

Alps Across the Footlights

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"AY, now I am in Arden," complains *Touchstone*, "the more fool I; when I was at home I was in a better place; but travellers must be content." One recalls that mountaineers on occasion have paraphrased and embellished this speech—frequently in forced bivouacs above the snowline. However, life is not made up solely of action, and it is sometimes pleasant merely to sit and dream, knowing that "All the world's a stage."

Several years ago we had occasion to examine a collection of more than 3000 playbills, representative of some seventeen London and provincial theatres during the period 1777-1837. It occurred to us, while writing *Mont Blanc Sideshow*—a biography of Albert Smith—to look at these with an Alpine eye, to see whether mountains had made any impression on stage production.

Saussure, the Geneva natural scientist, anticipating Byron's *Manfred*, suggests in his *Voyages* (§ 735) that dramatists who have exhausted the incidents of pastoral life should place their settings in the Alps, and even sketches a plot. A crystal-hunter, loving a maiden and being loved in return, but unable to marry because of poverty, risks his life to gain a mass of crystal in a dangerous situation. His sweetheart, fearing for his safety, goes in search of him. Saussure adds, "The depiction of such unusual events would enrich theatrical production in an absolutely new manner."

For a long time this suggestion fell on deaf ears; playwrights of his day were students of the classics, and geography and travel had no interest for them until travellers returning from the Grand Tour forced the marvels of the Simplon and the St. Gotthard upon their bewildered attention. Would the new note *take*?

The first account in English of the Paccard-Balmat ascent of Mont Blanc (a translation of Bourrit's pamphlet) appeared in the *Scots Magazine* for November, 1786, while the story of Saussure's success was published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for October of the following year. Yet one looks in vain for any echo of these happenings in the British playbills of the closing years of that century. Continuing, however, one comes upon items with Alpine

title justifying the purpose of the search, and we have sought additional information wherever Alps are mentioned as being represented in the scenery.

It is all gone now, like a procession of men with music disappearing up a lane, leaving a faint noise for memory. The things of the stage are ephemeral, and the elusive spirit of lost laughter slips away. But once, in the recollection of the wonders of Chamonix and Grindelwald, artificial Alps arose in London to gleam for a night and vanish. The curtain rises.

On the night of April 12th, 1796, wearing your best flowered satin waistcoat, you called a cab and escorted a delicately eager young lady (who had heard of that personable young Englishman, Mr. Greville, dashing across the St. Gotthard in his demountable chaise) to the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, there to witness a comic opera in three acts called *TRAVELLERS IN SWITZERLAND*. The bill states, "first time these two years," the part of *Dalton* being taken by Mr. Incledon, who taught music to Edmund Kean, and for whose benefit the performance was given. Appropriately, *Miss Somerville* was enacted by the well-known vocalist, Mrs. Mountain, and the whole concluded with a dance called the Savoyard.

You were young then, but did not in all likelihood become too sedate to enjoy *THE MOUNTAIN ROBBER; OR, THE TERRIFIC HORN*, as presented at Drury Lane in June, 1806, or *THE MOUNTAIN BELLS*, a musical sketch at the Richmond Hippodrome, October 19th, 1808. An operatic romance in three acts, *THE DEVILS BRIDGE*, with music by C. E. Horn and John Braham, would have drawn you to the Lyceum, May 6th, 1812, if only to see *Count Belino* enacted by Mr. Braham (of superb voice) and *Lauretta* by Fanny Kelly, to whom Charles Lamb proposed in 1819 when she was twenty-nine. Other performances of this operetta were given at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, February 20th, 1813, and English Opera House, September 2nd, 1823.

At Drury Lane, April 4th, 1815, as well as at Covent Garden, May 29th, 1817, the adventures of Don Quixote were gaily offered in *THE MOUNTAINEERS*. But there must have been earlier performances, for the D. N. B. states: June 9th, 1806, "Edmund Kean made his first appearance at the Haymarket, playing *Gamlin* in the 'Mountaineers.'"

THE MOUNTAIN CHIEF was a romantic drama with music by Lanza, given at Drury Lane, April 4th, 1818. Less successful was the performance of SWITZERLAND, opening there on February 15th, 1819, the D. N. B. remarking: "Miss Porter's 'Switzerland,' in which Kean played *Eugene*, was only acted once, and Kean was charged with want of loyalty and gallantry in playing the hero in perfunctory style." More diverting was the pantomime ballet, THE SWISS VILLAGERS, also at Drury Lane, February 3rd, 1823.

