

Last Plays of the Season

Good Offerings Mark Close of Theatrical Year

By J. E. WEBBER

Our New York Correspondent

ALL signs point to a speedy dissolution of the present theatrical season. The usual spring impetus has not been forthcoming, and only in isolated cases is there any show of effort to revive waning interest. That the season has been unusually disastrous to theatrical enterprise is a notorious fact, and in this fact no doubt lies a sufficient explanation of the present non-activity. Managers, if they have any new plays available, prefer to hold them over for another season rather than risk the hoodoo of this.

The best reason for "The Rainbow" is Mr. Henry Miller. The author is A. E. Thomas, heretofore known for that excellent comedy, "Her Husband's

entirety, has helped to revive the drooping spirits of the season somewhat. The piece is based on a French farce, which, under another adaptation, Mr. Charles Hawtrey presented about four years ago in London. So much of the French conscience, however, had been preserved in the translation that Londoners felt themselves scandalized and the piece was withdrawn. The present adaptation is by Mr. Charles Brookfield, who by virtue of his office of play reader for the English censor, was curiously enough called upon by Londoners to defend its morals. The piece consequently comes with a somewhat piquant reputation, although to our no longer virginal minds the criticism would seem to be more or less squeamish.

The story is this. Dear old Charlie has had at least two intrigues with respectable married sirens, before the opening of the play when we find him on the point of marrying an adorable young bud. The three acts of capably built up farce that follow are devoted to Charlie's amusing efforts to guard the knowledge of his past, not only from the young wife and her parents, but from the two husbands of the women for whom his past became purpled. Many amusing situations arise, and a fine sense of nonsense in the exposition of the characters helps along the fun. Mr. Hawtrey, last seen here in "A Message from Mars," is delightfully and unctuously humorous in the role of Charlie.

A Worthy Production.

A recent production of unqualified interest and charm was that of "Monsieur Beaucaire," with Lewis Waller in the romantic role. This old romantic comedy had a conspicuous place in the repertoire of Richard Mansfield, and its revival under such capable auspices, has proved that the piece has lost none of its old-time charm. It also showed Mr. Waller in a most engaging role, in which his finished acting methods and charms of person were seen to excellent advantage. With Mr. Waller at Daly's in "Monsieur Beaucaire," Mr. Arliss across the street in "Disraeli," and Mr. Hawtrey farther up the street in his farce, the English stage is pretty well represented in the dramatic attractions of Broadway, at this moment.

The Little Theatre, the private enterprise of Mr. Winthrop Ames, is at least fulfilling its professed mission of catering to the higher things of the

drama. The theatre is unique in size—seating only 299 persons—unique in the fact that its object is not commercial, and, so far, is unique in the character of its offerings. "The Pigeon," by John Galsworthy, has been the regular evening bill since the



CHARLES HAWTREY,
In "Dear Old Charlie."

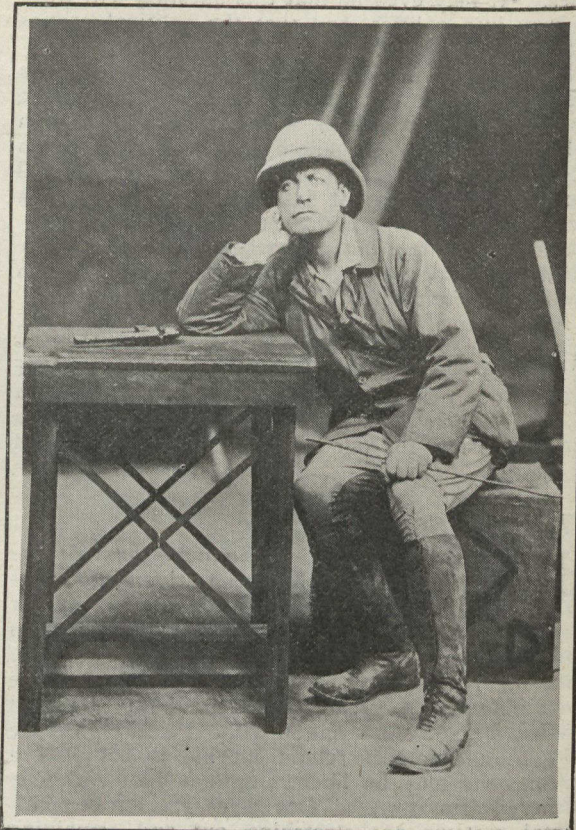
Wife," produced a year ago by Mr. Miller, and "What the Doctor Ordered," an unsuccessful farce of the present season. "The Rainbow" is a sentimental play of considerable sweetness, in which the daughter of an estranged husband and wife plays a leading part in their reconciliation. Following the separation from his wife the father (played by Mr. Miller) has fallen in with a fast Long Island set. When his daughter returns to him after an absence of several years, a sincere bond of affection is disclosed between them. Under the gentle influence of her presence in the home, the father tries to disentangle himself from these old friends and is succeeding, when the wife, fearful for her daughter's safety, takes her away. The separation imposes keen suffering on both daughter and father, and when the rather over-scrupulous wife realizes this, and the further fact that the father is rather a decent sort of man after all, she relents, and a reconciliation is ultimately effected. Mr. Miller, Laura Hope Crews, and Miss Ruth Chatterton are the leading members in the cast.

