THE THEATRE

THE PLAYGOER

Stage Rights—Rushing "Diplomacy"—Theatrical Themes Here and There.

"Sir Herbert Tree, in order to assist the critics in the performance of their duties, announces that the curtain will rise for the first performance of 'Henry VIII' at His Majesty's Theatre at 7 o'clock, and it is hoped that the performance may be concluded by 9:45."

The foregoing paragraph appeared recently in London newspapers. It was welcomed by the writers and readers of dramatic criticism. How far Sir Herbert's considerate example may be followed by other managers in London and elsewhere remains to be seen.

"The Importance of Being Earnest" has long been before the public in printed form. The title page in Samuel French's "Standard Library Edition" carries this notice: "The acting rights to 'The Importance of Being Earnest' are held by Mr. Charles Frohman, Empire Theatre Building, New York City, to whom application must be made for the right to perform, either by amateurs or professionals." This statement seems clear enough, even if it does not limit itself to the acting rights in this country. And so it seems a little odd that a competitor of Mr. Frohman should not have been acquainted with the notice and should have put this famous comedy into rehearsal for production at a New York theatre to-morrow night. Now, as all readers of theatrical announcements know, the preparations for performance have been withdrawn, and "Diplomacy" is to be substituted for Oscar Wilde's clever comedy. But will not Mr. Frohman see his way to revive in New York "The Importance of Being Earnest," which for many months of the past season occupied the stage of the London theatre in which it was originally produced—the St. James's? It is one of the most amusing comedies of modern times, as many theatregoers in this city can testify. One of the pleasantest recollections of the writer of these notes concerns the first performance at the St. James's of this "trivial comedy for serious people." The date was February 14, 1895, and George Alexander, Allan Aynesworth, Rose Leclercq, Irene Vanbrugh and Evelyn Millard appeared in the principal parts.

"Diplomacy" is to be revived at Maxine Elliott's Theatre on Tuesday night. It was first produced in English at the old Prince of Wales's Theatre, under the management of the Bancrofts, on January 12, 1878. Then it had been rehearsed for weeks, and before its rehearsal Bancroft had more than once taken the adapters to Paris to see the original production there. The French piece was called "Dora," but Charles Reade had previously written and produced a play with that name, founded on Tennyson's poem. The Bancrofts, therefore, had to find a new title for the adaptation of Sardou's piece, and after many selections they chose the name which, in England and the United States, has been familiar for thirty-two years. The adapters were announced as "Savile Rowe and Bolton Rowe." "Savile Rowe" was Clement Scott and "Bolton Rowe" was B. C. Stephenson. The cast was one of the very best that ever has been seen on the modern stage, and for the rest of the season "the scene of the three men" was the talk of the town. This was the cast:

Henry Beauclerq	John Clayton
Julian Beauclerq	W. H. Kendal
Count Orloff	S. B. Bancroft
Baron Stein	Arthur Cecil
Algie	Charles Sugden
Countess Zicka	Mrs. Bancroft
Dora	Mrs. Kendal
The Marquise	Miss Le Thiere

Bancroft, in his "Recollections of Sixty Years," says that, although occasional "morning performances" of various plays had been given in London before 1878, "it was not until we produced 'Diplomacy' that what are now called matinees—afternoon representations of the regular evening performance—were really established. At that time they were much more costly than now, frequent and separate advertisements being necessary to make them known. Moreover, it was our custom, and one that we maintained throughout our management, to pay full salaries to every one concerned in these afternoon performances, a rule which applied not only to actors but to business managers, booking clerks, hallkeeper, firemen—in fact, to all to whom the performance practically involved the equivalent of an evening's labor. Afternoon performances have long since become a large source of income to the managers, but I am told that in most of the theatres other systems of payment now prevail. It seems to me hard that the actor should not be given his full share, and harder still upon the ballet girls and poorer members of a company, who can ill afford the least deduction from their pay, and who are not in a position to protest."

