Real Theatres in Every National Army Camp
Soldiers in the Cantonnements Will See Best Plays and Leading American Actors
Each Week—Highest Ticket Price Twenty-five Cents

MARC Klaw is about the busiest human being in the country these days. He is soon to open sixteen new playhouses in territory where at present there is not a single theatre. And he is protected from competition in the future. Furthermore, he gets the houses rent, free, light, service free. Among 600,000 persons in the said territory are waiting with eagerness, impatience it might be called, for him to throw open the doors.

In all the days of the inclosed theatre, from William Shakespeare's Globe until today, there has not been such another situation as that which confronts Mr. Klaw. Everything has been provided beforehand for the manager to grasp his unprecedented opportunity—everything except the money. That one thing is money. Yet, even with money short, he has decided to push the plans forward, to open the theatres at the earliest possible date. For in the midst of his perplexity over the lack of money an idea struck him. It was an original idea. Nothing like it had ever been tried by a theatrical manager before. It was this: ‘Will we get the money from the great public before the opening of the sixteenth theatre?’

Mr. Klaw is now about to carry out his idea. What is more, he feels certain he will “get away with it.” The money, he says, will come in as fast as he can count it and receipt thereof. Probably it will, for the sixteen playhouses are the sixteen Liberty Theatres to be opened under the auspices of Uncle Sam himself in the sixteen military cantonments of the national army for the entertainment of the young Americans who are getting ready for that great business over in France.

Uncle Sam, through Congress, was so absorbed in voting millions for armies and navies and ships that, after providing the money for the formation of the cantonments, ran out of ideas. As the member of the Commission on Training Camp Activities representing the theatrical business, Mr. Klaw was asked to take charge of building and operating the sixteen cantonment theatres. It was a good-sized job, but as he accepted it as his bit in war work he expected to be free from one worry that usually accompanies theatrical undertakings. There would be no lack of funds. Then he discovered the little over-

ight. How he purposed to raise the money, the man who has dug sixteen theatres is here announced for the first time.

“The families and friends of the young men of the camp will present all the time. From the big stores, and little ones, too, many pack-ages will come to the cantonments—that’s how I got the idea that is going to solve this problem,” said the kind of fresh man.

“Better publicity could there be than a book of coupons entitling the soldier to a given number of admit one to the Liberty Thea-

tres? This idea we have worked out in practical form, and Liberty Theatre cou-

pons books will be placed on sale in a few days.”

“We have given them the name of ‘Smiling Books’—so many smiles for the boys in the camp, and you are to buy them with a smile, glad of the oppor-
tunity to give pleasure to men who later will make great sacrifices for us on the battle front in France. On the back of the books is this: ‘The coupons in this book will be accepted in purchase of theatre tickets at any Liberty Theatre in the national army cantonments.’ Below is a place for the donor to write his own name, and another blank line for the address of the intended recipient. There will be two kinds of books, one for $5, with 100 five-cent coupons, and one for $1, with twenty-five cent coupons.

“The Stage Women’s War Relief will have charge of the distribution of the books. The books will be placed on sale at all the large stores, so that customers who make purchases to be forwarded some soldier boy will have no trouble in including in the package a ‘Smiling Book.’ We expect to raise all the money we need in a short time.”

“All the other plans for the theatres are well advanced, and we expect to have them open and going by Dec. 1. The houses are being built all on one plan. Each theatre will have but one floor, to start the attendance so as to be attractive and convenient. The auditorium will be wide and shallow, but in the shape of a triangle so as to be more, and the stage will run back to the rear of the house. We have adopted the old stock system of scenery, in order that the com-

panies may not have much to do to the scenery, as we know how heavy the call will be on the railroad; for the transportation of the scenery, and the scenery of the packages, has been used in designing the scenery. Doors and windows will be interchangeable, by an arrangement on the order of the sectional bookcase: ‘Set trees’—

that is, trees standing out by themselves and attached to the platform by leaves; thus, by making a change, Spring and Autumn can be represented by one try.”

“We will have eight companies on the road all the time, four dramatic and four vaudeville. Plays will be up to date, and only first-class performers will be en-

gaged. With eight companies on tour filling the gap, one reason is import-
tant. It will provide the regiment with an entertainment function that will be of much value in hours of relaxation from the strain at the battlefront in France, for our plans do not contemplate supply-

ing professional entertainment for the troops after they go abroad. All the more important, therefore, that they, while in camp here, be taught to provide their own fun. Another idea is, if the military authorities permit, to have some of the hostest companies visit the different camps on a tour. We believe that this would arouse a healthy spirit of emulation on nothing else could. In order to discover, train, and assemble local talent, we have advertised in the papers in the various cantonments with the result that many amateur companies have been engaged. We have had many other offers of assis-
tance from men and women well known in the theatrical profession. Winschell Smith and John Hazzard will be among the others, and we have not hesitated when the situation allowed to order the companies of the United States and Canada to the United States and Canada. We have had many other offers of assis-
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