"By particular Desire of Several Ladies," so reads the bill, a farce THE HUNTER OF THE ALPS was offered at the Theatre, Wantage, on January 17th, 1823, enacted between the play of *The Castle Spectre* and an afterpiece, *Harlequin's Gambols*. Because of the freezing weather the management was careful to announce "Good Fires Kept."

WILHELM TELL, Schiller's last completed drama, had made a deep impression when first performed at Weimar, March 17th, 1804, and is the more remarkable in that the author never saw the scene of his play, obtaining the local information from his wife, from Goethe, and from the writings of Scheuchzer and others. Yet one would imagine that he had spent the greater part of his life in contact with the simple herdsmen of Uri and Schwytz. Although less concerned with the fate of his hero than with a people's efforts to shake off tyranny, Schiller yet contrives in the scene of the shooting of the apple to depict his characters with bold relief in a situation of superb and timeless grandeur.

Tell:

Ich soll

Mit meiner Armbrust auf das liebe Haupt
Des eignen Kindes zielen?—eher sterb' ich!

[What, I! Level my crossbow at the darling head of mine
own child? No—rather let me die!]

Even now, at the close of a performance at Altdorf, one leaves the theatre with no feeling of coming from a world of imagination into one of reality.

A presentation, said to be the first in America, was given by German and Austrian refugee actors at Hollywood, May 25th, 1939. The interesting scenery of Acts I and II, designed by G. Vagnetti for the Florence May Festival, is reproduced in *Illustrated London News*, June 3rd, 1939.

That the Grand Tour frequently included a visit to the Lake of Lucerne, doubtless accounted for the flurry of anticipation attending the announcement displayed at the New Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, May 11th, 1825, to the effect that "His Majesty's Servants will perform (for the First Time) a New Historical Play." This was *WILLIAM TELL* by Sheridan Knowles, interspersed with music by Henry Rowley Bishop—knighted in 1842, the first musician to receive that honor. The part of *William Tell* was taken by William Charles Macready, in this as well as the performance at the same theatre, February 25th, 1828. In the course of the play the following new scenery was used: The Castle and Town of Altorf. The pass of Grütli. William Tell's Cottage on the Mountain. Mountain Torrent. The Entrance to Gessler's Castle. The Market-Place of Altorf. Environs of Altorf. Vicinity of Gessler's Castle. The Fortifications from the Land side. Some of these scenes were designed by William Clarkson Stanfield, the most distinguished scenic artist of the nineteenth century, and were the most elaborate Alpine views that had yet been exhibited on the stage.

It was more than outdone, however, when Rossini's historical opera, *GUILLAUME TELL*, first produced in Paris on August 3rd, 1829, was offered in London. Originally in five acts, it was condensed to three, and given in English at Drury Lane, May 1st, 1830, under the title of *HOFER; THE TELL OF TYROL*, the events of the Napoleonic wars being more in the public mind at the time than the original legend. Arranged and adapted for the English stage by H. R. Bishop, the part of *Andreas Hofer* was taken by Mr. Phillips, while *Josephine Negretti* was enacted by Mme Vestris, granddaughter of the engraver, Bartolozzi.

The realistic Alpine scenery, again designed by Stanfield, was as follows: 1. Village in the Pusterthal, with the glacier called the Grauwand Ferner in the distance. 2. Forest. 3. Ravine (sunset). 4. Interior of Tyrolean tavern amongst the mountains. 5. The glaciers by moonlight, with the rising of the Tyrol. 6. Pass of Lueg from the rocks above the River Sill, with the Tyrolean ambush. 7. An apartment in the Castle of Innsbruck. 8. Market-place of Innsbruck in fair time, with the building called the Golden House.

A presentation with Swiss setting was given in Italian at Her Majesty's Theatre in 1839. The time is the thirteenth century; the place, Switzerland. Acts I and II are laid on Lake Lucerne; Act III in the marketplace of Altdorf on the hundredth anniversary of Austrian rule in Switzerland. In Act III the shooting of the apple is introduced. While the opera is now seldom given, the overture has attained world-wide fame, its motifs representing a calm followed by storm, this in turn by a *Ranz des Vaches*. The final section, with trumpet call, is supposed to suggest the call to arms and the uprising of the Swiss against the Austrians.

