

Evening Ledger

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PHILADELPHIA, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1915.

Play is nature's life insurance.

Some Figures That Do Not Lie

ADVOCATES of Government Invention of the field of private enterprise are watching the development of the Panama Canal business in the hope it will demonstrate that the Government can operate a profitable enterprise.

It is important, therefore, in order to prevent any misuse of the reports of the receipts, that whenever those reports are published they should be set over against the amount which must be earned before the canal can meet its fixed charges.

But it is only a small part of what must be taken in, to cover the annual cost of the canal. If it is to be conducted as a business enterprise, according to the best estimates obtainable the interest charge is \$11,000,000.

The Prosperity Procession Is on the Way

THE dollars which the Government permitted the railroads to collect in increased freight rates have already begun to circulate, to the general benefit of all industries dependent on their prosperity.

Eastern Ohio is experiencing the same sensation. Not only the steel mills, but the automobile factories, are getting ready to fill orders that will keep them busy for many months.

"Cloture" Is An Instrument of Oppression

MR. BRYAN favors the cloture rule in the Senate because it will remove "the last obstacle in the way of popular government at the national capitol."

The purpose of the cloture rule is not to make it easy for the popular will to find expression, but to break down the opposition of those patriotic Senators in both parties who have been fighting to prevent the enactment into law of a proposition for which there is no popular demand.

Bombastes Furioso

One cannot escape the conclusion that President Wilson and Secretary Bryan, in their communication with the Mexican revolutionaries and rebel leaders, have accustomed themselves to a tone that is not suitable for communications with the German Emperor—Count Ernest Reventlow, in the Tages Zeitung.

It is unfortunate that in Germany and England, too, clichés of flingoes still find places for their foolish utterances, in spite of the frightful havoc which war is now causing.

There is nowhere else for it to flow.

So, too, since capital seeks safety, it will turn more and more to the nation that is peculiarly immune to the vicissitudes of war. It is worth while to any belligerent to have the friendship of the United States now; it will be worth even more to have that friendship when the war is over.

To Be Against the Taylor Plan Is To Be Against Rapid Transit

THE special election to authorize the transit loan must be held at the earliest possible date in April. There must be no waste of time that will give Councils an excuse to adjourn for the summer before the appropriation bills have been passed.

Washington must stand firm in defense of neutral rights; firm against Germany and England, France and Russia, against any and all nations that may attempt to dispute our status. So it will do. We have the cards stacked, as it were, by virtue of our economic advantages, and none can afford deliberately to antagonize us.

Laws of Humanity Cannot Be Repealed

GERMANY'S naval predicament is so pressing that the Kaiser can be expected to insist as long as possible upon the right of his submarines to attack all non-German shipping in the war area which he has marked out.

Building Up An Audience

Sometimes they are humorous hints, even though they deal with discouragements and record perseverance through indifference and ill fortune.

How did the theatre live these 19 years?

Endowment, that necessity of any enlightened theatre that is to create itself in the midst of commercial competition.

As they say in Germany, February 18 is "Der Tag."

Cuba finds it can coin money in Philadelphia. It may be that Philadelphia can coin money in Cuba.

There seems to be an epidemic of masked robbers throughout the country; and not all of them are in politics.

Government in this country has become nothing more than grandfather and father-in-law, with son-in-law thrown in.

Americans are entitled to the protection of their flag, but that protection can best be extended when the flag flies from an American ship.

The "powerful interest" back of the demand for a wheat embargo is self-preservation, a law which this and all other generations have sincerely endeavored to enforce.

The unemployment crisis has proved that the bond between those who do not have to work and those who want to work and can't is closer than any one had supposed.

About the worst thing that can happen to an army is to drive the Russians back into the heart of their own territory.

John G. Johnson laid down a good rule when he said that every man has the right to hold whatever views please him, but that circumstances of his employment sometimes make it unwise for him to express them if he would do full justice to his employers.

On the theory that a pleased customer is the best advertisement, the Publicity Committee of the Democratic National Committee is about to begin an advertising campaign to persuade the voters that they are so well pleased with Mr. Wilson that they will want to use him again.

When a French soldier, whom the Germans had taken prisoner, wrote to the Kaiser for permission to go back to France to see his dying mother and promised to return to his father before March 1st, the Kaiser at once let the man go. He has just returned to Germany from his mother's funeral.

One of the keenest regrets felt over the New Theatre, even before its failure, was the lack of American plays in its repertory.

It could find only a few that met the popular commercial standards in technique set by European dramas.

And, like Lennox Robinson, all these playwrights have gone on from seeing their work in actual production to the writing of better and better plays.

