

DOES SHAKESPEARE PAY?

Large Audiences at Broadway Theatre Answer Question.

Altogether apart from the literary and dramatic value of Shakespeare's plays it is interesting to ask the question: Do they pay in this day and generation? The audiences at the Broadway Theatre, where Sothorn and Marlowe have been acting in "Macbeth" during the last week, show that they do—at least in New York and when played by Mr. Sothorn and Miss Marlowe.

At all performances during the last six days crowded houses have been the rule. There have been seven presentations, and each one, it is reported, has brought \$2,500 to the box office. Weekly returns of \$10,000 are considered "big business" at any theatre. According to the best information available, there are not more than six plays in town at the present time that are enjoying that degree of prosperity. And it is to be borne in mind, too, that \$1.50 is the highest price paid for orchestra seats during Sothorn and Marlowe's month's season in this city.

Mr. Sothorn reports financial returns of \$3,000 for two performances in New Haven, where he opened the season in "Macbeth" recently, and similar receipts in Providence, where he played for a week, and in Boston, where he acted in "Macbeth" and other plays of Shakespeare for three weeks.

Last season Mr. Sothorn and Miss Marlowe played three different times at the Academy of Music—once for four weeks, again for two weeks, and at the end of the season they gave a single performance in aid of the Actors' Fund of America. They played to an average of \$15,000 a week.

During their tour of the country last season Mr. Sothorn was much gratified to see the same popular demand for Shakespeare wherever he went. In every city where he and Miss Marlowe played the people filled the houses. All this has proved to the two stars that the American people want to see Shakespeare played, and they—the actors—have concluded to devote their time to his works alone.

"Why should we do otherwise?" asked Mr. Sothorn. "This is the sort of thing that Miss Marlowe and I want to do. The people seem to like us in these plays and they yield both of us a profit in excess of what either of us could receive as a star under other management. Last season was the most successful one we ever had and we have played five years in our present repertory. We are going to keep on playing Shakespeare, adding one new play each year. Next season we expect to produce "King Lear." Following that will come "Cymbeline" and "Othello."

Mr. Sothorn is one of the few actor-managers in this country. He hasn't even a stage manager to assist him. He bears the entire responsibility of production himself. Regarding his presentation of "Macbeth" he said:

"It cost us \$25,000 to produce the play and it necessitated a prodigious amount of work. It was a difficult play to present because of its popular aversion to the principal characters. It has never been a profitable play and has never been presented for long runs. But it is very valuable to us in repertory. There is the very dangerous element of the supernatural in it which if not done with force and persuasion submits one to the danger of appearing ridiculous. In our recollection of performances of "Macbeth" there has been a certain element lacking between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. I had not seen many performances of the play; neither had Miss Marlowe. But in consulting with others who were in a position to speak authoritatively, we learned that there had been no real bond of love between Macbeth and his lady. In fact, our friends were surprised at such a condition existing. But when we studied our parts we agreed that love for her husband was Lady Macbeth's chief characteristic. It was because of this that she was ambitious.

"Then, too, it was difficult for Miss Marlowe and myself to undertake these parts, because they were so widely different from anything that we had done before. And we had to play them, as others have done, bearing in mind our own qualifications. In his various Furness quotes Mrs. Siddons, who was one of the best Lady Macbeths, might have regarded her own part as Lady Macbeth was a blonde, fascinating, more or less mid-mannered and lovable woman. But Mrs. Siddons didn't play her that way, simply because, as she said, she couldn't. She impersonated her in accordance with her own personal qualifications.

"I am for my own impersonation of Macbeth. I do it as I see him after studying the play. I think actors are too prone to follow in the steps of those who have gone before. Our best aid is our own interpretation of a part. I don't mean to say that stage traditions should be ignored, but I think there has always been too much observation of what others have done. In my own case I have erred in this respect heretofore.

"I have noticed some comment concerning the dance of the witches in my production of "Macbeth." I did this to relieve the somberness of the play. There is absolutely no comedy in the drama, except the porter's speech, and I thought that a note of beauty, indicated by the "song within" in the stage directions, would be appropriate. Either the witches could stand on the stage and listen to a song within, or the song could be visualized. I decided upon the latter. There is precedent for this in Irving's version of the play. Dramatically it is not necessary, but it relieves the terrible strain on the nerves of the audience.

"Some one has said that Miss Marlowe 'tripped lightly on the stage' in the letter scene in Act I. That seems very natural to me. Lady Macbeth has just received a letter from her lord. She loves him, and she is glad to have received a message from him, and is anxious to read it. Why should she not show excitement and good spirits?"

"When asked as to his idea of Macbeth's character, Mr. Sothorn said that he was a brave man physically, but that he was an arrogant coward in that conscience makes cowards of us all.