Among the lighter productions at Drury Lane were *THE SWISS COTTAGE*; OR, *WHY DON'T SHE MARRY*, January 15th, 1833, by Thomas Haynes Bayly, and *THE TYROLESE PEASANT*, a domestic drama in two acts, on May 8th of the same year. *THE MOUNTAIN SYLPH*, presented at the Lyceum, August 25th, 1834, as well as at Drury Lane, January 28th, 1837, and February 17th, 1840, is considered to be the first modern English opera. It was in two acts, written by Thackwray and composed by John Barnett, and the song, "Farewell to the Mountains," sung by Mr. Phillips, is said to have produced an effect of extraordinary beauty.

All of this was eclipsed by the performance of *MANFRED*, Lord Byron's dramatic poem, given at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, October 30th, 1834 (then for the second time). The excitement was intense. "In order to produce the effects of Light and Shade the Chandeliers round the Front of the Boxes" were not used, and to give every possible effect to the extensive scenery it was found desirable to lay down a new stage. The music was composed expressly by H. R. Bishop, who presided in the orchestra, while the band (on a most extensive scale) was led by Mr. T. Cooke.

Count Manfred was enacted by Mr. Denvil; Mr. Cooper was the *Chamois Hunter*, and Miss Ellen Tree the *Witch of the Alps*. The Free List (except the Press) was totally suspended; no money refunded; *Vivant Rex et Regina!*

The following was the order of the scenery: "A Hall in the Castle of Manfred, with the Apparition of the Spirits of the Elements! A Wild Rocky Pass! Wherein is introduced the Incantation of the Witches. The *Jungfrau Mountain* Romantic Setting among the Glaciers! in which the Witches sing the Malediction.

A Cataract in a Lower Valley of the Alps! with the appearance of the Witch of the Alps, beneath its Sunbow!"

"The Glacier's cold and restless mass
 Moves onward day by day;
 But I am he who bids it pass,
 Or with its ice delay.
 I am the spirit of the place,
 Could make the mountain bow
 And quiver to his cavern'd base—
 And what with me wouldst *Thou?*"

Act II included the "Nocturnal Revel of the Destinies. A Chamber in the Castle of Manfred! with the embodying of the Spirit of Earth. *The Glaciers of the Upper Alps!* partly borne down by a violent Thunder Storm, and exhibiting in their Ruins the Evidences of Crime and Punishment, with the Moral of the Drama."

This was the first time that the Jungfrau was shown on a large scale in stage scenery, and aroused much favorable comment among those who had visited Wengern Alp in preceding summers.

THE ALPINE HOLD, at the Victoria, June 3rd, 1839, was a play by J. T. Haines; while the four-act melodrama entitled MT. ST. BERNARD; OR, THE GOLDSMITH OF GRENOBLE, at the Adelphi, October, 1839, enlivened by the American comedians, Hackett and Rice, claimed to be "full of murderous excitement, set off with good scenery."

A link with our own time, for it is still given today, is LINDA DI CHAMOUNI, at Her Majesty's Theatre, March 25th, 1843. Donizetti's opera, first produced in Vienna in 1842, was also performed at Drury Lane, January 12th, 1848. Time, 1760—Louis XV; place, Chamonix and Paris. Three acts: I, Departure; II, Paris; III, Return. Acts I and III are laid in the village of Chamonix, and *Linda's* famous soprano aria, "O Luce di quest' anima," is sung in the first act, the part being taken in the first American performance by Patti.

The original London performance is described as "One of those simple and pathetic tales of domestic interest, which, though it may slide easily into maudlin by spoken dialogue, is the very thing for music . . . it includes a Swiss maiden (Persiani), honourably beloved by a young nobleman in disguise (Mario), and persecuted by a licentious suitor (F. Lablache), her faithful friend and play-

mate, a boy (Brambilla), who unconsciously interposes for good in every crisis of her fate, her venerable father (Fornasori), and the upright and plain-dealing magistrate of the village (Luigi Lablache, Franco-American singer who taught Queen Victoria) . . . the getting up of the opera, too, is almost unprecedentedly complete for London: the departure of the mountaineers for Paris, which closes the first act, being a picture as simply affecting from its truth, as any we recollect."

