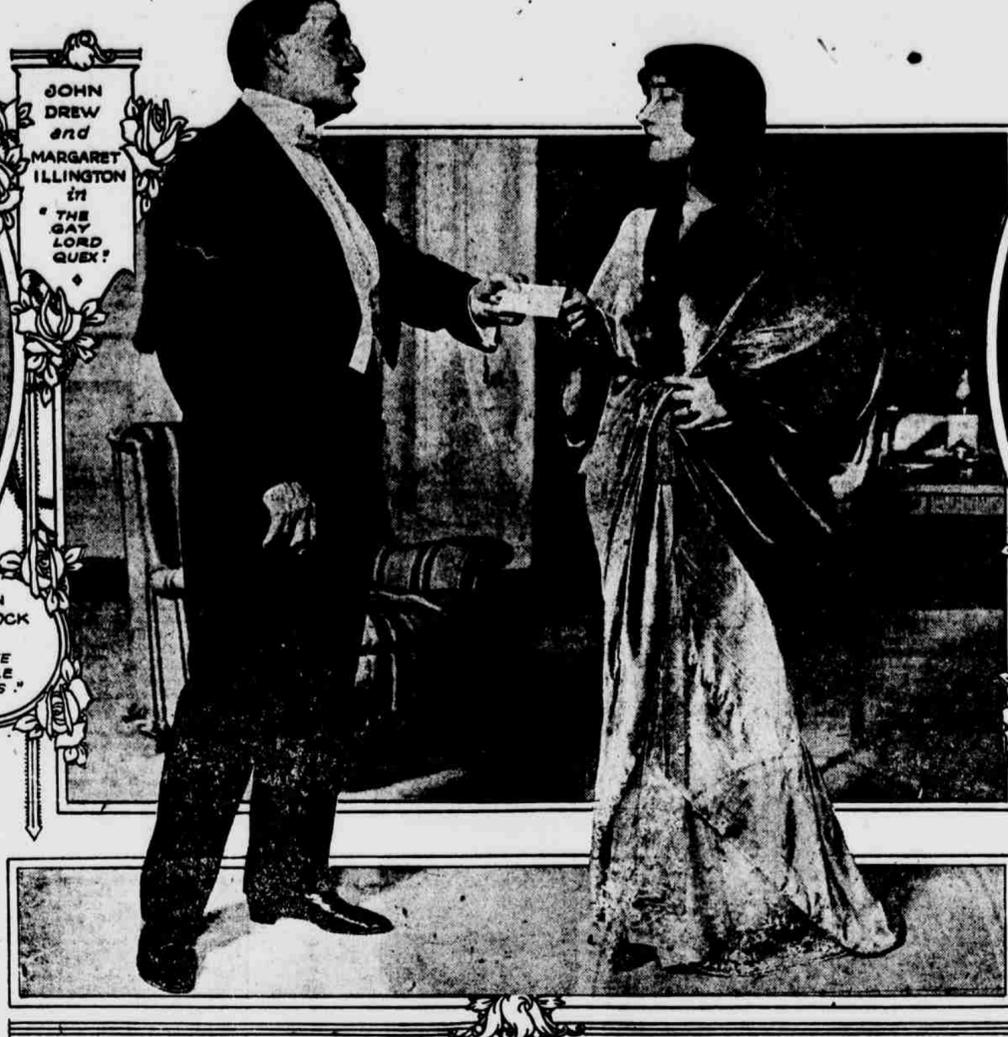


TWO PLAYS BY FAMOUS AUTHORS THIS WEEK



BY LAWRENCE REAMER.