Mr. Charles Frohman may or may not persuade the Legislature that theatrical performances on Sundays can render to the inhabitants of cities a noble service which the churches fail to give. But either way will serve the purpose of directing public attention anew to the undertakings associated with his name. There will be prodigious discussion at a trifling expense. It is not every year or two shows the universe a genius so fertile in inventions. What matter if they do not overturn the firmament itself? Their renown at least is placarded there. When the buds were opening in the spring an admiring world learned how the East Siders were to have a theatre all their own, wherein first class plays would be performed at third class prices by A1 players—if somebody would put up the money. But it appears that The New Theatre, which some engaging writers with a taste for "a derangement of epitaphs" have, for mysterious reasons, begun to call "the Comédie Française of America," already had a bee in its hive, intended to supply honey to the East Side. And not much has been heard of Mr. Frohman's philanthropic plan since the blossoming days of spring.

What, by the way, becomes of all the ingenious ideas that are fondly heralded? There was the striking conception of a theatre on every great Atlantic liner. Actors, you see, have to travel on the ocean, and their expenses have to be paid according to contract. It was a gallant notion that they should earn something en route. But nothing has come of it. No marine stage has been erected, and sea passengers still have the privilege of voyaging without a daily reminder that a theatrical performance is the most important thing in life. Nevertheless, the wireless stations crackled with the announcements of the superb idea and the cables thrilled with appropriate emotions.

And then that thoughtful, even if unnecessary, "exchange" of performing companies. Was it not New York's "Arsene Lupin" company which was to go to London, and London's which was to come here? But public hope withered under disappointment. Nothing happened. It was as if a political convention had made a platform. Who shall deny, though, the brilliance of the thought? And who shall measure the depths of grief into which the patrons of the play were plunged when New York's company went a-whirling through the West, and London's stayed at home? Bitter as such deprivations are, they must be borne, just as London, buoyed by yearly rumor, bears the annual disappointment of not seeing Miss Maude Adams, who, and strangely enough it would seem, has not yet been paragraphed for an English engagement in the season which makes such a torrid beginning. Still there is something to live for. Miss Adams, it is said, will play Chantecler. Can expectation soar to reaches loftier and yet more sublime? An artist who is nothing if not deliciously feminine is announced for a part which is nothing if not aggressively masculine. The human imagination, as the world knows, has no limits to its boldness. I live daily in the charmed hope that one fine morning I shall read that Miss Billie Burke is to appear as King Lear.

Do people go to the theatres when the thermometer is at 90 because of a devouring love of art, or because they are bored with other forms of entertainment which the town offers? The New Yorker in his wisdom may absent himself a while, but the summer tourist who is passing through the city offers some likelihood of profit. At any rate, only on such a presumption can good reason be found for beginning the season in August and for having two dozen theatres open before the middle of September.

The hot nights may furnish suitable occasion for losing money on experiments really intended for the road, but for any other purpose they are as useful as a fifth wheel to a coach. Why should reasonable beings be expected to sweat under them? It is a delusive joy, this jumping from one heat into another. Not even the newest "star" can imagine that a fond public pants for the sight of him during the dissipations of our so-called "temperate climate." The healthy mind in these latitudes prefers nature to artifice during certain boiled and roasted weeks, and is not at all inclined to shorten the annual opportunity which actors have for taking to the woods and becoming human. Any memory that is not overstrained can testify that, whatever the almanacs and weather bureaus may say to the contrary, the first ten or fifteen days of September always bring an unhappy mixture of heat and humidity, and that there is more joy then in the surf than in the song of soubrettes, more happiness in the North Woods than in the orchestra seats, more pleasure on the links than in the flare of the footlights. Actors, it may be supposed, act before autumn because they have to do so, which is perhaps the same reason that drives critics to paper staining. But nobody imagines that a new play thrust into sight while the mercury is seeking the top of the thermometer is a thing for which any great number of persons yearn. There may be exceptions, to be sure, just as there are exceptional cabbages over which the merry worm has not prevailed, or exceptional watering places which bear some resemblance to their advertisements, or exceptional actors who are stage broke, but these merely prove that the rule holds in any season. Nobody comes back to town in hot weather to see a play—unless his money is in it.