The American première took place in Palmo's Opera House, New York, in 1847, and it was also given at the Academy of Music, during the mid-eighties. Patti took the part of *Linda* in the New York performance at the Metropolitan on April 23rd, 1890. The Chicago Opera Company, with Galli-Curci in the title part, gave the first New York performance of the opera since Patti's day at the Lexington Theatre, February 4th, 1919. In the Metropolitan revival, March 1st, 1934, the lead was taken by Lily Pons; Mmes Swarthout and Vettori and Messrs. Crooks, de Luca, Pinza, Bada and Malatesta in the cast; Serafin conducting.

The story is that of the French drama, *LA GRÂCE DE DIEU*, the title having topical significance at the time. In Paris when the question was asked, "Qu'est-ce que la Savoie" the reply was: "C'est la grâce de Dieu!" The fitness of uniting Savoy with France had been remarked upon for two centuries, and became a reality in 1860.

Albert Smith adapted and translated the French version as *THE PEARL OF CHAMOUNI* about 1844, the exact date and the minor London theatre being unrecorded in his *Story of Mont Blanc*, where he writes that "The valley and village of Chamouni, as seen from the Col de Balme pass, with Mont Blanc in the distance," formed an outstanding scene made as true to life as possible. *Linda* was the name of the St. Bernard presented by Smith to Charles Dickens. Sir Henry Dickens, his last surviving child, wrote in 1932 that when very young he had played with the dog.

In a book, *Mont Blanc Sideshow*, the present writer has traced the development of Albert Smith's one-man show, which ran at Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, during the years 1851-60. It had its origin in the original paintings by Smith himself, with which he and his brother, Arthur, following a summer tour, enlivened

Surrey villages during 1838-40, Mont Blanc being the theme, based largely on Auldjo's account.

For the new performance, following Smith's own ascent in 1851, he employed William Beverley, the scenic artist, to paint the views. The late Douglas Freshfield attended at the age of nine. Its success was unprecedented, and had Albert Smith not died at an early age, would, in Edward Whymper's opinion, be running yet. "Those last luxurious days when St. Bernard dogs lay in front of the stalls, and on closing nights of each season beautiful bouquets were presented to the ladies by the entertainer." That 2000 performances (the record of the century) were given before his voyage to China is proof of Smith's exceptional magnetism.

Planché's review, ASCENT OF MT. PARNASSUS, bringing first-night crowds to the Haymarket on March 28th, 1853, included a parody scene of the Mont Blanc entertainment just described. Albert Smith himself, one evening, took the part of the *Spirit of Mont Blanc*, much to the mystification of Mr. Buckstone, who had been kept in ignorance of the substitution.

The stage directions for the particular scene call for a replica of the room at Egyptian Hall, arranged to represent a Swiss chalet of actual size, *The Spirit of Mont Blanc* appearing in the rostrum L. C., through door L., as much like Albert Smith as possible:

Spirit of Mont Blanc: Me!

Mr. Buckstone: You—who are you?

S.: The Spirit of Mont Blanc.

To witness my ascent has now been long
The fashion.

B.: True: but then that's not a play.

Fortune: No, it's an entertainment.

B.: In its way.

S.: I hope I'm not in yours at any rate.

B.: What do you mean, sir, to insinuate?

S.: Nothing; I mean exactly what I say.

I hope I'm not in anybody's way.

I struck out for myself a path quite new,

And have succeeded, may you do so, too.

B.: Mont Blanc's a noble mountain, sir, your hand,

I've often heard how very high you stand,

And have no doubt you'll keep your proud position.

S.: I've gained the summit, sir, of my ambition.

MOUNTAIN DHU, at the Adelphi in December, 1866, was a burlesque of the "Lady of the Lake," while in successive years there appeared topical versions based on *Linda*. LINDA DI CHA-

MOUNI; OR, THE BLIGHTED FLOWER, a burlesque by Conway Edwardes, was given at the Bath Theatre Royal, February 20th, 1869. On September 13th of the same year LINDA DI CHAMOUNI; OR, NOT A FORMOSA opened at the Gaiety Theatre. Produced at a time when pirate depredations brought the island of Formosa into the news, it was described as "An operatic incongruity in three scenes and a sensation . . . proceeding from the pen of Mr. Alfred Thompson. In treating the subject, the adapter has departed widely from Donizetti's opera . . . the incidental music is capitably sung, and dances briskly executed . . . the costumes are exact and brilliant, and the scenery is superb. The range of the Alps, painted by Mr. Gordon, is particularly striking."