WHEN the second act of "Barbara" which Arthur Hopkins produced at the Plymouth Theatre last week, had almost drawn to a close there came suddenly some intimation as to the motive of the unusual play with which Florence Lincoln was puzzling a New York audience. A doctor who was inevitably to become the husband of the heroine had refused to remain any longer as a consulting physician in her case. He could not bring himself to consent to the operation which the other physician had found necessary.

or inviting. It still refuses to be anything more than pathological, whatever it may be called. But if the audience had known this detail of the girl's future and had been in any way orientated as to the incidents in her life which led her to become a victim of these delusions, there might have been an interest in her adventures which is altogether missing in the present writing of the drama. Yet Miss Lincoln's play is said to be an academic product though it violates to its own irreparable damage one of the few laws of playwriting that the pundits have been able to recognize.

He was of course asked by the family for some explanation as to this sudden change of belief. It was owing to her happiness that he was unwilling that she should be restored to health. He thought her happier in the delusion that she was the mother of three children than she could ever be again.

Arthur Hopkins and his associates prepare so carefully all the material phenomena of his productions that the false mood which was established at the opening of "Barbara" came as a surprise to those who found they had made a mistake. The clever music composed by Elliott Schenck, who is now called in whenever the theatre is in need of musically aid or comfort, did not necessarily suggest happiness and the content of the restful spirit which was Barbara when her hopes of maternity were realized in advance by her dreams.



SYLVIA JASON in "DOING OUR BIT"

delusion than she had ever been in her life before? Then came an explanation in a few words, when it ought to have been in at least a complete scene at the beginning of the play. Some vestige of motive at last appeared. All the vague and spineless action that had made up the drama until that scene was reached was explained at last. The girl it seems had been a Cinderella. In the vacant house without love or the attention of childhood, she had come to look upon her dolls and then her possible children as the most important things in her life. It was in her neglect and loneliness that she made them an obsession.

So with the music played in the dark, the stage gradually grew light and the old gardener at work on a small shelf was revealed. Then entered the vineyard nurse, who looked like an especially determined tritoeuse of the French Revolution. In the shadowy opening of the act, with the distant music and the grim aspect of the room, it seemed as if some crime must have been committed by this sinister couple plotting here in the half light and discussing in phrases which until long after the opening scene were incomprehensible to the audience. The event of the scene showed that such an impression of the opening mood of the play was altogether false.

Dion Clithorne followed the family tradition when in writing "The Old Country" he utilized such an absorbing theme as false impersonation. None was more popular with playwrights of the time of his grandfather, the triumphant Dion Boucicault. Tom Taylor's "Henry Dunbar," which dwelt with this theme in the theatre quite in the terms that Wilkie Collins might have used had the play been a story between covers, knew a long life. Managers and playwrights still finger lovingly its yellow bound pages, but the day that they were past. Then Mercy Merrick represented what might be done with such a character on the distaff side. But how different were the motives which impelled the characters in these plays and in the work of the descendant of the prolific Victorian playwright.

The hero of "Henry Dunbar" came back to fight tooth and nail to make a place for himself in the world when he comes back to represent himself as the murdered English gentleman. So the contemplation of the struggle was of intense interest to its audience in the old days. The open fight of "Mercy Merrick," especially when such a genius as Clara Morris was representing the character, was equally thrilling to observe so long as its conventions retained their plausibility. But in both cases as well as in all the plays which such as "Captain Swift" and "Jim the Penman" had a similar tendency, there was always a great motive to inspire the audacity and boldness of the imposture. Life, fortune or love was at stake. It was in the category of what Freytag has called important motives that the theme of "The Old Country" fell. Compared to the immense questions at stake in the other plays mentioned, what was the ambition of a son to bring back his mother to a village that she might lord it over those who had scorned her? She was born there and had it, it enjoyed some deliciously happy minutes with the son of the lord of the manor, which was now her property. But this is but a paltry motive on which to build a play. Even the character of the hero could not stand up against such conditions.

BENEFIT AND CONCERT

CENTURY—Messrs. Dillingham and Ziegfeld announce the first Sunday night concert here to-night, the series to continue throughout the season. The talent at this first presentation will include not only many of the stars from "Miss 1917" but several popular entertainers from other attractions.

