

New York Theaters and Their Attractions

Impression in the Drama Shown by Pessimistic Play

George Kaiser's 'From Morn to Midnight,' Which Came to This Country From Germany, Is New Form of Modern Play.

By LAWRENCE REAMER.

OUR native representative of impressionism in the drama is of course Eugene O'Neill, who has written his most striking plays in a series of short scenes instead of the usual longer acts divided into as many scenes as the playwright found necessary to his purpose. Although he followed this form in "The Hairy Ape" and previously in "Emperor Jones," there was no such anarchy in "Beyond the Horizon" and "Anna Christie." They were cast in the more accepted mould. George Kaiser's "From Morn to Midnight," which came to this country with the reputation of great popularity in Germany also is uncompromisingly modern in its proclamation of impressionism. Its seven scenes are devoted to the psychological adventures of a provincial bank clerk, who is so upset by the approach of romance that he loses all moral balance and absconds with a certain reckless delight.

This then is the most modern form that the playwrights—some of them—are to adopt as a means of their most complete expression. Obviously such a manner is adapted only to its special kind of fable. On the other hand, it is possible that D'Ennery in the '70's might have made "The Two Orphans" impressionistic in form. Suppose he had divided that old melodrama into scenes instead of acts. Some sixteen or seventeen scenes, instead of five acts divided into those parts, might have been taken to make up the play. Would "The Two Orphans" then have been impressionistic?

It is interesting to observe that in spite of the wholly modern form in which he casts his plays Kaiser, with his associates, is not afraid to avail himself of some of the most hackneyed expedients of the despised "well made" play. The third scene of "From Morn to Midnight" is nothing but a soliloquy. In this the hero, in the manner of Hamlet, discusses his mental and emotional state. The playwright at least condescends when he makes use of this old form to do it in the most approved way—that is to reveal a state of mind and not to put the audience into the possession of facts necessary to an understanding of the story. Impressionism is at least orthodox to this extent. If it is going to help itself to the despised conventions of a former age, it is at least going to do so in the correct fashion.

One of the most successful of the numerous effective expedients devised by Lee Simonson to illustrate this performance is the sight of the steward's box at a bicycle meet. Flooded with light is the high stand, its point apparently protruding over the track from a background of flags. Here in evening dress stand the judges, their polished silk hats forming points of light in the illumination from above. There is in this device all the illusion to be had from a view of a full auditorium and tiers on tiers of painted spectators on the canvas background. As a matter of fact, there is, with the cheering of the unseen spectators, vastly more illusion.

Mr. Simonson is undeniably the most modern of our stage artists. He has done nothing superior to this example of his skill. The playwright is, however, reactionary at this point. He has the men in the judges' stand describe the event of the races. So we hear what happens to Number 2 and how the pace dropped here and how the Dutchman spurred. It is true that *Lady Gay Spanker* was highly applauded for years when she used to adopt this manner of describing the race in "London Assurance." But as she grew older her methods fell into disfavor. This manner of making the spectators aware of the event of a race or battle or a prize fight passed into such disfavor that not a teacher of dramatic construction at a college would allow a beginner to write a play in which a scene off the stage was described to the audience by one of the characters. Impressionism, however, takes its good where it finds it.

The philosophy of "From Morn to Midnight" is of the melancholy and unrelievedly pessimistic character found to-day in so much of the Teutonic fiction. In the velodrome scene the absconding cashier throws about his stolen money to see the riders struggle for the prize and risk their lives and limbs to gratify the morbid hunger for amusement which animates the mob of sensual spectators. He is prepared to offer even more than he has sacrificed to stir their desires when the Royal Highness arrives. The stillness that comes over the crowd shows that even the demand for the sight of blood is subservient to their awe of the sight of royalty. There is an emotion more powerful even than any that money can buy.

