

"RETURN YOUR OPERA GLASSES!"

GUY BATES POST TELLS OF HIS EARLY EXPERIENCES IN SEATTLE



where the student swept out, copied documents and ran errands for the munificent salary of sixteen dollars a month and the awesome privilege of reading Blackstone, Choate and the state reports in the boss' legal library after business hours. I only had time to earn one month's salary and memorize about ten fundamental principles of Chitty on Contracts when my father failed in business, and I was obliged to go home and help earn a living for the family. The first thing that offered itself was a job as usher in the old Seattle Theatre, and I took it. I tried to make myself useful to the management, and so far succeeded that I was rewarded by being given the opera glass privilege. Like opera glass privilege meant money and responsibility, and the money came when I needed it worst.

"My first 'carrying tones' that reached from the stage to the back row were developed while calling out 'Return your glasses' at the end of each performance.

"Being around the theatre, the manager used to require me to sell tickets while the treasurer went to his meals, and then one day, greatly to my pride and gratification, when the other fellow got sick I was appointed treasurer.

"My box-office experience was useful in many ways and my connection with the theatre there in Seattle enabled me, in addition to getting a general idea of business, to take up the study of music, vocal and instrumental. You see I had an ambition to get on the 'other side of the footlights,' and the best opportunity seemed to offer itself in the musical productions. That's why I studied music. Oddly enough, however, it wasn't in a musical piece that I got my first chance.

"Mrs. James Brown Potter and Kyle Bellew came out to the Coast and produced that horridly bit of realism, 'Theresa,' by Balzac. I appeared as a super and worshipped at the shrine of Kyle Bellew. After Bellew went away I carried a spear and did anything else that was expected of a supernumerary during the engagements of the late Joseph Jefferson and the late Fanny Davenport. Then Bellew came back to Seattle. I got a chance to talk with him one night, told him my hopes and ambitions and asked him to give me a chance, however modest, in their company. Mr. Bellew listened to my plea, engaged me for small parts and took me East. That was my start and I shall never cease feeling grateful to that excellent actor and kind-hearted gentleman for the opportunity and the encouragement he gave me."

At the end of the recital of "The Heir to the Hoorah" at the Hollis Street Theatre, Boston, the succeeding bill was "Raffles," with Kyle Bellew as the star. Guy Bates Post averaged on leaving the "star" dressing room Saturday night, for its embellishment with flowers, palms, and the American and English flags crossed over the mirror. He left a bit of a note, too. It read:

"Dear Mr. Bellew—When you took me, an amateur from Seattle, in your company twelve years ago I never dared hope to have the proud pleasure of relinquishing a 'star' dressing room to your incoming. Let the flowers speak for me the greeting I would give you if my management and the railways hadn't conspired to make it impossible. Yours in gratitude and friendship,

GUY BATES POST."

Bellew acknowledged the little courtesy in a letter which Mr. Post treasures. Characteristically he phrased it: "It was no surprise to me to find you the previous tenant of the star dressing room at the Hollis. I foresaw something of the sort when I paid your fare across the continent from Seattle twelve years ago. Instead of waiting till I got to New York to hire a youngster."

EVERYBODY in Seattle and Eastern Washington will have a specially cordial greeting next week for Guy Bates Post, the young actor whom the late Kirke La Shelle chose to create the leading role in "The Heir to the Hoorah." Professionally Mr. Post is known to all sophisticated theatregoers by reason of his excellent work in "A Rose of Plymouth Town," "A Bird in a Gilded Cage," and as Steve in Owen Wister's Western classic, "The Virginian." Any intelligent patron of the drama could tell one as much as this "off the bat."

But Mr. Post's picturesque past includes quite a number of successes and some failures concerning which the reading and play-going public of the East have not been informed until very recently, though the facts are familiar to many of his friends here in his home city. Guy Bates Post was born in Seattle in the early seventies of well-to-do parents prominent in

the affairs of the then little city. His father was a Canadian and his mother an American of good old Knickerbocker Dutch stock. The maternal grandfather, a pioneer of the country opened up by the Lewis and Clark discoveries, lived to see Seattle and Portland become great cities, and then died at the comfortable age of 70. It is from this sturdy old grandfather, perhaps, that Guy Bates Post inherited that tenacity of life and purpose which subsequently has stood him in such good stead.

"I first started to the public schools in Seattle," said Mr. Post, by way of explaining in San Francisco his anxiety to get back to the Puget Sound country. "I learned English, arithmetic, baseball and boxing all in a bunch in the public schools, which I attended till I was ten or eleven years old. Afterward I went to a boarding school in California, where I pursued an academic course for four or five years, leaving at my own solicitation in order to take up the study of law. I studied law under the good old system

Colwell