"His character is summed up by Lady Macbeth," he said, "in the words: 'What thou wouldst lightly that wouldst thou holily.'"

Mr. Sothorn was quoted in The Tribune last year as saying that he hoped some time to have a Shakespeare theatre of his own in New York. In response to a question regarding this new plan that he might have regarding this venture he said:

"Several friends of mine have spoken to me about the subject—some of them very recently. But I am not anxious to push the matter. It will come in time. I don't want to be dictated by a board of directors. I want to do things in my own way. Under present conditions Miss Marlowe and I can do what we please, where we please and when we please, and that is a source of infinite satisfaction to us."

MISS CHRISTINE NORMAN. In "The Aviator." Astor Theatre.



MISS OLGA NETHERSOLE. In "Mary Magdalene." New Theatre.



MISS JULIA MARLOWE. In "Macbeth." Broadway Theatre.



DE WITT C. JENNINGS. In "The Gamblers." Maxine Elliott's Theatre.



MISS MARGARET WYCHERLY. In "The Blue Bird." Majestic Theatre.



THE COMING WEEK

NEW PRODUCTIONS.

Globe Theatre—Mme. Bernhardt: Monday night, December 12, "Madame X"; Thursday night, December 15, "La Befana," an Italian drama by Sem Benelli.

Irving Place Theatre—Wednesday night, December 14, "Polnische Wirtschaft" ("A Nice Mess"), a burlesque-operetta, with music by Jean Gilbert.

COMEDY AND DRAMA. ACADEMY OF MUSIC—"The Power of the Press," a melodrama, will be played by the regular stock company.

ASTOR—James Montgomery's new farcical comedy, "The Aviator," with Wallace Eddinger and Miss Christine Norman in the principal parts.

BELASCO—"The Concert" is well along in the third month of its successful run.

BLOU—Miss Zella Sears has won success in "The Nest Egg," a comedy of rural and suburban life.

BROADWAY—Sothorn and Marlowe will begin the second week of their month's engagement here with "As You Like It," which they will play to-morrow, Tuesday and Wednesday nights. They are to present "Romeo and Juliet" on Thursday and Friday nights and on Saturday afternoon. On Saturday night they will be seen in "Hamlet."

CIRCLE—Second week of "Mother," which won success during several weeks at the Hackett. Miss Jane Corcoran gives a sympathetic impersonation of the title part recently given up by Miss Emma Dunn.

COLLIER'S COMEDY—William Collier in "I'll Be Hanged if I Do."

CRITERION—"The Commuters," James Forbes's comedy, has been running longer than any other play in town.

DALAY—"Baby Mine," with Marguerite Clark, Walter Jones, Ivy Troutman and Ernest Glendinning successful in the leading parts.

EMPIRE—William Gillette, in a revival of plays that will win him his place on the American stage, will begin his second week to-morrow night, in "The Private Secretary," which he first played in September, 1884. Next week Mr. Gillette will present "Secret Service." His engagement will end on December 21.

GAIETY—"Get Rich Quick Wallingford" will probably remain here for the entire season.



MME. SARAH BERNHARDT. Globe Theatre.

comedy drama "Helmath," for the Russian Relief Society will be given.

KNICKERBOCKER—Last week of the successful engagement of Mr. Fred Terry and Miss Julia Nelson in "Henry of Navarre."

LIBERTY—Edgar Selwyn's play, "The Country Boy," still strikes its human notes and entertains with comedy.

LYCEUM—Oscar Wilde's sprightly comedy, "The Importance of Being Earnest."

LYRIC—Mrs. Leslie Carter, in "Two Women," a drama by Rupert Hughes.

MAJESTIC—"The Blue Bird" still fascinates. So popular is the play that Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday matinees are given. Between Christmas and New Year's there will be daily afternoon and evening performances.

MAXINE ELLIOTT'S—Seventh week of Charles Klein's "The Gamblers," which has met with marked success.

NEW THEATRE—Miss Olga Nethersole in Maeterlinck's "Mary Magdalene."

REPUBLIC—Miss Edith Tahafero and her associates have completely won the hearts of New York theatregoers in "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm."

WALLACK'S—Last week of Miss May Irwin in "Getting a Polish." Next week, "Fondler Walk."



MISS RUTH ST. DENIS. New Amsterdam Theatre (Matinee).

by Miss Kitty Gordon, who has retired from the cast.

ALHAMBRA—Clarice Mayne, London music hall singer; Julius Steger, in "The Way to the Heart," and the Lorch Family of acrobats, are the features of an excellent bill at Percy Williams's house.

AMERICAN—"Nana," a sensational Parisian whirlwind dancer, will make her American debut here. Tom Terris and his English Players will act for the first time in this country "A Man's Shadow," from the French of Moreau and Delacour. Arnold Daly will present Frank Campeau and company in "The Tin Horn," a one-act melodrama. The Karno Comedy Company will be seen in "A Night at the Club." Several others make up the bill of twenty-two performers.

