

creeps in. Though he plays four different parts in as many consecutive performances, not an idiosyncrasy of the one appears in his portrayal of the other. Here is the very embodiment of sunken identity. Mr. Irving's most significant attribute is his versatility, and it is a versatility that is brilliant in its comprehensiveness. All this implies fidelity in detail. Mr. Irving recognizes the importance of the etceteras. He steepens himself in faithfulness in the smallest things, well knowing that the atmosphere makes the play vivid. Yet he never overdoes it. In his company there are two or three Japanese. They are no more and no less Japanese in "Typhoon" than is Irving himself. Maeterlinck said of Martin Harvey, in "Pelleas and Melisande," that the Pelleas of Harvey was greater than the Pelleas of Pelleas himself. So is it with Irving. The Marquis of Irving, in "The Lily," is greater than the Marquis which Gaston Lenoux painted in his play. It is in players like Mr. Irving that the playwright finds the most finished portrait of the character he has created by his pen.

Second only to his faithfulness to detail is his restraint. There is always suggestion of something held back by supreme effort, which makes the audience long for more revelation. Half concealed is half revealed, and, ergo, half revealed is half con-

cealed. The dramatic moments in the plays in which Mr. Irving acts are made the more dramatic because he goes just far enough to make the straining point. His portrayal of intense passion is enthralling because he knows just where to stop. A shade more declamation, a soupcon more abandon, and the thing is overdone, the spell broken. The strangling of Helene by Takeramo is a triumph of dramatic art, because being melodramatic it yet avoids the theatrical. The nearest approach to this consummate realism on the American continent is Nazimova's "Bella Donna."

Mr. Irving does some daring things. He wrote the play, "The Unwritten Law," and one feature of it is several pauses of three or four minutes' duration, when no one but he is on the stage. For those three or four minutes may be seen the picture of a man struggling with himself. Sometimes there is no sound but the quick breathing which is the outward sign of a soul in torment. Irving, oblivious of the lights, the people, the time, lives for a few moments the agony of the character he is playing, and the awakening leaves him distraught and physically weak. I have seen him at these times stagger across the stage, because he could do nothing else but stagger across the stage.

There is yet another side to him. It is in his pro-

fession as actor that the public knows him best. But those who have heard him lecture, and those who have read his work—for he has written extensively—know that here is a scholar, a master of English. Perhaps this is the result of Marlborough and Cambridge. More likely it is because he is a genius as author as well as a prodigy as actor. Drama's gain is literature's loss. This is apparent in even so small a matter as a curtain speech. There is never a word that is superfluous. Always what he says is lit up by some fresh, bright phrase which proclaims him the true litterateur. He must have made some thousands of speeches, and delivered some hundreds of lectures, but always there is something different, always something new. His great theme is his father. His veneration for Sir Henry Irving is his grande passion. He can make the three words, "My dear father," contain a world of love, of admiration, of reverence. He is tremendously proud that he is the son of the greatest actor the world has ever known. If it were ever suggested that he would become a greater, those eyebrows would go up, and the sardonic smile play around the corners of his mouth as he thought that if ever he could be compared to him he would count the thought his dearest possession. And it will be conceded that if he keeps up the traditions of his august father he will do well.

From Winnipeg, some of the chief supporters of this movement are His Hon. the Lieutenant-Governor and Mrs. Cameron, Sir Hugh J. Macdonald, Sir William Whyte, Mr. Fred W. Heubach, Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Nanton, Mr. J. F. Ney.

The East is just as enthusiastic as the West, in supporting the Society. From New Brunswick are the Honorable J. D. Hazen, Senator M. H. Thorne, Mr. J. F. G. Knowlton, K.C., and Mr. John Thompson.

The smaller towns are fortunate in seeing such productions as the Society will bring to them. From Chatham, Ontario, to Amherst, Nova Scotia, they will go. Fort William and Brandon, Fernie and Kamloops, too, will be fortunate. The only difficulty which might arise is that of distances. When a company has to travel several hundred miles to appear in a town for only one night, the expense of such a "jump" can easily be imagined. Heretofore, the smaller cities of the West have been denied the pleasure of good plays, simply because of the great distances. It seems only natural that the companies should be reluctant to travel so far, without some financial guarantee.