We come at last to classic MONSIEUR PERRICHON, beloved of Cercles Français down to the present time. By Eugène Marin Labiche and Édouard Martin, it was first produced at Paris in 1860 and introduces *Perrichon*, that amusingly pompous fellow, who sums up his smug self in the declamation: *C'est ça . . . moi et le Mont-Blanc . . . tranquille et majestueux!*" The English adaptation, entitled MONT BLANC, was presented at the Haymarket, May 25th, 1874, a comedy by Henry and Athol Mayhew, which ran for three weeks, Mr. Buckstone taking the leading part. "The work is of the first order, and not a little ambitious in its treatment. Part of the plot is derived from 'Le Voyage de M. Perrichon.' The scene is on or near Mont Blanc, and the action that of tourists engaged in its ascent. Among them is one Mr. Chirpey, a London oil and Italian warehouseman, who seeks to place a bill of his 'persuasive pickles' with the corresponding engravings on the summit of the famous mountain. . . The new scenes by Messrs. O'Connor and Morris are well painted and set."

It is not difficult to trace additional foreign productions of far earlier date. The ancient plays of the local peasant theatres were chiefly religious (mysteries) or historical. R. Töpffer in his *Nouveaux Voyages en Zigzag* (1853; 16th day of the 'Voyage autour du Mont Blanc') mentions the tragi-comedy L'OMBRE DE STAUFFACHER, given at Geneva in 1584, and a play based on the life of William Tell presented at Zug, September 14th-15th, 1672. The earliest known TELL performance took place in Canton Uri shortly after 1511, and a version based on Schiller's drama is still given regularly during the summer at Altdorf. Töpffer lists by title (from the *Conservateur Suisse*) plays given in the Valais and elsewhere

in Switzerland during the seventeenth century. He and his school-boys witnessed the outdoor production of *ROSA DE TANNENBOURG* at Stalden, September 4th-5th, 1842, Töpffer making amusing sketches of theatre and audience, which included J. D. Forbes, then returning from his tour of Monte Rosa (*Travels in the Alps*, 354).

Grand-Carteret (*La Montagne à travers les âges*, ii, 279) speaks of the comic operas *LA VALLÉE SUISSE* (1812), *LA BERGÈRE SUISSE* (1853) and *LES DEUX PETIT SAVOYARDS*, by Marsallier and Dalayrac, all presented at Paris.

Among the best-known of German dramatic writings with Alpine theme are the following: Goethe, *JERY UND BÄTELY*; Ludwig Ganghofer, *HERRGOTTSCHNITZER*; Fr. Kranewitter, *ANDRE-HOFER*; Jos. Ruederer, *DER SCHMIED VON KOCHEL*; Max Schmidt, *AUSTRAGSTÜBERL*; Jos. Weigl, *SCHWEIZERFAMILIE*; and Zach. Werner, *DER 24 FEBRUAR*.

Highly amusing and suitable for amateur presentation is the operetta in one act, *L'ASCENSION DU MONT BLANC*, by Pericaud and Delormel (St. Beuve), with music by Frank Beraldy, which was presented for the first time at the Eldorado, in Paris. The characters are *Barbillon* (M. Urbain) and *Pétunia* (Mlle Duparc), his wife. The stage represents a salon.

Barbillon has married *Pétunia*, a peppery lady to allow his friend, *Isidore* (her former lover), to escape. *Isidore* is meanwhile hiding away at rue Rochefort, 37 bis, but is said to have perished on Mont Blanc.

Barbillon

Nous étions arrivés au sommet du Mont-Blanc,
Isidore admirait ce spectacle sublime;
Quand vint à voltiger sur cette haute cime
Un petit papillon dont l'aile était d'argent.
Isidore, rempli d'audace,
S'élançait alors pour l'attraper;
Mais soudain l'insensé, venant à trebucher,
Pique un tête dans l'espace.

Pétunia

Horreur! horreur! horreur! Quel trépas effrayant!
Ah! mon pauvre Isidore! . . .

Barbillon

Je crois le voir encore . . .
Pendant que dans l'abîme il roulait vivement,
Il m'a dit: 'Barbillon, va chez ma fiancée,

Console-la
Et dis à Pétunia
Qu'elle eut ma dernière pensée.'