The new season is as promising as any old one. Its young back bends under the burden of the promises it bears. An avalanche of "great plays" is to startle the town before the snows are half over. That shattered, overworked word "great" will be stretched again to cover their bones in the fond, foolish way of yore. It may appear any minute.

Is it a compliment to the memory of America's greatest actor that a new theatre in New York should, in 1910 or 1911, bear his name? The intention is well enough, no doubt, but who shall say that whatever the aim of the projector may be, a year or two will not bring musical farce, burlesque "revues," alleged but "questionable" comedies, and even moving pictures, to the stage of the Edwin Booth Theatre? The fashion changes quickly in this town, and if there are half a dozen theatres with an established and dignified policy will anybody find it easy to identify so many? And only such a theatre should bear the name of Edwin Booth. It is refreshing, this desire of a manager, to honor the memory of the tragedian whose nobility of character was even greater than his splendid genius, but it will depend upon the spirit and judgment which are to direct the policy of that house whether the association with a noble name will long remain a memorial honor or will soon become a mockery.

A. W.

WILLETTE KERSHAW. In "The Country Boy." Liberty Theatre.

CLIFTON CRAWFORD. In "Three Twins." City Theatre.

MACLYN ARBUCKLE. In "Welcome to Our City." Bijou Theatre.

FLORENCE ROBERTS. In "Diplomacy." Maxine Elliott's Theatre.

WALTER JONES. In "Baby Mine." Daly's Theatre.

IRENE FENWICK. In "The Brass Bottle." Lyceum Theatre.

BESSIE M'COY. In "The Echo." Globe Theatre.

GERTRUDE VANDERBILT. In "Our Miss Gibbs." Knickerbocker Theatre.

A. E. MATTHEWS. In "Love Among the Lions." Garrick Theatre.

EMMA CARUS. In "Up and Down Broadway." Casino Theatre.

NANCE O'NEIL. In "The Lily." Belasco Theatre.

THE COMING WEEK

NEW PRODUCTIONS.

Monday Night, Sept. 12—At the Bijou Theatre, Maclyn Arbuckle in the comedy, "Welcome to Our City."

Tuesday Night, Sept. 13—At Maxine Elliott's Theatre, all-star revival of Sardou's "Diplomacy."

COMEDY AND DRAMA.

ACADEMY OF MUSIC—The new stock company will revive this week Joseph Arthur's play of rural Indiana called "Blue Jeans," in which Robert Hilliard played the leading part at the Fourteenth Street Theatre some years ago. Edward Lynch will impersonate Perry Bascom; John T. Dwyer will be the Ben Boone; Miss Priscilla Knowles, the leading woman, will have the part of Jeans; John J. Kennedy will be cast as Colonel Henry Clay Risener, and Miss Anna Hollinger will be the Sue Endelly. Miss Florence Gerald, who is to play character parts, will make her first appearance as Samantha Hawkins.

ASTOR—The long and successful engagement of "Seven Days" is drawing to a close.

BELASCO—Only three weeks more of "The Lily," in which Miss Nance O'Neil, Charles Cartwright, Miss Julia Dean, Bruce McRae and others are acting quite up to the best standards of the American stage.

BIJOU—This theatre will open to-morrow night with Joseph Brooks's production of "Welcome to Our City," a farce from the German, in which Maclyn Arbuckle will have the principal part. The scene of the play has been changed to New York. The leading character, Colonel Jim Scott (Mr. Arbuckle), is a South Carolinian visiting his daughter and son-in-law in this city. He strolls up Broadway, and is arrested for speaking to a young woman, agent of a morality society, whose avowed object is the purification of Broadway. The same young woman turns out to be the girl with whom the colonel's son-in-law was in love before he married the colonel's daughter. This young woman learns for the first time of her lover's marriage, and she makes trouble. In their efforts to escape this young woman the colonel and his son-in-law run afoul of the wife of a jealous musician. They pretend to be prospective pupils, and are caught by their wives in the act of taking a lesson. A sea captain from Baltimore comes on the scene, and the morality girl falls in love with him, thereby clearing the situation. The play closes with the colonel running for the next train South.

In the cast, besides Mr. Arbuckle, are Mabel Turner, Susanne Westford, James Durkin, William Jefferson and a dozen others, who play minor roles.