HIPPODROME—Charles Dillingham has placed the Hippodrome at the disposal of Mrs. Oliver Harriman, president of Junior Patriots of America, for a benefit performance for sufferers of the Antilles. Aiding Mrs. Harriman in the preparation of the programme is the Society of American Magicians, and a host of distinguished operators, stars, musical comedy favorites and mystifying wizardry is promised. The principal soloist will be Louise Homer, the contralto, and Frank Tours will be in charge of the musical portion of the bill, with a band of 150 enlisted men.

the playwright who could circumvent the loss of illusion which they have caused would find the subjects still possess their old theatrical value.

Could anything be more naive than the present astonishment of the managers that the public will not crowd the theatres? Is it the war tax? Is it the economy that people are just now beginning to practise? What can be the active cause of the complete loss of interest in the theatre? Why do half a dozen theatres out of the fifty in New York have a monopoly of the public's patronage? To the unfortunate observer for business reasons—all the plays that come to New York there would seem no ground for obscurity. The causes which keep the public at home must be perfectly clear. Not one play out of ten given in New York during the season is worth the time much less the money of a man or woman of average intelligence. These inept and amateurish compositions that shine across the dramatic horizon are not deserving of the attention bestowed on them as matters of news. Why anybody should willingly spend an evening under such circumstances is difficult to imagine. If the war tax is having any effect on the theatre it is probably felt most in those in which it has been difficult to accumulate an audience at all. Now the death-blow in their righteous rebellion against complete boredom and an additional financial outlay, are sulking in their tents. The theatres are empty just as they always should be when plays of the prevailing calibre are offered here.

The Shuberts, who really have the interests of the drama at heart, even though they are managers, announce that they have grafted on to their Little Red School House of the Drama a new department, which is to be known as the Camouplays Department in the slang of the students. The word "Camouplays" is derived from the French term "camouflage," and it is expected that the students will gain such a mastery of the Gallic tongue through a rapid repetition of the word thirty times before breakfast that they will easily be able to slip into their plays a frequent "Madame" or "Monsieur," so necessary, for instance, in the French or bedroom farce.

Prexy Worm, who is himself so conversant with the new term that he is able to pronounce it now every time on the first try, says that camouplays is "a dramatical veneer that is applied to unsuccessful plays," transforming them into metropolitan successes before the New Republic has been able to damp them by calling them "artistic successes." The term is not, as one irreverent person suggested, a misnomer for the wastebasket or "can our plays" department.

Prexy Worm has been so busy licking the new department into shape that he has had to defer the college opening for the fall semester, the blowing of the university whistle has also been postponed and the Glee Club is getting rusty in the performance of their alma mater's song, "We Won't Go Home Until Morning." The Grand Old Man of the Institution, in fact, has been so occupied sharpening pencils for the fall semester that he hasn't had time to be measured for his gown. Little difficulty, however, is expected in the matter of the Prexy's regulation mortar board cap, as Dr. Worm has any number of top hats on hand.

THE WEEK'S NEW PLAYS.

MONDAY—John D. Williams presents at the Forty-eighth Street Theatre a revival of Arthur Pinero's famous comedy, "The Gay Lord Quex," with John Drew and Margaret Illington in the leading roles.

Joseph Weber will present at the Broadhurst Theatre "Her Regiment," by William Le Baron, with music by Victor Herbert. Donald Brian will make his first appearance as a lone star in this play.

"What's Your Husband Doing?" a three act farce by George Hobart will be acted at the Thirty-ninth Street Theatre by a company of well known actors.

TUESDAY—The Charles Frohman Company will present Ann Murdock in "Three Little Bears," by Edward Shields Carpenter, at the Empire Theatre.

WEDNESDAY—Grace George will present Henry Bernstein's play, "Elevation," at the Playhouse.