When the thief calls to him the girls from the ballroom of the cabaret to share his champagne he recognizes what the power of his gold is and the little feeling that any of them has for him. So he whips them from his presence, physically or through such brutality as the charge that the girls who will not dance for him on the table must have a wooden leg. All the emotions of the preceding scenes are recalled in the Salvation Army barracks as the penitents climb up to the bench of confession. His own quiet family life, with the girl learning the overture to "Tannhauser" on the piano, his wife hesitating about the time for broiling the chops and the old woman watering the geraniums in the corner, flash again across his memory as the men and women rise to tell their sordid life stories. Even the courtesan with the wall about the wooden legged man recalls the brutal horror of his hours in the supper room. Such is the mood and such the inscrutable hopelessness of the new play, moreover of the new school of fiction which between covers found its most searching utterance in "The World's Illusion."

If Kaiser deals with such problems in all his plays it is to be feared that they will awaken no touch of warmth in the heart of the American theatergoer. The form of impressionism we have learned from O'Neill. Brief and swiftly moving scenes, one problem of character or life rather than any old fable, the rapid and rather inconsequent progress of the cinema—this seems to be at least the outward and visible signs of impressionism in the drama—combined, of course, with a complete willingness to take anything out of the old theater conventions that may suit the convenience of the dramatist.

It seems that after all it was Her-



MISS MARION COAKLEY in 'THE DRUMS OF JEOPARDY' at GAIETY



ED WYNN in 'THE PERFECT FOOL' at GEO. M. COHAN THEATER



MISS OLGA COOK in 'BLOSSOM TIME' at AMBASSADOR



MISS MARIE LOUISE WALKER in 'HEADS I WIN' at the EARL CARROLL THEATRE

Chic Sale's Rural Air Natural, Not Assumed

Charles Sale, better known as Chic, is always himself, whether on the street or on Keith's stage. Most artists when before the footlights assume character roles wholly unlike themselves. On the street, at home, wherever he may chance to be, Chic Sale is just his natural self. The rural characters he portrays are his own people, the people among whom he was born and raised. He is still one of them, and his contact with the rest of the world has left him unchanged internally.

W. Somerset Maugham Writes His First Photoplay

"The Ordeal," a Paramount picture by W. Somerset Maugham, will be at the Rialto this week. Mr. Maugham is one of a number of well known writers who, after learning screen technique at the Laasy studio, have evolved stories with the requirements of the screen directly in mind. Others include Sir Gilbert Parker, Mrs. Ellnor Glyn, Edward Knoblock, Samuel Merwin, Harvey O'Higgins, George Pattullo and George Ade.

Amusement Parks Offer Varied Entertainment

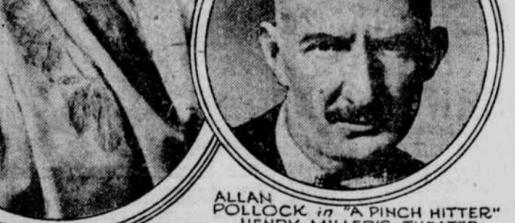
Starlight Amusement Park, at East 177th street, The Bronx, is now running full blast, with the big bathing pool, 300 by 300 feet, open and getting its daily refilling of filtered salt water from the Sound. Their Sunday baseball "double header" will feature the home team, the National Red Sox, against the Gotham.



MISS NAN HALPERIN as 'THE BABY FLAPPER' in 'MAKE IT SNAPPY' at WINTER GARDEN



MISS FERNE ROGERS with MCINTYRE and HEATH in 'RED PEPPER' at SHUBERT



ALLAN POLLOCK in 'A PINCH HITTER' at HENRY MILLER'S THEATER

'Shuffle Along' Stays in Brooklyn Another Week

"Shuffle Along," the all negro musical novelty, has been held over for a second week at the Montauk Theater, where it played to capacity attendance last week. Fanny Brice, returning to vaudeville, will be headliner at the Orpheum this week. Others will be Vivienne Segal, Paul Morton and Naomi Regina and William L. Gibson and Regina Connell.