COMEDY—Miss Clara Lipman, in "The Marriage of a Star."

CRITERION—"The Commuters," James Forbes's amusing comedy of suburban life, in which Taylor Holmes and Miss May De Sousa do the best acting.

DALY'S—Margaret Mayo's farce, "Baby Mine," in which Miss Marguerite Clark, Ernest Glendinning, Miss Ivy Trautman, Walter Jones and Miss Sarah Biala are successful.

EMPIRE—John Drew in "Smith," Somerset Maugham's latest comedy. Mr. Drew is the same delightful John Drew as of old, playing, however, the unconventional role of a Rhodesian farmer who has returned to England to visit his sister, who is the leader of a bridge loving, child hating, shallow set. The only person who appeals to him is Smith, the housemaid, to whom he proposes marriage. There is much comedy in the piece and no little amount of serious reflection. Miss Mary Boland is charming as Smith, and Miss Isabel Irving, Miss Sibyl Thorndike and Mr. Hassard Short play their parts uncommonly well.

GAIETY—John Barrymore and his excellent company in Winchell Smith's delightful comedy, "The Fortune Hunter."

GARRICK—A. E. Matthews in the last week of "Love Among the Lions," Winchell Smith's comedy.

HACKETT—Jules Eckert Goodman's new drama "Mother," in which Miss Emma Dunn plays tenderly and naturally the title part.

IRVING PLACE—The season will open on Thursday night, September 29, with a new military play called "Kasernenluft," which is one of the current successes of the German stage. Other plays to be presented under the direction of Theodore Burgarth are the following light operas: "Das Musikanten-Mädel," by Jarno; "Das Jungfernstiff" and "Die Keusche Susanne," by Gilbert; "Susett," by Knopf; "Das Fidele Gefängnis," by Stolz, and "Polnische Wirtschaft," by O. Konkowsky.

LIBERTY—"The Country Boy," Edgar Selwyn's new comedy, which is acted by an especially well balanced cast, in which Robert McWade, Jr., has earned first honors.

LYCEUM—Sixth and last week of "The Brass Bottle," a fantastic comedy worth seeing. Edwin Stevens, Richard Bennett and Miss Irene Fenwick have the principal parts.

LYRIC—Miss Dorothy Donnelly in the second week of her second year in Bisson's powerful drama, "Madame X."

MAXINE ELLIOTT'S—William A. Brady and the Messrs. Shubert will revive during the next three weeks, beginning Tuesday night, Sardou's delightful comedy, "Diplomacy," in which the actors will be cast as follows: Charles Richman, Henry Beauclerc; Charles Cherry, Julian Beauclerc; Theodore Roberts, Baron Stein; Milton Sills, Count Orloff; Effingham Pinto, Algy Fairfax; Frederick Esmolton, Markham; Miss Florence Roberts, the Countess Zicka; Chrystal Herne, Dora; Sarah Cowell Lemoyne, the Marquise de Rio Zares; Marion Ballow, Lady Fairfax, and Jewel Power, Mien.

"Diplomacy" was first presented in Paris in 1877, and was done for the first time in English at the Prince of Wales Theatre, London, early in 1878. The first American performance was at Wallack's Theatre on April 1, 1878. On that occasion the players were Lester Wallack, H. J. Montague, Frederic Robinson, W. R. Floyd, J. W. Shanpon, W. J. Leonard, W. A. Eytinge, C. E. Edwin, H. Ayling, J. Peck, Rose Coghlan, Maude Granger, Mme. Ponisi, Sara Stevens and Pearl Eytinge. Rose and Charles Coghlan gave an historic revival of the drama in New York at the Star Theatre in 1892. The most recent metropolitan revival of note was at the Empire Theatre on April 15, 1901, when the cast included William Faversham, Charles Richman, Guy Standing, Wallace Worsley, Edwin Stevens, George Osbourne, jr., William Barnes, George Sylvester, Frank Brownlee, James Weed, Jessie Millward, Margaret Anglin, Thomas Whiffen, Ethel Hornick and Margaret Dale.