The Shuberts are charging nothing for the pamphlet itself, not because they consider it worthless but because they feel that the managers have already been so hard hit by the ticket tax that if they asked for what the publication really is worth it would lead to an alarming increase in profanity. They are thinking of adding Prof. Joey LeBlanc to the faculty of their camouplays course, since the experience he has gained in papering a house through his cut rate agency is expected to be of invaluable aid to

their students in the art of giving a play popularity among the Broadway set.

TO PLEASE THE PUBLIC.

New Plays Offered This Week by the Managers.

Two comedies, an "emotional" play by a famous European playwright and a musical comedy, are the fresh lure laid this week by the managers for the elusive public.

John Drew and Margaret Illington will appear at the Forty-eighth Street Theatre on Monday in Arthur Pinero's comedy, "The Gay Lord Quex." Mr. Drew and Miss Illington thus come together as joint stars for the first time since they acted together in Pinero's "His House in Order." The piece is under the management of John B. Williams.

Sir Arthur Pinero, some time ago completed and delivered to Mr. Williams a revised version of "The Gay Lord Quex," so that the text as acted by Mr. Drew and Miss Illington at the Forty-eighth Street Theatre to-morrow night will be a good deal fresher and altogether newer in treatment than that performed in this country by Sir John Hare and Irene Vanbrugh nineteen years ago. At that time "The Gay Lord Quex" ran eight months in New York, following a season of two years in London. For the piece is very exceptional as a compact and continuously interesting play; it is probably Pinero's best. As a vehicle for a man and woman star "The Gay Lord Quex" is especially happy, the two chief parts are very



CLARA MACKIN, CHARLOTTE IVES and VIRGINIA HAMMOND in "WHAT'S YOUR HUSBAND DOING?"

evenly divided and virtuosity is expected in each performance. Since the play is practically new to the present generation, an outline of its story may not be amiss. Quex, after the loose and aimless existence of a rich, pleasure seeking nobleman, finds one woman whom he loves with a passion finer and more overwhelming than he has ever known before. He has everything to make him eligible in the eyes of the girl, but the spectre of a frivolous past will emerge to vex him and make him fearful for a happy future. The woman he so supremely loves has an odd sort of foster-sister, one Sophy Fulgurey, a musician with her own shop in Bond street. There is a strong affection between these two girls despite their widely varying social positions. Muriel Eden is the apple of Sophy's eyes and Muriel has long since learned to lean upon the judgment and the sympathy of the more experienced Sophy. Coincident with Quex's suit for Muriel's hand, a young Capt. Beating has captured the fancy of Muriel. Sophy favors the cause of Beating. She is suspicious of the elegant Quex, and astiduously goes to work to make her suspicious of him (already hinted by her to Muriel) good. The indiscretions of a sentimental duchesse, an old flame, seem to give Sophy her supreme opportunity to destroy Quex in the mind of Muriel. Quex suddenly finds himself and the duchess trapped by the artful Sophy and his prospects of marriage with Muriel about to be wrecked. Fired by his passion for Muriel—the one serious passion he has ever felt—he battles for his happiness. And Sophy fights him, quite like a tigress for her young. The wits of the philanthropist and sophisticated nobleman are more than matched by those of the firm and relentless working girl. Both use every worldly weapon, every trick of cajolery and threat—the one to save the very height of their struggle, where no quarter seems likely to be asked or to be given, a depth of nature is sounded in each that hitherto has seemed absent. Nobleman and working woman, having evoked the best in each other, declare a truce, and both, with the single aim in view of securing the happiness of Muriel, whom both love, combine their sharp wits to encompass that end.

In the company supporting these noted stars will be George Fauncefort, Leonard Willey, Rexford Kendrick, Violet Kemble Cooper, Louise Drew, Irby Marshall, Helen Beaumont, Florence Fair, Yvonne Jarrette and Maxine MacDonald.

"What's Your Husband Doing?" a new three act farce written by George V. Hobart, will be presented by the Hobart-Jordan Company, Inc., for the first time in New York at the Thirty-ninth Street Theatre to-morrow. Mr. Hobart has personally directed the rehearsals of his piece and has selected for the cast Hale Hamilton, Virginia Hammond, Charlotte Ives, Clara Mackin, Jane Cooper, Alice Lloyd, Jeri Prouty, Walter Lewis, Joseph Conyers, Augustus Hege, Thomas Clarke, Peter Craig, Martin Malloy and David Adler.

