

A Glance at the New Plays

A Group Which Includes "Sumurun," "Lydia Gilmore," and "A Slice of Life"

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AFTER "The Garden of Allah"—"Kismet." After "Kismet"—"Sumurun." After "Sumurun"—what? What new excitement can the feverish activity of the theatrical manager snatch from the Orient for our entertainment? What inaccessible harem of delight still awaits the invading horn of his touring car? What further glamour can Occidental imagination cast over the sordid realities of the "land of mystery and silence?" Prof. Rheinhardt's wordless play, with the company that produced it in Germany, has arrived and become the theatrical novelty of the New York season. So far, however, it has not produced any of the sensations which report credited to Berlin and London. But then, New York is different—different both in the quality and degree of its imagination. The piquancy of "Sumurun" after all is novelty. It tells its story, and tells it most graphically, in pantomime, visualizing all the human emotions—love, hate, jealousy, passion, murder—without other aid than the gesture and facial expression of the actor. The story is liberally sprinkled with humour, and the whole thing goes to a musical accompaniment which serves to carry the action, and is tuneful, melodious and descriptive in turn. The pictorial effect is of flat drawing, somewhat exaggerated in line and colouring.

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WITH the exception of "Sumurun," the new group of plays shows a decided slump in quality. Few possess any artistic interest at all, and only one or two are likely to survive the ordeal of their metropolitan presentation.

First in importance is "Lydia Gilmore," a new play which Henry Arthur Jones has written for Miss Anglin, and which was no doubt devised to furnish this accomplished actress with opportunities similar to those of which she availed herself so effectively in "Mrs. Dane's Defence." The action takes place at Chelmsbury, an old assize town in the Midlands of England. The emotional opportunities may be judged from a situation in which Lydia Gilmore, the wife of a prominent physician, is suddenly confronted with the knowledge that her husband has been carrying on an intrigue with a neighbour's wife, and has just killed the woman's husband in a scuffle that followed his discovery. The murder shocks the community to its foundation and circumstances point strongly to the guilt of Dr. Gilmore. His only chance of escape is an alibi, which his wife is called upon to establish. The trial scene, which brings about the dramatic climax of the play, unfortunately has been forestalled by a similar much better trial scene in "A Butterfly on the Wheel." By means of two such realistic pictures American audiences ought to become tolerably familiar with the procedure of an English assize court. Miss Anglin's personal success is unmistakable, and her magnificent work will no doubt bring to the play a large measure of popular success in spite of several handicaps.

The dramatized "White Magic" marks the second unhappy attempt within a month to win stage laurels for the late David Graham Phillips. The departed novelist no doubt had his admirers—in and out of girl's boarding schools—and the circumstances of his death invited curiosity in his work, altogether



Margaret Anglin in her new play "Lydia Gilmore," by Henry Arthur Jones. Photo by Genthe.

outside of "literary" circles. Between the two it was expected to find a public sufficiently large to support the stage versions we have witnessed. Such expectations have not been realized. "The Grain of Dust" has already gone its way. And in spite of the charm of acting and person which Gertrude Elliot brought to bear on the part of Beatrice Richmond, the "White Magic" manuscript will soon be neatly tied up with baby blue ribbon and laid away.

"The Trail of the Lonesome Pine" is an equally unfortunate attempt to dramatize a popular seller. John Fox, Jr., is the novelist, and the dramatizing has been done by Eugene Walter, author of "The Easiest Way," a play that, in point of construction at least, is one of the best America has produced. The scenes of the new play are laid in the Cumberland Mountains, and the story deals with the arrival of the two young engineers from the East, its effect on the life of the mountains and the fortunes of June, a wild, primitive, imaginative child of nature. Charlotte Walker, the beautiful wife of the author, plays the part of June with considerable sincerity.

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"A SLICE OF LIFE," which Ethel Barrymore has produced in connection with a revival of "Cousin Kate," is one of those delightful little Barrie satires turning lightly on the problem play.

To tell the story would be to deprive you of the surprise on which so much of the enjoyment depends.

