

PLAYS

Good, Better,
Worse

VIOLET HEMING.

Playing a leading role in Richard Walton Tully's play, "The Flame."



KATHLEEN CLIFFORD.

This former favourite of the vaudeville stage is now playing the leading feminine role in "A Pair of Queens."

Some in Canada, All in New York

to marry a deserving, hard-working young artist. Having salved his conscience, as far as money will do it, the unknown, fearing that the galling chains of matrimony will never suit his spirit of wanderlust, quietly skips out, leaving them all in doubt as to whether he was the real husband-father.

This play will be worth watching for when it comes to Canadian theatres.

MURIEL MARTIN HARVEY has name enough to be famous without appearing in a play of Canadian origin, and as leading lady with an actor so agreeably famous as Cyril Maude. "Jeff," which is a dramatization of Stephen Leacock's Sunshine Sketches, appeared in Toronto last week with Cyril Maude and Muriel Martin Harvey in the leading roles. It was well received by the critics and by the public, who would persist in seeing in Jeff some traces of the genial old Grumpy, given in Canada by Cyril Maude at the fag end of season before last.

IN the October number of The Theatre, Robert Mantell recounts his personal reminiscences of the stage. Mantell is good at the art of reminiscing. Most elderly actors are. He has been long enough wrestling with other critics to be ready for a little mild satire at his own expense. As a general thing, Mantell has never impressed anybody as a humorist on stage. In fact, he is rather the heaviest performer of all the heavyweights in ponderous tragedy. After the season of 1877 came to a close I



MURIEL MARTIN HARVEY.

Cyril Maude's new leading lady in "Jeff."

was engaged to open in Newcastle in pantomime, he says. Of this engagement the salient fact that stands forth was that Gerald Eyre, later a New York favourite, was Demon of the Cave, while I played the role of the Frog. It was Mr. Eyre's duty, of course, to kick the Frog about the stage. He used to ask, under his breath, "will you stand me a drink after the show." And knowing that unless I gave my promise his kicks were sure to take on an unpleasant tinge of realism, I used to croak, "Yep, yep, yep," and the best English notices of these earlier days of mine, came from the critic who discovered that I had so closely studied the habits and the accents of the bull-frog, that my hops about the stage, and my croaking "yep" were the most truthful reflection of bactrician naturalism ever seen on the local stage.

Among the visiting stars whom we supported was George Clarke, later a great favourite at Daly's Theatre in New York. Owing to the alcoholic disposition of the old men of the company, I was cast for the part of Father Doolan, to the "Con" of Mr. Clarke in "Con the Shaughran." Afterwards when I had come again to America and was playing Loris Ipanoff in "Fedora," with Fanny Davenport, at the Fourteenth Street Theatre, it was my custom to meet a group of bright spirits at the old Morton House each evening after the play. George Clarke, Bartley Campbell, Leander Richardson and I were settling the fate of the drama at such a gathering one night when the question of bad performances came up, and someone asked Mr. Clarke to name the very worst actor he had ever seen. Mr. Clarke mused a few minutes and then replied: "A fellow named Hudson—Bob Hudson—whom I ran across in Newcastle during a tour of the English provinces. He played Father Doolan in 'Con the Shaughran,' and for utter, hopeless crime his acting lay over anything I ever saw."

"The joke is on me," I said, "for I was that Bob Hudson."

IT is \$10,000 in forged money, and not a pearl necklace, that the police and the populace squabble and fall over each other about in "A Pair of Queens." There is—as it happens—no necklace in the play. But, by way of compensation, the piece itself, instead of being a properly built climax of laughable situations, is more like a string of beads. The series of amusing moments have been threaded together with a filament of plot so tenuous that I looked to see it snap at any moment. And even the mile-a-minute speed at which the thing is played couldn't make me forget that the beads on the string were all pretty much alike.

MR. POWERS, appearing at the Royal Alexandra last week, is said to be happy with Somebody's Luggage—which is not true if a six-foot man happens to fall heir to the luggage of a person five feet two, in which case the safety razor and the tooth-brush are about the only things interchangeable.

The play is a dramatization of a story by F. J. Randall, in which a drunken Englishman, on board a Channel steamer, has his travelling bag exchanged for that of an Australian who is coming to take possession of an estate. The Australian falls overboard, and the drunkard is delivered by a cabman at the house where the arrival of the other man is expected. The innocent intruder, having been thrown from the cab in a collision at the door, is supposed to be out of his head when he denies his identity as the heir and when he claims to be himself.

This is clearly an Empire play, and should be patronized everywhere in Canada by box parties from the Round Table. You see, it includes both an Englishman and an Australian, and happens to have been played in Canada. The playwright was very unkind, however, to depict the Englishman as a drunkard. But with so genial an inebriate as Mr. Powers creates on stage—the used-to-drinks in Ontario, Manitoba, etc., will be moved to envy. The play was produced at the 48th Street Theatre on August 28th.

PAGANINI, by Edward Knoblauch, performed in Canada last season, with George Arliss in the title role, was put on in New York at the Criterion last month. Gotham does not think this play is the equal of Milestones, My Lady's Dress, and Kismet, by the same author, and all seen in this country. A point both the playwright and the actor miss is the fact that Mischa Elman has a theory that he sometimes holds seances with Paganini.

CANADIAN playwrighting talent again scores at the Shubert in Gotham in Lazarus, by Harry O'Higgins and Harriet Ford. This play was produced in Chicago last season and was well received in a city where Dives is more important than Lazarus.

Mr. Lazarus is a rich miner, who returns unknown to his deserted wife and daughter, and, like the usual god in the machine, straightens out their various troubles. He rids the wife of a blood-sucking husband (she had married again, having thought No. 1 to have been killed in a railroad accident) and sufficiently endows his child with the means necessary