"The Right to be Happy" is the title of a new play by Kellet Chambers dealing with the fortunes and misfortunes of an impecunious Knickerbocker family. To cover a young brother's defalcations and save the family from the disgrace of exposure, the elder daughter accepts a position as "social sleuth" for a trust magnate whose wicked machinations are only limited by the author's imagination. Her dramatic mission is to discover the secret for the manufacture of artificial rubber—the inventor of the secret process supplying the social and spiritual antithesis to the brutal trust head. The situation develops a conflict between love and self-interest in which love—although somewhat scarred and unvirginal—eventually triumphs. Edmund Breese, Dorothy Donnelly and Leslie Faber are the contending trio.

"Dear Old Charlie," imported from London in its



HENRY MILLER AND RUTH CHATTERTON,
In "The Rainbow."



LEWIS WALLER.
In "The Explorer."

opening a month ago, while three matinees a week were for a time devoted to Charles Rann Kennedy's "The Terrible Meek," and "The Palace of Han," adapted by the same author from Chinese sources.

"The Terrible Meek," like the same author's "The Servant in the House," is an effort to interpret Christian dogma in terms of modern psychology. The present is a one act play, and to the daring of the theme has been added a daring and startling innovation, by which the entire action takes place on a darkened stage. The voices of a woman weeping and two soldiers are heard discussing an execution that has just taken place. The dialogue soon exposes the symbolism even without the culminating scene, the three crosses boldly outlined against the dawn. Miss Edith Wynne Matthison plays the leading roles in both her husband's plays.

Amid far more frugal surroundings, the waning season has brought us a production of Strindberg's "The Father"—possibly the most important offering from a literary and dramatic standpoint since the Irish Players in "The Playboy of the Western World." Mr. Warner Oland, very well known on the American stage, and a fellow-countryman of the author, was responsible for both the production and the translation, and appeared in the title role. The piece, as readers of Strindberg know, deals with the highly contemporary problem of sex strife. It is a grim story, terrific in power and terrible in its analysis of human motives and passion. The wife of the play, failing to assert her right over the education of her daughter, conceives the fiendish idea of creating a doubt in the father's mind as to his part in the child's parentage, and drives him insane.

Coming down to happier if less worthy things—the field of musical comedy—the season has been enlivened somewhat by a revival of "Forty-five Minutes from Broadway," with George Cohan himself in the role of Kid Burns; "The Wall Street Girl," with Blanche Ring in a delightful role; "The Rose Maid," a very tuneful operatta; and "Two Little Brides." In addition to this more or less familiar brand of comic opera, we have had revived for us on a pretentious scale those old favourites of other days, "Patience" and "Robin Hood."

A Stageland Surprise

CHARLES FROHMAN had an idea that "The Butterfly on the Wheel" would not make good on Broadway, so he dressed Marie Doro, the star, up in the toggery of Oliver Twist, and sold the rights of the Butterfly to Lewis Waller. Waller brought it to New York, where it started going at a \$10,000 per week gait, with better prospects in view. Now Frohman is a disappointed manager, and Waller bids fair to be a soon-to-be-successful producer.