Calendar of First Performances

MONDAY. GAIETY THEATER—"The Drums of Jeopardy," a play of love and adventure, will be produced by Alfred E. Aaron. It is a dramatization by Harold MacGrath and Howard Herrick of MacGrath's story of that name. In the cast will be William Courtleigh, Marion Coakley, Paul Everton, Reginald Barlow and C. Henry Gordon. SHUBERT THEATER—McIntyre and Heath will be presented by Lee & J. J. Shubert in a musical comedy, "Red Pepper." The book, which is in two acts and eight scenes, was written by Edgar Smith and Emily Young and shows McIntyre as a negro of misfortune and Heath as the Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford among the darkies, while a horse race is revealed in motion. The lyrics are by Howard Rogers and Owen Murphy and the music by Albert Gumble and Owen Murphy. In the supporting cast are Bob Nelson, Miss Mabel Elaine, Miss Vivian Holt and Miss Lillian Rosedale.



MISS FERNE ROGERS with MCINTYRE and HEATH in 'RED PEPPER' at SHUBERT

Did You Hear?

That 'The Czarina' Was in Possession of David Belasco for Eight Years.

By LUCIEN CLEVES.

NOW that the end of the run of "The Czarina" at the Empire Theater was reached last night, it may be interesting to tell some of the American history of the play. David Belasco had it in his possession for eight years. During all this time he was seeking an actress for the title role, but always failing to find her. He at one time thought of bringing to this country Mme. Roland, the Hungarian who created the role in Austria. He even journeyed one summer so far as Ischl to hear her in the part. She was confident that she could speak English, but Mr. Belasco unfortunately did not agree with her, and as he was the doctor that difference in view was fatal. He then thought of Miss Ida Rubinstein, who had at least the qualification of being a Russian, but that plan also fell through. Miss Elsie Ferguson was anxious for the role and Mr. Belasco was once in negotiation with Miss Margaret Anglin, but they failed to agree. Finally it came into the possession of Miss Ethel Barrymore, with whom Mr. Belasco was satisfied. It had practically been agreed that she was to play the part when the contracts with "DeLasse" interfered. So she took that drama and never had any reason to regret it. Finally Mr. Belasco having despaired of finding his ideal for the part of the heroine handed the play over to Miss Coakley. But he kept the second act he had written, which differs importantly from the original.

Play of Paris Underworld.

"The Seventh Heaven," which John Golden has accepted from the pen of Austin Strong and recently produced in Atlantic City is a tale of life in the Paris underworld to-day.

Mme. Muzio Goes West.

Claudia Muzio, in spite of all reports to the contrary, will not spend all her time next season in Italy. The dramatic soprano will sing for a while with the Chicago Opera Company.

A Red Light in Baltimore.

Miss Margot Kelly, with the flaming red locks, is the leading woman for this summer of a stock company in Baltimore.

Plastic Surgery in Play.

Plastic surgery is the theme of "The Divorcee," which H. Woods has produced recently with Miss Florence Reed as the heroine. The play is by Bayard Veiller, who makes his leading feminine figure have her face changed by the doctor, and the title can no longer recognize her because she is so beautiful.

Professional Woman's League Has Big Program

The Professional Woman's League, Mrs. Russell Bassett president, held its twenty-ninth annual reception and installation of officers on Monday afternoon at the Hotel Astor. Mrs. Ben Hendricks was chairman and was assisted by Mrs. Emmie J. Howard, Mrs. Florence K. Harris and Mrs. Emile Paul Mathieson. The program was most enjoyable and opened with greetings from the president and included specialty dancing by Anna Hill; soprano solos by Miss Emily Jennings; a sketch, "The New Chief of Police," by Charles and Sadie MacDonald & Co.; Miss Fay Marble, in a specialty number; Mr. Wilton Lackaye Mrs. Amelia Morgenroth's "Kiddies" from the "Chaive Bourie."



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