

"To-day" making an impression even upon the weakest of minds. The taste of a person who would enjoy it might be morbid and unhealthy, but those who see it merely out of curiosity, and they are probably the majority of the patrons, will not regret anything except the time wasted. Although the play serves no good purpose on the stage, it is hardly likely to pervert any morals that are not already thoroughly unsettled. Indeed, the most immoral thing about it is the assumption that the women of to-day, with the possible exception of the suffragettes, who are not mentioned, have been allowed to go undeveloped in their minds until they are willing to sell their bodies for a few luxuries.

Every few years in theatrical history, some extraordinary type of entertainment becomes popular. It is like a boil on the face of the drama, and will pass away naturally without leaving any injurious effects if the sufferer waits patiently and refrains from irritating it. The brothel plays are a phenomenon of this sort. Raving about them will not do any good, but in another year or so, dramas of the same type will not draw well enough to pay for the leading lady's hairpins. Before very long, they are going to be forgotten as completely as the Salome dances, and in the meantime, Canadians are not missing very much if the productions fail to cross the border.

It is folly to assert, as so many writers do, that the presence of "To-day" among the successes of the year indicates a decidedly vicious tendency in the taste of theatre-goers. That impression has gone abroad, although facts do not warrant it, for there have never been more clean and wholesome plays enjoying large patronage in New York than at the present time. Indeed, the general air of the theatres is cheery and sweet rather than sordid and murky.

One has only to visit a few of the comedies now on the list of hits in order to realize that the publicity given to the brothel plays has misrepresented the present tendency of the American stage. "Grumpy," in which Cyril Maude has been drawing crowds to a very out-of-the-way theatre for many months, may be classed as a comedy, even though it possesses a thrilling plot of crime and detection. Grumpy, the old criminal lawyer who proves in a crisis that his brain has not grown old with his body, is a very humorous character study, which has carried the play to its great success.

Nothing could be cleaner and smarter than "Too Many Cooks," the first effort of Frank Craven, the young actor-dramatist. It tells a very simple story of the building of a house by a young couple about to be married, and shows how interfering relatives nearly spoil their happiness. Mr. Craven has all the freshness and observation of George M. Cohan, with a great deal more refinement than the author of "Forty-five Minutes from Broadway" has ever shown. With only one play to his credit, it is not possible to foretell Mr. Craven's future, but if he develops along the same lines as "Too Many Cooks," he may become the outstanding writer of comedies of American life. Even if his first comedy cannot be called a big achievement, it contains an unusual amount of human nature, furnishes refreshing entertainment and gives promise of better things to come.

"Kitty Mackay" is drawing crowds to the same theatre in which "Bunty Pulls the Strings" made its great hit. The new comedy of Scotch life is by no means another "Bunty." Some of its wit does not sound as though it really belonged to the land of the heather, but it contains in Mag Duncan, played by a very clever young actress, Margaret Nybloc, a character of a canny lassie with a dry sense of humour who would carry even a play of less merit to popularity. A rural comedy of life in Maine is "Along Came Ruth." It tells a pleasant tale of how a girl with advanced business ideas wakened up a quiet old town, and the flavour that has made the play popular comes from the many broadly drawn character types that it contains.

There are half a dozen other entertaining and wholesome dramas that might be mentioned, but these are enough to furnish a reply to anyone who asserts that the American theatre caters chiefly to depraved tastes at the present time.

Who is the most popular star in New York? In the light of recent theatrical history, the one answer must be "Miss Laurette Taylor." She won that position after showing her ability in several parts, and her popularity came to its height when she appeared in "The Bird of Paradise." Those who were fortunate enough to see her in that part will not soon forget the rarely moving quality of her acting. Then followed "Peg O' My Heart," in which she achieved stardom.

Miss Taylor is not one of those stars who are content to rest her whole success upon a pleasing personality. She prefers to be first of all an actress.

When she comes upon the stage, it is not Miss Taylor with a brogue or Miss Taylor with an olive complexion, called by different names to fit the play. In every role she attempts to convey a clearly defined character drawn without any thought of her own best tricks. It might be said that her brief stage experience, that reached its climax in the phenomenal run of "Peg," can scarcely have given anyone a chance to credit her with versatility, but Miss Taylor recognized for herself the danger of becoming too closely identified with the character of the Irish girl. Early in March she started a series of special matinees, presenting a group of one-act plays by her husband, J. Hartley Manners, and these matinees have served as an indication of her versatility and her popularity. Everyone knows that special matinees are as a rule abominated by theatre-goers, and the crowded houses that greet Miss Taylor at each of them indicate her hold on the affections of the Broadway public.

It is more important, however, that they should have given Miss Taylor a chance to show her powers as an actress. In "Just as Well," she is a spoiled child of the English upper classes, a young lady with all the affections of the bachelor girl in society. The second playlet bears the title "Happiness," and in it Miss Taylor appears as a young girl working in a New York millinery establishment. This role possesses all the tenderness that gives such charm to the comedy of the actress, and one of the rumours of Broadway at the present time has it that Mr. Manners will build the playlet up into a three-act drama for his wife. The matinee closes with "Dupes," in which the chief part is that of a courtesan, who, having suddenly inherited a fortune, treats all her discarded admirers to a tirade against the ironies of life. In the last piece, Miss Taylor can hardly rise to the chief demands of character, while her capabilities do not find scope, but in the others she is inimitable. As a comedienne, she has something of pathos in her acting that adds zest to her fun. She never strains a point to get a laugh, but she does make everybody smile and love her. It is unusual for a comedienne to possess such wistful eyes, and Miss Taylor must thank nature for them, but her brains have been the biggest factor in her success in New York.

