in the big leagues. Bresnahan refused to be duped by the Cardinals, and it is said he did not agree to a compromise until something like $20,000 had been added to his bank roll.

A strange coincidence connects many lawyers with the management of the affairs of the St. Louis Club. President J. C. Jones and Director Don Hocker are both members of the St. Louis bar, while Miller Huggins, who succeeded Bresnahan as manager, is said to be as good at arguing before the court as he is with the umpires.

Woes of the Woman Magnate.

But being a baseball magnate is not all that it's cracked up to be. Said Mrs. Britton the other day:

"If ever a woman was left with a white elephant on her hands, that woman was I when I fell heir to the St. Louis Cardinals of the National League. I love my home and my children and when my father left this baseball estate to me I nearly collapsed with surprise, for I had never in my whole life thought I would fall heir to such a thing. When I really found myself in possession of it I began to realize that I certainly had an outside career on my hands with a vengeance.

"Let any woman dissatisfied with the drab reality of home life and domestic surroundings just fall heir to a baseball team if she is looking for 'an outside interest'—'a career.' Well, all I have to say is that is the last thing I would wish to happen to another of my sex. It's been a terrible revelation into the dishonesty and meanness of some men.

"In fact, before I became possessed of this 'white elephant' I thought everybody was kind and that good nature and honesty were to be found everywhere among men, but this has been an eye-opener. I have found to what degree of meanness men will go to take advantage of a woman whom they look upon as a novice in the business world.

"I have found out how little chivalry and loyalty there can be in some men. I have learned a lesson which, after all, is such an unfortunate lesson for any woman to have to learn.

"While I have made a success where failure might have been made—I have done so at demands upon my feminity and my optimism. It has not really made me feel that a woman left with an extraordinary inheritance need not expect to depend on chivalry and upon her status as a woman for a fair deal."

MRS. JOHN T. BRUSH OWNER OF NEW YORK NATIONAL BASE BALL CLUB. ©AIME DUPONT.

MRS. BRITTON, OWNER OF ST. LOUIS NATIONAL BASE BALL CLUB.

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