NAZIMOVA'S—Last week of Miss Gertrude Quinlan in "Miss Patsy." Next week "Con & Co.," Oliver Herford's new comedy, adapted from the French.

REPUBLIC—Wallace Eddinger in Winchell Smith's adaptation of George Randolph Churchill's novel, "The Making of Bobby Burnit."

WALLACK'S—H. B. Warner in "Alias Jimmy Valentine," a play that has taken fast hold of the playgoing public of this city.

MUSICAL PLAYS.

BROADWAY—"The Summer Widowers," with Lew Fields. A hot weather play with all-the-year-'round possibilities.

CASINO—Eddie Foy and Emma Carus in "Up and Down Broadway." Lots of fun, with plenty of good music and dancing.

CITY—"Three Twins," with Clifton Crawford, Miss Bessie De Voie and a large singing and dancing chorus.

GLOBE—Miss Bessie McCoy, in "The Echo," one of the musical hits of the new season.

HERALD SQUARE—Miss Marie Dressler in "Tillie's Nightmare." The success of Miss Dressler's career.

KNICKERBOCKER—Miss Pauline Chase in "Our Miss Gibbs," the new London musical play, in which Miss Gertrude Vanderbilt, Miss Julia James, Miss Kitty Mason, Bert Leslie, Fred Wright and Ernest Lambert are prominent in the cast.

NEW AMSTERDAM—"Madame Sherry," most delightful of musical comedies, in which Miss Lina Abarbanell and Ralph Hertz are particularly successful.

NEW YORK—"The Arcadians." As delightful a comedy with music as one would wish to see. It is well started on what seems likely to be its second full season in this city.

WEST END—De Wolf Hopper with Miss Louise Dresser in "A Matinee Idol," in which Mr. Hopper, of course, is very funny.

VARIETY HOUSES.

ALHAMBRA—Carrie De Mar will be comedienne extraordinaire for Harlem this week in her inimitable character songs. Claude and Fannie Usher will act in "Fagan's Decision." Charles Gill and company are to present "The Devil, the Servant and the Man." Wilbur Mack and Nellie Walker will be seen in a "musical flirtation" called "The Girl and the Pearl."

AMERICAN—The Russian ballet dancers headed by Mlle. Galemberti and G. Molasso are to be retained for a second week. New figures will be presented by the beauty ballet of thirty, and solo dances will be performed by Mlle. Ovide and Mlle. Koch. Steve Bartle, an English comedian, will make his American debut. Edna Aug, the clever comedienne and mimic, will appear for the first time this year.

COLONIAL—La Pla, the dancer, will be the chief attraction here. Others on the programme are "The Rigoletto Twins," dancers, gymnasts, singers and impersonators; Charles Leonard Fletcher and company in "Nerve," and Elsie Fay in "The Act Dainty."

COLUMBIA—"Queens of the Jardin de Paris" is the title of the burlesque that will be presented here this week. In the cast are Ida Crispi, Eva Van Osten, Edna Gill, Frank Stanhope and Harry Koler. A good vaudeville bill will be a feature of the performance. Sunday afternoon and night concerts begin to-day.

FIFTH AVENUE—Miss Rose Pitinoff, a young girl of seventeen, and the only woman who ever swam from Charlestown Bridge to Boston Light, a distance of twelve miles, will be the sensation here in an exhibition of swimming and diving.

HAMMERSTEIN'S VICTORIA — First appearance in vaudeville of Mme. Thamara de Swirsky, former premiere danseuse at the Metropolitan Opera House. Also, Dr. Perin, palmist; Pat Rooney and Marion

Continued on seventh page.

MME. GALLAMBERTI. American Music Hall.

CARRIE DE MAR. Alhambra Theatre.

DR. CARL PERIN. Hammerstein's Victoria Theatre.

A DRAMATIC FEAST

A Month of Mme. Bernhardt at the New Amsterdam Theatre.

Mme. Sarah Bernhardt, who is shortly to make her seventh and last theatrical tour of this country, will arrive in New York October 28, in time for the opening of her season at the Studebaker Theatre in Chicago, on October 31.