Miss Laurette Taylor is one of the very few young stars for whom it is possible to predict a notable career on the stage.

A Living Wage

A Simple Study in Economics, of Great Interest Both to Labour and Capital

By W. W. SWANSON

Department of Political and Economic Science, Queen's University

IN the midst of present discussion and argument as to who is responsible for the high cost of living, the interests of the workingman are apt to be overlooked. Although the workingmen comprise the bulk of the population of Canada they have had no adequate voice hitherto in the management of the affairs of the nation. And yet it is safe to say that the true prosperity of a people is to be gauged rather by the economic position of the average citizen than by the wealth and power of any particular class. At present a malevolent attempt is being made by certain demagogues to stir up strife between the manufacturers and the farmers of this country. In the long run, however much evil may be wrought by pursuing this policy, it will be abundantly proved that only by mutual sympathy and co-operation between the various classes of producers can true prosperity be achieved. It is evident to all those who take more than a superficial view of present conditions that the manufacturer, the merchant and the farmer must combine to secure permanent prosperity. But such an understanding must include also a proper consideration of the welfare of the working classes. Most Canadians, irrespective of party politics, are convinced that the industries of this nation should be protected; and the conviction is also growing that such protection should include a due consideration of the interests of the workingman. In brief, it is being forced home with cumulative force that the nation, if it is to achieve true progress and prosperity, must guarantee to the worker a living wage. However trite the problem of the high cost of living has become to some of us, it yet remains a matter of surpassing importance to the average worker. No more vital blow could be struck against Canada's national life than to permit the standard of living, to which Canadians have risen after years of intense effort and sacrifice, to permanently fall. We need not apologize, therefore, in once more raising the question of the cost of living in the form of a living wage.

A CLEAR understanding of what the standard of living is permits some appreciation of its significance. In the first place, unless the standard includes adequate food, clothing and shelter, health will inevitably suffer, and the race will degenerate physically. If, on the other hand, men obtain a proper satisfaction of these fundamental wants a foundation will be laid, not only for good

health, but for intellectual progress. Moreover, unless a decent standard of living can be maintained, the future of the nation will be menaced from another quarter. In an effort to maintain the customary status, parents will sacrifice families and will choose to have fewer children, for whom they can properly provide, rather than risk losing their position by rearing a larger family. To make up the deficiency in the native population we shall have to depend upon immigration from abroad. Here there is a real danger that the homogeneity of the race will be destroyed by the influx of people alien in birth, in outlook and in national ideals.

We must insist, too, upon a decent standard of wages being maintained, because in most cases fair wages have meant the gratification of the intellectual and artistic sense of the workers; have meant books and pictures; have meant a few extra rooms in the house, and more decent surroundings generally; have meant a few years' extra schooling for the children; have meant, finally, a general uplifting of the whole working class. It is idle to expect, for example, that the taste of the Canadian people for music, for literature and for art, can be improved if the workers are overwhelmed by the battle of providing for themselves and their families.

MUCH has been said of the extravagance of the working classes and of their wasteful methods of laying out their income. But it must not be forgotten that they buy everything at retail and are, therefore, greatly handicapped in securing full value for their money. Take, for example, the matter of rents. The following table shows that the rents charged to the poor are exorbitantly high in consideration both of the resources of the people and of the worth of the rented property. It is generally admitted that 10 per cent. is a fair return upon the full value of property for a year; yet the first house on the list yields its owner 24 per cent. The figures in this table were obtained by Dr. Forman, for the city of Washington, but they are not unrepresentative of cities of similar size in Canada and the United States:

Monthly Rents Actually Paid by Fifteen Families Compared with Rents Necessary to Secure a Ten Per Cent. Return on Full Value of Property.

Family No.	Market Value Property.	Rent Value.	Rent Paid.	Excess Paid.
No. 1	\$420	\$3.50	\$8.50	\$5.00
No. 2	330	2.75	5.00	2.25
No. 3	360	3.00	7.00	4.00
No. 4	390	3.25	5.00	1.75
No. 5	600	5.00	6.00	1.00
No. 6	1,284	10.70	12.50	1.80
No. 7	300	2.50	5.00	2.50
No. 8	357	2.98	4.00	1.02
No. 9	900	7.50	8.50	1.00
No. 10	600	5.00	7.30	2.30
No. 11	375	3.13	5.00	1.87
No. 12	900	7.50	7.50	none
No. 13	750	6.25	9.00	2.75
No. 14	1,500	12.50	14.00	1.50
No. 15	650	5.42	10.00	4.58

Another source of loss to the average workingman's family is found in the retail purchasing of supplies. The housewife knows what good bargains are, but oftentimes the money at hand prevents her from purchasing goods except in small quantities. She may buy at the grocery store a single bar of soap for five cents, knowing very well that she could get six bars for a quarter and thus save five cents; but if so much is spent for soap there will not be enough left for food. The same holds true in the buying of potatoes by the peck or by the bag. A can of vegetables may be bought for ten cents, and three cans for twenty-five cents. The housewife knows perfectly well that for every five cans purchased singly there is a clear loss of one can; and the same may be said of the whole grocery list, of butter, sugar, coffee, salt, etc. Taking all these facts into consideration, it is fair to conclude that the average workingman's family loses ten per cent. by reason of bad bargains in paying rent and meeting living expenses. If, therefore, we wish to form a just conception of what a man is earning we must subtract from his nominal earnings the one-tenth which he loses because of the conditions under which he lives. Add to this the upkeep, repair and depreciation of furniture. The working classes buy household goods, as a rule, on the instalment plan. A dollar or more may be lost in this way in buying a blanket, two or three dollars on a rug, and twenty