Donald Brian, who is now under the direction of Joe Weber, will come to the Broadhurst Theatre to-morrow evening in the new opera "Her Regiment." It will be the initial performance here, the score of which is by Victor Herbert. Mr. Herbert has found a new partner in William Le Baron as librettist.

The three scenes of "Her Regiment" take place in Normandy, and while its title may suggest militarism, it is to be understood that throughout the telling of the story there is not the slightest hint of the present war, in fact, of any war. Fred G. Latham has superintended its staging, which is said to be the most elaborate that Joe Weber has made in his long line as a producer.

The supporting cast contains the names of many who have already done excellent work in musical plays, in Audrey Maple, Josie Intropodi, Pauline French, Norma Brown, Cissie Sewell, Edythe Mason, Frank Moulton, Sidney Jarvis, Hugh Chivers, Frederick Mannatt and others. There is, of course, a large chorus of pretty girls.

Victor Herbert will conduct the large orchestra at the opening performance to-morrow evening.

At the Empire Theatre on Tuesday Charles Frohman will present Ann Murdock in "The Three Bears," a new comedy by Edward Childs Carpenter, author of "The Cinderella Man." Mr. Carpenter made an excursion into the folklore of childhood in "The Three Bears." Every one knows the old nursery story that the post Southern wrote to amuse his children—how little Goldilocks wandered off into the deep woods and visited the home of the three bears, how she fell asleep in the little bear's bed and how the bears found her there and chased her out of the window. In the play a wonderful little Goldilocks runs away from the home of her aunt to escape a hateful marriage with a man her ambitious aunt has selected for her. She takes refuge in a camp she owns in the Maine Woods, finding it already occupied by "three bears." These are a physician, a musician and a lawyer. The latter two are worn out, nervous cynics and profound women haters, for their careers have been blighted, they think, by unfortunate love affairs. The physician hopes the life in the woods will restore his patients to their normal condition, but when the play begins they are still growing at one another and at everything. Into the environment strays the little runaway. The men, enraged by the sight of a woman, try to drive her away, but (and here the playwright has given a new twist to the old story) she stays to win their hearts and soon has the whole atmosphere of the place changed. Mr.

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GEORGIE O'RAHEY in "LEAVE IT TO JANE"

Murdock impersonates the Goldilocks of the play, while Jerome Patrick, Rex MacDonald and Percy Marston appear as the "three bears." The play has been staged by Eden Payne.

On Wednesday Grace George and her Playhouse Company will give the first American performance of Henry Bernstein's "Elevation." This play was first produced at the Grand Franciscan, Paris, last June and was hailed as the one dramatic work inspired by the war which truly expresses the spirit of France. Incidentally, it will be the first play of a serious nature to be presented in New York since the conflict entered the conflict, and its reception by the public will be watched with great interest by other less conspicuous managers who have been waiting for some one else to make a break away from khaki clad characters and dignified presentation of the serious side of the war. In the cast supporting Muriel will be Lionel Atwill, Holbrook Blinn, Howard Kyle, Charles Fox, Fred Friedley, E. John Kemble, and Blanche, Esther Howard, Nellie Brown, Florence Walderson, and Miss Knowles.

A Play a Week Here. STANDARD—The Selwyns will present Jane Cowl and Jane Murfin's play, "Daybreak," and a new dawn of art is expected to burst on upper Manhattan as soon as Blanche Yurka appears. Jerome Lawler, Cyril Courtney, Agnes Findley and others will perform with the assistance of the property man. BRONX OPERA HOUSE—A. H. Woods's production of "Mary Tully's farce," "Mary's May," is announced here, and Bronkites are expected to govern themselves accordingly.