Pétunia

Vraiment! c'est en roulant qu'il vous a dit ça?

Barbillon

Il m'en a mêm' dit plus long qu'ça!

Barbillon, expecting *Pétunia* to commit suicide, substitutes sugar for the rat-poison, luckily for himself as *Pétunia* promptly puts it in his tea in the belief that he (*Barbillon*) has pushed *Isidore* off the mountain. The truth comes out and *Pétunia* rushes off to punish *Isidore*, only to find that he had left for parts unknown. Reconciliation between *Pétunia* and *Barbillon*, who depart for a honeymoon in Switzerland—and an ascent of Mont Blanc.

Of passing note are *THE MOUNTAIN DEVIL*, at the Surrey, March 26th, 1879; and *VOYAGE EN SUISSE*, at the Gaiety Theatre, March 27th, 1880, in three acts and five tableaux, adapted from the French by Robert Reece, and revived as *THE SWISS EXPRESS* at the Princess Theatre, December 26th, 1891, a pantomime farce by A. W. Gilbert and Charles Renad. *THE ALPS*, offered at Cambridge, June 2nd, 1886, was a farce in three acts adapted from *Perichon*; while *ALPINE TOURISTS*, a comedietta in one act by Newton Phillips, was given at Ladbroke Hall, January 24th, 1888.

Members of the American Alpine Club, whose climbing careers began thirty or more years ago, will remember *THE MOUNTAIN CLIMBER*, a farce in three acts by Cosmo Hamilton, derived from the German of Curt Kraatz. After a successful run in London, where it opened at the Comedy Theatre, November 21st, 1905, it was brought to New York. There it was put on at the Criterion Theatre, March 6th, 1906, with Francis Wilson and May Robson in the leading parts. The hilarious plot recounts the adventures of Mr. Montagu Gibsey, given to periodic visits to Paris (where he poses as a bachelor), allowing his wife and daughters to believe that he has been mountaineering in Switzerland. To facilitate this deception he has written letters home copied verbatim from a book about the Alps. His wife overjoyed at her husband's bravery publishes these in a little volume, and insists that he repeat his heroic actions before the family and friends. Before a reporter and a photographer he demonstrates his prowess on a peak made of

all the parlor furniture. To make matters worse he is brought face to face with the man whose book he has cribbed, and it is further expected that he will make an ascent which no explorer has hitherto been able to accomplish.

The opera, *LA WALLY*, by Alfredo Catalani, produced in Milan in 1892, might well have served as inspiration for A. E. W. Mason's classic, *Running Water*, and has retained its popularity with Italian audiences. The libretto by Luigi Illica unfolds its story against the background of the Marzell and Similaun (Eastern Alps). *Wally* is a peasant maiden with two suitors, one of whom makes her believe that the other—whom she really loves best—is false. This turns her love to hate, and she plots with the scheming suitor to kill the other by throwing him into a crevasse. He bungles the job, and the repentant maiden rescues the victim, realizing that she loves him; but in the final act he is swept to death by an avalanche, into which she throws herself to die with him.

The opera was given August 18th, 1935, at Breuil, 8000 people flocking to the amphitheatre from the Piedmontese provinces and beyond. This was the first time that outdoor opera had been given at such an altitude (6601 ft.). "The stage with its church and chalets depicting an alpine village square, slopes on one side into an expanse of meadow and pine grove, and on the other borders a real lake, the Lago Azzuro, whose waters mirror the surrounding cliffs—the Jumeaux, the Dent d'Herens, the Giomein—topped by the towering mass of the Matterhorn." The two performances were under Alfredo Zietti's baton and Mario Dupraz's stage direction, the Scala cast being supported by the orchestra, chorus and ballet of the Teatro Regio of Turin.

Much of this happened long ago, but it indicates sufficiently that modern productions such as *MUSIC IN THE AIR* and *WHITE-HORSE INN*, delighting us with their Alpine settings, are but an improved satisfaction of an old nostalgia for the mysterious beauty of mountains and the happiness of foreign travel, expressing themselves in Alps across the footlights as substitutes for reality.

And so, as the curtain falls, one can only admit that, as in Albert Smith's "Complaint of the Foreign-Office Clerk,"

"I lost myself in visions bright,
Day-dreaming of the treat,
To be with you at Chamouni,
Away from Downing-street."