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RIVAL RECIPES FOR NATIONAL THEATRE

English, American and Irish Proposals—Is the Secret of Creating a National Drama to Be Found in Lady Gregory's Irish Players?

By KENNETH MACGOWAN

Of the making of national theatres there is no end—this season.

Granville Barker's excellent success with his season at Wallack's in New York has brought out very broad hints from some of the founders of the late "New Theatre" that they will be backing him in a similar venture next year.

F. C. Whitney, a manager whose principal experience has been in exceptionally good productions of operetta, is out with an elaborate announcement of what he calls a National Theatre. It is to be founded, financially, on the subscriptions of 5000 people to one \$2 seat each for a season of 30 weeks.

To all appearances Mr. Whitney proposes simply a good stock company and acting school giving "standard" pieces; there seems nothing venturesome or in the broadest sense creative about the proposition.

His list of possible plays includes almost every actable play of every language and some that very certainly are not. The list of American dramas, for instance, includes such silly old standbys as "The White Slave," from which that famous line, "Rags are royal raiment if worn for virtue's sake," is reputed to have come.

There seems little promise in a venture which begins by announcing: "We have no intention of exploiting realistic plays," and then qualifies that absurd statement by a proviso quite as naive: "We shall not discard any modern play on account of its realism."

Lastly, there is Lady Gregory, the gray-haired, fresh-souled director of the Irish Players. This year the actors of her Abbey Theatre are playing to their own public in Dublin, while their guide and friend is touring the United States talking on "A National Theatre for America."

Three things have made the Abbey Theatre and its plays. Three things make such a theatre in America. They are tireless, persevering, provident endeavor, a sufficient endowment to carry the venture through years of struggle to the goal of popular support, and an unswerving devotion to the ideal of a new, intellectually creative, native drama.

This is not Lady Gregory's deliberate prescription. She has only dropped the hints from which we may derive it.

Building Up An Audience

Sometimes they are humorous hints, even though they deal with discouragements and record perseverance through indifference and ill fortune.

Building up an audience is a slow business when there is anything unusual in the methods or the work. \* \* \* Often I have gone out by the stage door when the curtain was up, and come around into the auditorium by the front hall, hoping that in the dimness I might pass for a new arrival and so encourage the few scattered people in the stalls.

Very often in the green room I have quoted the homely proverb, "Grip is a good dog, but Holdfast a better!" \* \* \* And Mr. Yeats, in his turn, wrote, to encourage me: "Any fool can fight a winning battle, but it needs character to fight a losing one and that should inspire us; which reminds me that I dreamed the other night that I was being hanged, but was the life and soul of the party."

How did the theatre live these 19 years? Endowment, that necessity of any enlightened theatre that is to create itself in the midst of commercial competition.

We asked a guarantee fund of £300 to make the experiment, which we hoped to carry out during three years.

I enclose a guarantee paper filled up for such a sum as I can afford (or perhaps more), to lose, but I hope there will be no loss for anybody in the matter, while there will certainly be some gain to Ireland!

Perhaps it was the patent magnitude of the odds against them that made them see the necessity for endowment. For they went into the venture with the most modest of hopes built upon the slightest of foundations.

I took Yeats to the office. We sat there through that wet afternoon, and though I had never been at all interested in theatre, our talk turned on plays. Mr. Martyn had written two, "The Heather Field" and "Maevie." \* \* \* I said it was a pity we had no Irish theatre where such plays could be given. Mr. Yeats said that had always been his dream of his, but he had of late thought it an impossible one, for it could not at first pay its way.

We went on talking about it, and things seemed to grow possible as we talked, and before the end of the afternoon we had made our plan. We said we would collect money, or rather ask to have a certain sum of money guaranteed. We would then take a Dublin theatre and give a performance of Mr. Martyn's "Heather Field" and one of Mr. Yeats' own plays, "The Countess Cathleen." I offered the first guarantee of £25.

Even in the modesty of that beginning they had the germ of the idea which was to make a great theatre—the deliberate limitation to a national Irish drama, a drama that must be created.

That limitation of the theatre's work to plays about Ireland or by Irishmen was the secret of its artistic success, as perseverance and endowment were the key to its ultimate financial triumph. And a similar limitation of an American theatre to the plays and playwrights of its own country, or better still of its own locality, may be as much a secret of success for us.

Such a policy sooner or later brings out an audience that finds a peculiar interest in its triumph; and the test of the need for an enlightened theatre, as well as its ultimate justification, must lie in the native drama that it will call forth.

