

SOME RECENT PLAYS

In Which Dramatic Seriousness Is Enlivened with Farce

By J. E. WEBBER

Our New York Correspondent.

OUR dramatic feast continues. On the heels of the Scotch Players have come the famous Irish Players of the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, and the Drama Players, an organization born of the movement begun in Chicago for a higher standard of dramatic taste. Mr. Donald Robertson, the director of the native organization, modestly disclaims any uplift motives, however, and declares the sole ambition of the Drama Players to be the presentation of a repertoire of the better class of plays, which, under prevailing theatrical conditions, are liable to neglect. They have made a very commendable start, and in their New York visit have given a highly creditable performance of Moliere's classic, "The Learned Ladies," which no student of the drama should miss, and Ibsen's poetic but very much neglected drama, "The Lady from the Sea."

The fame of the Irish Players, sponsored by William Butler Yeats and Lady Gregory, long ago reached America. The Players are partly the product and partly the cause of the new literary movement that has been sweeping over Ireland. With headquarters at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin—given to them for a time rent free through the generosity of Miss Horneman, and now their own property—they have for several years been doing the work of a National Theatre for Ireland. They have not



IRENE FENWICK

Playing the leading role in "The Million."

the delusion that they had retained the youth and good looks that were theirs before their loss of sight. The application of the miracle working waters of a certain holy well serves to cure them of their affliction, but with sight comes disillusionment, and when blindness returns soon after, the foundations of a life-long happiness have been swept away.

"The Rising of the Moon" deals with the escape of a political refugee.

"The Workhouse Ward" presents two old cronies, acquainted since youth and the most amiable of enemies as they cross verbal swords from a pair of pauper beds. A woman offers one a comfortable home, but he refuses to be parted from his life-long enemy, and as she leaves in astonishment, they resume their pleasantly acrimonious conversation.

"The Price," a new drama by George Broadhurst, tells the story of a penniless girl, Ethel Toscani, in

whom an artist already married finds an artistic soul mate and who dies on discovering that she does not love him. She afterwards marries a doctor, whereupon the wife of the dead artist seeks revenge by attempting to destroy the happiness of her home. She shows the husband evidence of the artist's relations with the girl, and the latter's efforts to retain her husband's love in face of the evidence of her past furnishes some strongly emotional scenes. Helen Ware plays the leading role.

Mme. Simone brought her present New York engagement to a close in a brilliant performance of Henri Bernstein's "The Whirlwind." This is a story of French life in which a social parvenu sacrifices his daughter to gain social advancement. She finds consolation in a lover whose gambling proclivities lead him into embezzlement. To save him from disgrace, the woman throws herself on the mercy of a money lender, then on the wealthy father to whom she confesses the intrigue. Failing in both, she meets the terms of a jilted and conscienceless sweetheart of former days and with the needed assistance arrives at the rooms of her lover only to find him a suicide.

Amid all this sobriety, three farces have made their appearance, one, entitled "The Million," scoring a phenomenal success. The piece is adapted from the French of Messrs. Ber and Guillemand



HELEN WARE

In George Broadhurst's play "The Price."



INA CLAIRE

In a charming new musical comedy, "The Quaker Girl."

and relates the story of an impecunious sculptor, who, in the last stages of comic financial disaster, is suddenly informed that a Brazilian lottery ticket which he is holding has won first prize. On top of the ensuing hilarity, however, the horrible discovery is made that the ticket has been carried off in the pocket of an old blouse, appropriated by a burglar to assist his disguise. The hot pursuit of the missing blouse leads to all sorts of entanglements and no end of fun.

"The Cave Man," by Gelett Burgess, is written to prove that our democratic institutions offer equal social opportunity to all—perhaps. The story is told in the same author's "Lady Mechante." This Lady Mechante is of the English peerage and is on a visit to New York, of whose social ways she becomes highly critical. She declares she can throw her visiting card out of a window and make a social lion out of the man who returns it. The card is returned by Smagg, a coal heaver, whom Lady Mechante proceeds to groom and coach for presentation in society as a social reformer. He becomes the social lion of the hour and his triumph going to his head he lays siege to the heart of the English lady herself. He of course encounters a shock that brings him to his senses and he returns humbled to his coal heaving.

"Uncle Sam," in which that unctious comedian, Tom Wise, in starring jointly with John Barrymore, deals with the adventures of a party of Americans, motoring through Europe. Mr. Wise plays the part of Uncle Sam to a nephew who is constantly getting into scrapes.

"The Quaker Girl," with Ina Claire in the title role, "The Three Romeos," and "The Wife Hunters," with Emma Carus, are the latest additions to our comic opera entertainment.



THOMAS WISE and JOHN BARRYMORE

In a scene from a new farce, "Uncle Sam."

only trained native actors with great success, but the encouragement they have given native-born playwrights has produced, at least, one genius, the late J. M. Synge, whose plays now enjoy international celebrity. They presented two programmes in a recent week, the first consisting of a three-act comedy, "The Well of the Saints," by J. M. Synge, and a comedy in one act by Lady Gregory, "The Workhouse Ward"; the second contained a tragedy in two acts, by T. C. Murray, entitled, "Birthright"; George Bernard Shaw's, "The Showing Up of Blanco Posnet," and a one-act play by Lady Gregory, "The Rising of the Moon." The Shaw play is the only exception to the rule of Irish plays, either in authorship, locality or theme. The reason for the exception is that Mr. Shaw had written "John Bull's Other Island" for the Players, which they were unable to present at the time.

When the English censor later refused to permit the performance of Blanco Posnet, the Irish Players in gratitude promptly offered Mr. Shaw the use of the Abbey Theatre. The first performance was an occasion of great excitement.

"That evening," writes Lady Gregory, "for the first time we hesitated. . . . But we decided that we had given our word and that at all risks we must keep it or we would never be trusted again."

There was an immense audience. At the end there was a tremendous burst of cheering and the cause won. There was a large crowd outside the theatre. . . . When the applause inside was heard the crowd took up the cheering and it went through the street. The plucky theatre that had successfully resisted mob censorship had now successfully defied the Lord Lieutenant."

"The Well of the Saints" tells the story of a devoted blind couple who had gone through life under