The larger cities of the West appreciate this difficulty. Certainly they are very enthusiastic, and many have given their names in support of it. From Vancouver are the Right Honorable Sir Charles Tupper and Lady Tupper, Rev. the Lord Bishop of New Westminster and Mrs. Pencier, Rev. Eber Crummy, D.D., Mr. and Mrs. C. G. Henshaw, Mrs. Sillito and Mr. and Mrs. Campbell Sweeny, and many others.

The first representative to come over from England is a very typical representative, Martin Harvey, undoubtedly the country's best known romantic actor. He is at present appearing in Canadian cities, in plays of the seventeenth century and early eighteenth, "The Breed of the Treshams" and "The Only Way."

Ever since his landing in Halifax, on January 8th, Mr. Harvey has received excellent support. He is on his way to the Coast, and undoubtedly will be equally well received wherever he goes. For he has all the finesse of the English player, not spoiled by premature praise and flattery. He is of the poetic personality necessary for the interpretation of such roles as Sydney Carton. In his own land, he is known as the best Sydney Carton ever attempted on the stage.



The Guillotine Scene in "The Only Way."



One of those vivid crowd scenes of Martin Harvey; the Court Scene in "The Only Way."

British Plays for Canadian Audiences

By MARGARET BELL

CANADIAN entertainment has been so long in the clutches of the big New York syndicates and trusts, that Canada's tastes have had to be governed by the tastes of the syndicates. The discrimination of the Broadway offices begins and ends with the shows which make the greatest appeal to the unthinking public. In short, the artistic perception is influenced solely by financial profits.

Witness: The Winter Garden Shows, the Evelyn Thaw hotch potch, the Jardin de Danse, the Follies, the George M. Cohan vulgarities, and other typical Broadway classics. For many seasons, the motto of the Broadway managers has been, "We'll give them what they want," following up which wise resolution, they send out a series of shows—and such shows! Of course, there are a few theatrical producers in New York who are really artistic; such men as Winthrop Ames, George Tyler, and David Belasco. They have done much to send excellent productions throughout the country. But they are in the minority.



Martin Harvey as Sydney Carton in "The Only Way."

Of late, Canada has been fortunate in seeing English plays and productions. The late Edward Terry made an extensive tour through this country, and was followed by Lewis Waller, who, tiring of the dust of New York, shook it from him and confined most of his tour to Canada. Naturally, one of the best tangible proofs of a player's popularity is the number of dollars which are dropped into the box-office till. Edward Terry was much pleased with the results of his tour, and Lewis Waller reaped a handsome reward.

That set Canada thinking. It was quite evident that the Broadway trusts did not know what the public wanted. Some other plan must be adopted.

It was known that in England, there was an organization known as the Theatre Organization Society, founded several years ago, for the improvement of public entertainments. Several well-known names appeared on their committee list, such as Lord Beauchamp, the Bishop of Southwark, Professor Gilbert Murray, Lady Henry Somerset, Lady Coventry, and many more. Such success had followed their efforts that Carl F. Leyel decided to form a limited company, with a capital of ten thousand pounds, the aim of which would be to send first-class companies to Canada. William Holles, of Montreal, was consulted, and became the Canadian manager of the organization.

Canada received the news joyfully. For, in the past the English dramatists have transferred their acting rights to American managers, who have shown little regard for what Canadians consider their legitimate claims; with the result that Canada, with the exception of Montreal and Toronto, has starved for good plays.

This new organization, known as the British Canadian Theatre Organization Society, will endeavour to give every Canadian city the entertainment which is a compliment to the public's taste and discernment. The membership of the new Society entails no financial responsibility; only the moral obligation to support its object and patronize its plays. There is no subscription or entrance fee, simply the co-operation of all real lovers of the best in dramatic offerings, to secure such entertainments for Canada.

One may readily see that, apart from the educational value of such a movement, an Imperial spirit will be formed, which will unite the great mass of Canada's playgoers in spirit and sympathy with the home land. And eventually there will arise what the country has looked for and desired for so long, a National Theatre.