BRONX—Paul Armstrong's "Three Thieves," a gripping tale of the underworld, with Frank Deshon in the leading part, will be at the Bronx Theatre this week.

CITY—Two concerts will be given to-day by the following entertainers: Sam Chip and Mary Marble, Farrell Taylor Trio, Andy Eric, Gerold Griffin and Company, the Three Vagrants, Barry and Halves, Floyd Mack, Henry Olive and Company, Davis and Scott and Roeder and Tunison.

COLONIAL—Odiva, the delectable swimmer and diver, will be the chief performer here. Edwina Holt and company will present George Ade's merry comedy, "The Mayor and the Manicure." Also Ben Welch, Morton and Moore, Lester, the ventriloquist, and others.

COLUMBIA—The Dainty Duches Company will be seen at the Columbia Theatre this week in a one-act musical travesty called "Bradley from Wall Street" and a burlesque entitled "Sultan for a Day." The principal members of the company are Joe Morris, Sam Green, Oscar Lewis, Margie Hilton, Helen Walsh and Fanny and Kitty Watson and the Baker-Devoe Trio.

EDEN MUSEE—"Santa Claus Greeting Echo," in which she and her associates have already given much pleasure.

HERALD SQUARE—Miss Lulu Glaser, John Shavin and others, in "The Girl and the Kater," an rollicking musical play as one would wish to see.

NAZIMOVA'S—"Madame Troubadour," with Mme. Oily in the title part.



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THE FRENCH STAGE

One of Ambrose Bierce's Stories Dramatized—A Paris Labor Play.

Paris, December 1.

The art of stage decoration and scene painting and lighting is, in Paris, on the eve of a revolution. The initiative, the movement, which promises to have far-reaching consequences abroad, as well as in France, is due to M. Jacques Rouché, the new manager of the Théâtre des Arts, who, after careful studies of the methods in use at the leading playhouses in Moscow, London, Munich, Vienna and Berlin, has adopted in the Théâtre des Arts the serious and original ideas already developed in his interesting little book on the subject, entitled "Modern Theatrical Art." The reform is accomplished by numerous technical details that it would be tedious to explain, but which are based upon two main features. The first of these consists in the simplification and harmony of scenery and costumes, so as to create a "symphony" as it were, between the stage-setting and the spirit and genius of the play. The second feature is the elimination of all details and accessories, no matter how picturesque they may be, that do not directly bear upon the dramatic action. M. Jacques Rouché, seconded by the talented painter, M. Maxime Dethouze, has selected the best points realized at Moscow by Meyerhold and Stanislavsky, in London by Gordon Craig, at Munich by Fritz Eiler, and in Berlin by Max Reinhardt. The most important technical innovation to obtain these results is the suppression of the footlights, which are replaced by systems of "celes-tic" electric lamps, placed high up, just beneath a roof of vaulted reflectors that illuminate the stage with nicely adjustable floods of light coming from above. This obviates the grotesque shadows hitherto cast by the actors and accessories upon the scenery. Moreover—and this is the most telling result—it brings the public in close touch and in the mental union with the actors, from whom the audience was formerly separated by the barrier of light from the "ramp." The uprights and side scenes, which originated in the faraway days of the rudimentary theatres of strolling players, and which for over three centuries have been in use in French theatres, are also suppressed. At the Théâtre des Arts all wings and panoramic illusions vanish and in their stead are pictures painted on canvas by skilled artists upon which the effects vary by means of plays of light and by smaller pictures, made so as to revolve on their own axes. Thus the scenes are no longer in "depth," but in "bold relief." The "stereoscopic boxes," to borrow the expression of M. Jacques Rouché, that delighted many generations of playgoers, have received their death-blow. The actors are now "pushed toward the public," so to speak, by the scenery itself. The harmony between scenery and costume now accomplished at the Théâtre des Arts and at the Opéra Comique and at the Odéon is due to the influence of the Russian ballets. The Moscow artists opened the eyes of the Parisian public to the fact that owing to slavish routine of the old system all efforts to attain realism by methods that could only pretend to give approximate illusions were in vain. Scenery must henceforth be in the same color scheme as the costumes, and this is now accomplished.