She is to come to this city for a four weeks' engagement at the New Amsterdam Theatre, beginning December 5. On her opening nights, both here and in Chicago she will present Rostand's "L'Aiglon." During her stay at the New Amsterdam she will be seen in a repertoire including "Le Samaritain," by Rostand; "Britannicus," by Racine; "Jeanne d'Arc," by Emile Moreau; "Le Bouffons," by Miguel Zamacois; "Sapho," by Alphonse Daudet; "La Sorcière," by Victorien Sardou; "La Dame aux Camélias," by Dumas; "La Bella," which has been played for two years in Italy and which Mme. Bernhardt produced at her theatre in Paris last February; "Phèdre," by Racine; "La Rampe," by Rothschild; "La Tosca"; "La Passe," by G. de Porto-Riche; one act of "Fédora" (dans le spectacle coupé); "Federigo," "Monna Vanna," "Hamlet," Rattaldo, an adaptation of Tolstoy's "Resurrection" and Rostand's "Le Bois Sacré," "Romanesques" and "Princess Leontine."

Mme. Bernhardt will be under the direction of William F. Connors, who managed her last famous tour of this country, in 1905-'06, when she played in tents, auditoriums and what not in opposition to the Theatrical Trust. Her visit this time, however, will be under different circumstances. All past friction has been forgotten, and she will be received with open arms by the Messrs. Shaw & Erlanger and their associates. In fact, she will appear only in "syndicate" theatres throughout the country. Her tour will extend through the country, Canada, Havana and Mexico.

She will bring with her a company of forty-six actors. She will travel in a special train of five cars.

The scale of prices for all performances will be $3, $2 and $1. Her receipts will probably average $25,000 a week. In 1905 she often played to $4,000 or more at single performances in one-night stands.

In a recent letter to Mr. Connors Mme. Bernhardt said that she intended to give a conference on Rooseveit and Chantecler which she has already given in London with considerable success. The letter was suggested by comment in Paris in which the ex-President and Rostand's work have been the object of much comparison.

Arrangements are now being made for Mme. Bernhardt to appear in the stadium of Harvard and the University of California. The last time she was in this country she gave a special performance at Harvard, and was awarded a medal by the Cercle Française of the university.

MME. SARAH BERNHARDT. Taken on her 65th birthday.

AT THE MANHATTAN

Mr. Hammerstein Will Begin Comic Opera in English on September 19.

The Manhattan Opera House will open the season of 1910-'11 on September 19 with an elaborate presentation of "Hans, the Flute Player," a comic opera which will have its initial American production on this occasion. The music is by Louis Ganne, the Continental composer, while the book is by Maurice Vaucaire and George Mitchell.

The cast, which is a long one, is headed by Miss Sophie Brandt, who has been seen in this city in "The Waltz Dream" and other plays. Since her last appearance here Miss Brandt has been studying abroad, and she will return to this country much improved in her art.

The orchestra will be the same that has played at the Manhattan Opera House since its opening, and will be under the direction of M. Josiah Zuro. The stage will be under the supervision of M. Jacques Coini.

"Hans, the Flute Player," will be elaborately staged. There will be a chorus of 120—the same aggregation of well trained singers which participated in the grand operas that were given by Mr. Hammerstein. There will also be a ballet of forty, more than half of whom have appeared at the Manhattan Opera House during previous seasons.

The box office will be opened for the sale of tickets on Monday, September 12.

CHILDREN AT THE NEW THEATRE

The fifty children engaged by The New Theatre to appear in "The Blue Bird," the play by Maurice Maeterlinck which is to reopen the playhouse September 26, are rehearsing daily on the theatre's roof garden, overlooking Central Park. The youngsters are to impersonate the souls of the unborn about to visit the earth for the first time, sprites in the palace of the Fairy Berylune, elfs in the realm of Night and tots in the Kingdom of the Past.

The children are in charge of the theatre's matron, Mrs. Anna Morrison, who sees to it that they arrive and depart on time and that the more mature ones do not overwork. There is plenty of time for play between scenes, and many a romp the small folk have on the roof or in the smaller rehearsal rooms. When the play opens one of the large rooms will be turned into a nursery, where they will spend their time when off stage.