



A Scene from "The Bridal Path," Thompson Buchanan's New Comedy, Now Running at the 39th Street Theatre.

# New Plays of the Week

*And the Irish Players in a New Repertoire*

By J. E. WEBBER

THE Irish Players have once more hung their harp in Gotham's theatrical babel. Crook plays, strident melodramas and cacophonous chorus ladies make a babel indeed. But the harp hangs high and above the din the attentive ear may catch the strains of its weird and compelling music. And this attentive ear the public seems more than ever willing to yield. A year's reflection has but deepened first impressions and proved the richness of the Player's offerings by comparison.

A popular or even widespread interest in the literary drama is, of course, too much to ask—as yet. And we who confess to its enjoyment have still to admit an exclusiveness of taste that borders on the "queer." Fortunately interest in the Irish Players is not wholly dependent on exclusiveness of taste, else we should not now be enjoying a second visit. The breadth and variety of their work hold a universal appeal and will make profitable, we hope, many more visits to these spiritually alien shores. Their chart this season will also, no doubt, take them farther inland, and should Canada be included in the itinerary, I can think of no better investment, for whatever Mlle. Gaby may have left, than a programme or two of Irish plays. Montreal, as the port of debarkation, I notice, has already been touched.

The repertoire this year includes a number of



Doris Keane and A. E. Anson, in Edward Sheldon's New Play, "Romance."

new offerings. Among them, "The Magnanimous Lover," by St. John Ervine; "Patriots," by Lennox Robinson; "Maurice Harte," by T. C. Murray; "Damer's Gold," by Lady Gregory; "The Countess Cathleen," and "A Pot of Broth," by William Butler Yeats. "A Pot of Broth" shows the author in an entirely new mood. A tramp surprised in the home of a farmer, while he is looking for food, fails to wheedle a meal out of the farmer or his wife. Then his wits come to his rescue. He sings the farmer's wife a song to flatter her, and shows her a supposedly magic rock which he has picked up on the road. This rock and water, he declares, will make as fine a pot of broth as can be found in all Ireland. Distracting her attention he fills the pot with all the vegetables he can find in the house. Then feigning gratitude he takes the food he has cooked and goes his way, leaving only the rock in the pot. Arthur Sinclair, one of the most unctious comedians that ever set foot on a stage, plays the tramp.

"The Magnanimous Lover," of St. John Ervine, is based on the theme of "Hindle Wakes," that is, the social position of the woman who refuses to accept moral regeneration through marriage. The characters are a woman who has lived through ten years of disgrace, and her lover, who returns after this interval with an offer to marry her and take care of the child. He admits that he does not love her and is marrying her to save his own soul. Her reply is, "If I marry, it will be to save my own soul and not that of Henry Hinde."

TWO important ventures in American drama are "The Bridal Path," by Thompson Buchanan, and "Romance," by Edward Sheldon, author of "Salvation Nell," "The Brute," and "The High Road," produced this season by Mrs. Fiske.

"The Bridal Path" is a more or less whimsical comedy in eugenics. Natalie Marshall, an independent, high-spirited daughter of an old Long Island family, has, for reasons not usually discussed in polite circles, decided to take her matrimonial affairs into her own hands. Men have so long chosen the mothers of their children, she thinks, that it is high time for mothers to choose the fathers of theirs. Having run up her flag in the presence of an exasperated parent, she produces as an exemplary, if not perfect specimen of physical manhood, a sturdy engineer, humble in origin, but of clean habits and sufficiently promising career. An exposition of her radical ideals in the presence of the man of her choice soon clears the field of a dangerous rival (an artist, to whom children are a bourgeois sentiment) and by the second act she has led her ideal mate to the altar in triumph. The chance discovery of a former affair between the groom and her artist rival mars the nuptial night and threatens permanent disruption in the morning. A turn in the action, however, brings to light some of Natalie's pre-engagement plotting and schemings, and through the mouth of the sorely bated husband the whole subject of feminine morality is

boldly and humorously exposed. When the humbled Natalie finally sues for peace, the bared truth on both sides is found to offer a substantial foundation for future happiness. Ann Murdock plays the heroine and there is much magic in her art.

"Romance" is a play in three acts with prologue and epilogue. In the prologue it develops that the young nephew of Bishop Armstrong is engaged to marry an actress and a remonstrance with the boy serves to introduce the Bishop's own romance, which occupies the three acts of the play proper. As the Bishop begins to relate this love story of his early life the scene melts into a picture showing him forty years earlier as the young clergyman of St. Giles church. This second scene, which is the first act of the play, shows a reception hall in the home of one Cornelius Van Tuyl, one of the leading New York bankers of that day. An entertainment is in progress with Cavallini, the famous opera singer present as the leading artist of the occasion. The young clergyman meets the singer and falls in love with



Ann Murdock and Robert Warwick, in "The Bridal Path."