Of vastly different texture, although highly amusing and diverting in its way, is a new farce by Augustin MacHugh, under the title of "Officer 666." The story concerns a young millionaire who returns from a European trip to find that a burglar has taken possession of his home, assumed his name, become engaged to a young society girl, and is rapidly disposing of the young millionaire's paintings. The young man borrows the identity of a policeman, along with his uniform and succeeds in getting rid of the burglar, recovering his name and prosperity and winning the hand of the girl who had given her hand to the thief. The humorous possibilities will not be overlooked, and in spite of the farce hoodoo upon us, "Officer 666" promises to be as successful as "The Million."

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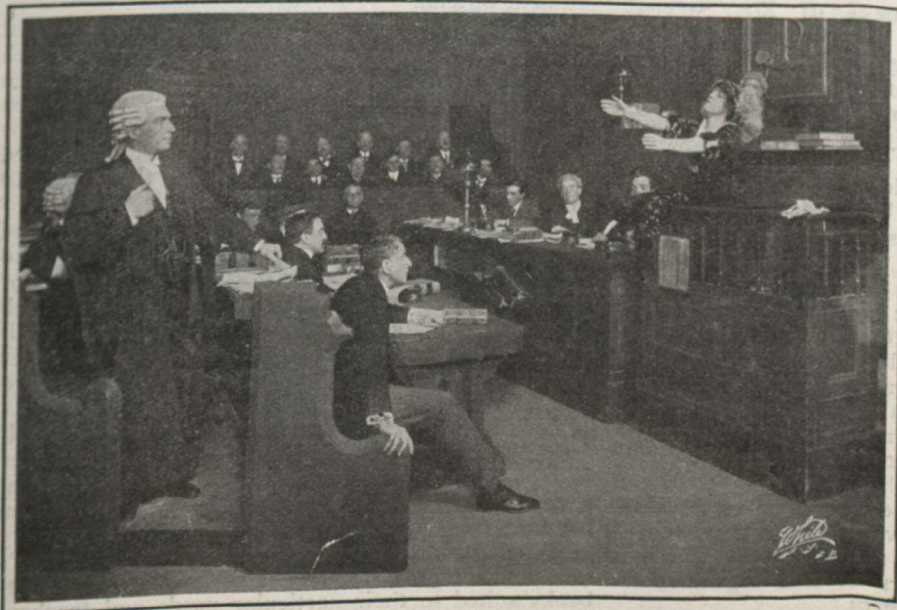
THE loneliness of humorists this season is further illustrated in the reunion of Weber & Fields after eight years of separation. A characteristic programme, along the lines of the old Music Hall shows, has been provided for the occasion. "Hokey-Pokey," the first part of the entertainment, may be described as a pot pourri of Weber-Field reminiscences. The second revives the popular custom of burlesquing popular plays of the day. The successful little Scotch play, "Buntz Pulls the Strings," is the first to be laid on the altar of mirth under the title of "Buntz Bulls and Strings." An important cast gives further importance to the event.

To Tour Canada

PLANS for the coming theatrical season in Canada are being made by Mr. A. G. Delamater, the well known producer of plays, which should be of interest to every patron of the theatre throughout the Dominion. The project is to present prominent English stars supported by companies made up entirely of English actors in all available London successes, their tours to include every city and town in Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Mr. Delamater bases his opinion that Canada desires the English company and the English play in preference to New York successes upon years of careful study of the theatre problem in Canada.

A Scottish Player's Story

THE Scottish players, a company of whom are touring Canada, have some very new and original stories about their own countrymen. Here is one told by Ethelbert Hales, who plays Tammas Bigger in "Buntz Pulls the Strings": An old Glasgow Scotchman was moving from one house to another in the same street. He was Scotch of very Scotch, and carried all his things in a wheelbarrow instead of hiring an express man. The last load was a tall ungainly grandfather's clock, as stiff and awkward to move as an old man with muscular rheumatism. So the economical Scot had to abandon the barrow and carry the clock over his shoulders. Staggering along he met a friendly countryman who had had a wee drap too much. "Tak ma advice," said the mellow one, "an' buy a watch."



The famous trial scene in "A Butterfly on the Wheel." Madge Titheradge in the witness box.



Scene from "Sumurun," the wordless play that has been the theatrical sensation of two continents.