

Back Set Drama Affects 'Horn' Presentation

(Continued from page 1 Sec. C) problem to the director and stage manager, and required full red-carpet treatment or he would refuse to go on stage for his performance. This is not at all in keeping with "the show must go on" tradition of the theatre, but somehow Caesar was always forgiven.

Other cast members, non-the-less, more than made up for his short comings in this tradition. A doctor was hastily summoned to the set one afternoon during rehearsal to treat Charles Elledge (Rev. Sims) who had just been bitten by a deadly Black Widow spider. In a state of shock and near unconsciousness, Elledge played Rev. Sims that evening, and remained on his feet until the stage went dark on the final scene—then collapsed.

During the season just ended, Elledge spent many days in the hospital where he underwent surgery. Each evening he was carried to the stage, accompanied by a nurse, where he would walk on scene on his own feet, returning immediately to the wings and his bed at the end of his scene. He never missed a performance as a result of the operation . . . even claimed his evening walk-ons were therapy prescribed by his doctor!

Almost nightly at Horn in the West the Regulators and the Colonial men put such fervor into the battle scenes that someone is injured . . . sometimes quite painfully, but the audience never knows! Script for one scene calls for a scout to be shot from a tree. One night the young actor playing the scout role fell wrong. He

chucked to the ground with such force that a leg was snapped like a match stick. He lay there uncomplaining until the scene was finished. The audience never knew he was injured.

Theatre manager Carl Fidler declares that the rate of injury to cast members far exceeds that of a college football team, and through it all they hide every hurt from the audience.

No personal effort ever seems too great to a cast member, if it helps lend reality to his performance. One actor who had lost a leg in a childhood accident would remove his artificial limb and appear on stage without it, following a battle scene. About as real as theatre can get!

After a few performances many old timers cease to "act" a role. They become so caught up in the characterization they portray that they actually live it. Stand back stage any night and you will see actors come from the stage in an identity entirely apart from their own. Sometimes they are in character so effectively they may shed real tears if they are living a sorrow-filled moment . . . or radiate a real sparkle of joy if the moment warrants it. This is the kind of performance that finds an instinctive sympathy with its audience, and one that comes through with genuine beauty to the viewers who share it. This is real "theatre."

Backstage must find a counter-acting of emotions to give it balance . . . and they find it in acts of "slapstick", hilarious because it is so ridiculous. In one scene that denotes a

momentous occasion, an actor unfurls with something of a flourish an important document bearing the Royal Seal, and from this impressive parchment reads a message of State. One night the poor fellow's document was "ragged", and with a flourish he unfurled the comic section of the Sunday paper!

In another scene, young Dr. Stuart snatches his bag up smartly and strides with hurried steps to fulfill some urgent mission. Imagine his chargin the night his bag had been filled with wet sand, weighing enough to break a man's back!

But all of backstage is not an extreme of hilarity, nor of too deep devotion to a role. There are moments for romance . . . for warm friendships . . . and for love. There is no fraternity on earth where brother feels greater regard for brother than among those of the theatre, and nowhere do men so nearly escape all regard for race or color or creed.

There are moments of reward that touch backstage. One evening at the close of a performance a lone man walked back to shake hands with the cast. He had driven alone from Syracuse, N. Y. to see this drama he had heard so much about. He would start the return journey at once. He had time, though, to thank them for the experience of seeing Horn in the West, and he wanted them to know he considered it worth his trip!

Then there was the night that fog wrapped the theatre so dense the stage could not be seen from rear seats. The theatre manager walked out to call off the per-

formance for that evening, and found 112 devotees of the drama who were waiting in the mist to see it. He hastily assembled the cast, who were equally devoted to their audience, and there before 112 people occupying the front rows of the theatre, they gave an inspired performance.

These are the things that go into the living drama behind the scenes of every stage. At Horn in the West, much of it passes unobserved by the audience . . . and yet this drama behind—the drama that envelops the lives backstage can spread across the footlights to touch those who view it.

Perhaps—as much as the script itself—it is this intangible presence of the backstage world that makes a drama great.

Almost everyone who knows and loves the "Horn" agrees that much of its impact . . . much of its bigness . . . is born in the hearts of those who add bigness to its backstage.

Working At Pinnacle Inn

Miss Lila Gragg, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Milton Gragg, of Boone, is working at Pinnacle Inn for the summer. Pinnacle Inn is a summer resort, located in Banner Elk, and is operated by Lees-McRae College, whose students help staff the Inn in order to pay part of their college expenses. Lila graduated from Appalachian High School this spring, and plans to attend Lees-McRae College this fall. She is going to take the course for Medical Secretaries.

Litterbug Is On Prowl As Travel Increases

The litterbug is on the prowl again, now that the season of greatest travel to North Carolina's Variety Vacationland is here.

The Travel Council of North Carolina, which sponsors the all year Keep North Carolina Beautiful program, offers these suggestions for stamping out litter-bugging and eliminating the ugly trail of travel trash litterbugs leave from mountains to beaches:

1. Carry a litter receptacle in your automobile, and dispose of its contents in a roadside litter deposit (there are over 400 along North Carolina highways plus hundreds of others in parks and recreation areas), or in a proper receptacle at your home or vacation destination.
2. Clean up the places where you picnic or camp, and dispose of the debris in a proper receptacle.
3. Remind your children and other passengers in your automobile not to toss trash from the car.
4. Use the litter receptacles along streets and boardwalks, and at the service stations, drive-ins, parks and scenic attractions you visit.
5. Remember that trash along hiking trails and waterways is just as unsightly and unsanitary as that along highways and streets.
6. Use the ash tray in your car, and wherever you are, dispose of lighted cigarettes just as carefully as you would in your own living room.

Most litterbugs are simply thoughtless people, points out the Travel Council, but when they are thoughtless they are not only breaking the law and adding to the public expense of clean-up but creating hazards and unsightliness which make travel less enjoyable for everybody.