It is a pity that M. Jacques Rouché did not select a play more effective than "La Caravane des Enfants" for the opening of the Théâtre des Arts. The author, M. de Bouché, is a poet and a man of "genius." Perhaps this is his misfortune, because the ambitious philosophy of his conception does not lend itself to dramatic development. It is the story of a beautiful, refined but weary girl, who has gone away in Paris and upon her deathbed, inspired by her hypocritical and brutally ascetic sisters from their native village. The stage-setting is the greatest attraction of the play. The scene where the silhouette of the expiring invalid, vaguely perceived through a curtained glass door, while a drunken uncle is vainly and in their stead are pictures painted on canvas by skilled artists upon which the effects vary by means of plays of light and by smaller pictures, made so as to revolve on their own axes. Thus the scenes are no longer in "depth," but in "bold relief." The "stereoscopic boxes," to borrow the expression of M. Jacques Rouché, that delighted many generations of playgoers, have received their death-blow. The actors are now "pushed toward the public," so to speak, by the scenery itself. The harmony between scenery and costume now accomplished at the Théâtre des Arts and at the Opéra Comique and at the Odéon is due to the influence of the Russian ballets. The Moscow artists opened the eyes of the Parisian public to the fact that owing to slavish routine of the old system all efforts to attain realism by methods that could only pretend to give approximate illusions were in vain. Scenery must henceforth be in the same color scheme as the costumes, and this is now accomplished.

"Montmartre," a comedy in four acts, by M. Pierre Frondaie, brought out at the Vaudeville Theatre, is the story of Marie-Claire, a captivating young lady of Montmartre, who may be best described as a twentieth century type of Abbé Prévost's "Manon Lescaut." The author, M. de Bouché, is a poet and a man of "genius." Perhaps this is his misfortune, because the ambitious philosophy of his conception does not lend itself to dramatic development. It is the story of a beautiful, refined but weary girl, who has gone away in Paris and upon her deathbed, inspired by her hypocritical and brutally ascetic sisters from their native village. The stage-setting is the greatest attraction of the play. The scene where the silhouette of the expiring invalid, vaguely perceived through a curtained glass door, while a drunken uncle is vainly and in their stead are pictures painted on canvas by skilled artists upon which the effects vary by means of plays of light and by smaller pictures, made so as to revolve on their own axes. Thus the scenes are no longer in "depth," but in "bold relief." The "stereoscopic boxes," to borrow the expression of M. Jacques Rouché, that delighted many generations of playgoers, have received their death-blow. The actors are now "pushed toward the public," so to speak, by the scenery itself. The harmony between scenery and costume now accomplished at the Théâtre des Arts and at the Opéra Comique and at the Odéon is due to the influence of the Russian ballets. The Moscow artists opened the eyes of the Parisian public to the fact that owing to slavish routine of the old system all efforts to attain realism by methods that could only pretend to give approximate illusions were in vain. Scenery must henceforth be in the same color scheme as the costumes, and this is now accomplished.

Five new plays are produced at the Grand-Guignol, which remains under the management of M. Max Maury. Three of these "Sabotage," "Figures de Cire" and "Condoilance" will rank among the best pieces brought out at this popular little theatre. "Sabotage" is a one-act Socialist tragedy, by MM. Hellem, Valeros and d'Espouy. The only child of a working couple is ill in bed. The symptoms become more and more favorable. The husband, a red-hot unionist of the Pataud type, goes out to attend a meeting, where he makes a terrific speech that causes a strike. In his absence the child becomes worse. The mother calls in a surgeon, who declares that an immediate operation of tracheotomy is the sole means of saving the infant's life. It is 9 o'clock at night. The operation is begun by the light of electric lamps. At the most critical period of the operation the current suddenly ceases owing to the strike. The surgeon continues by aid of a hastily procured candle. It is too late. The child is dead. The distracted mother, unaware of the fact, returns, and weeps over the body. The father returns, and weeps over the body. The operation ceases over the triumphant strike and "sabotage" of electricity. The mother shrieks, "Assassin! You have murdered our child!" "Sabotage" is terrible and intensely realistic. It evokes wild outbursts of enthusiasm each night, and is in unison with the popular feeling of the hour.

"Figures de Cire" "Wax Figures" by M. André de Lorde and Georges Montaigne, is a development of one of the most poignant short stories of the American writer, Ambrose Bierce, in his "Tales of Soldiers and Civilians." A man boasts of his immunity to all sense of fear. He makes a bet that he will spend the night in the Chamber of Horrors of a waxwork museum. It is a weird, stormy night. His nerves forsake him. A live figure emerges from a historic guillotine. It is a wretched woman of Montmartre who has sought refuge from a police raid. This apparition causes such emotion that the man falls

Mr. Benson's admirable company, which has been performing Josephine Preston Peabody's "Stratford-on-Avon" prize play, "The Piper," in several of the principal cities of Great Britain, will enact the same piece at a series of matinees in the St. James's Theatre, London, beginning just before Christmas. It is understood that "The Piper" will this season or next be seen at The New Theatre, New York.

"An Inquirer" asks why current criticism concerns itself so much with the play and so little with the acting. Easily answered: There are so many plays, but there is very little acting.

MARY MARBLE. City Theatre.

FRANK DESHON. Bronx Theatre.

"NANA." American Music Hall.