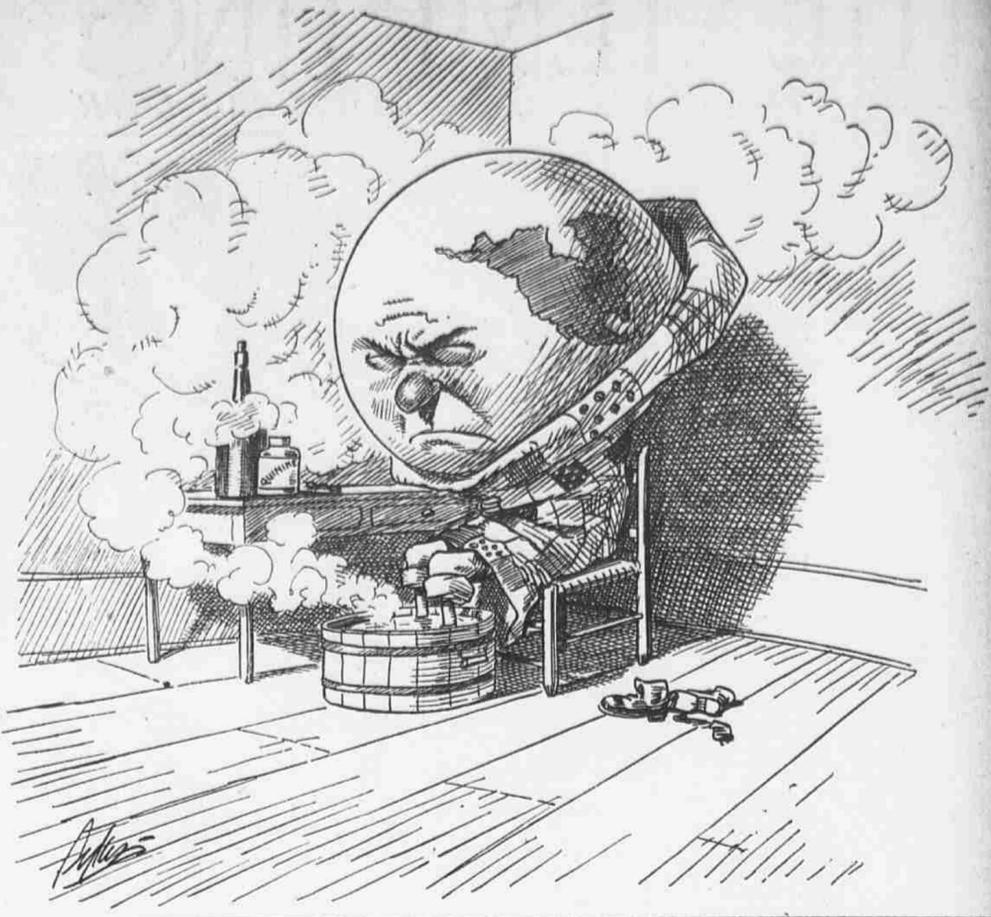
There can be no doubt of the Abbey Theatre's success with this policy. When Lady Gregory and Mr. Yeats resolved on an Irish playhouse they saw three plays to be acted, just three. When Lady Gregory finished the writing of "Our Irish Theatre" in the spring of 1913, 101 Irish plays of various lengths had been written for and produced by the Abbey Theatre. All of them came because there was a theatre ready to act them.

And, like Lennox Robinson, all these playwrights have gone on from seeing their work in actual production to the writing of better and better plays.

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BLAME THE WEATHER MAN FOR THIS



A BATTLE OF THE WILDERNESS

Hand-to-Hand Fighting in a Polish Jungle — Remarkable Description of Scenes During and After a Conflict Fiercer Than Any in Our Civil War.

By STANLEY WASHBURN

(By Special Arrangement with the Review of Reviews.)

AS FAR as I know there is nothing in the history of war, with the possible exception of our own Battle of the Wilderness, that can touch this event, and the Virginia campaign in comparison as to losses, duration and men engaged was a mere skirmish.

Yet a few weeks afterward, other than the mere fact of it having taken place and having been won by the Russians, nothing much is known about it.

I am not going to try to describe the military or strategic aspects of this desperate conflict, because if one begins on the historical relations of battles in this war there is absolutely no ending.

I shall, however, sketch briefly the nature of the work that the Russian soldiers did here; for in no battle of the whole war, on any front, has the fibre, determination and courage of troops been put more thoroughly to the test than in this very action.

The German program, as is now well known, contemplated taking both Warsaw and Ivangorod and the holding for the winter of the line between the two formed by the Vistula. The Russians took the offensive from Ivangorod, crossed the river, and after hideous fighting fairly drove Austrians and Germans from positions of great strength around the quaint little Polish town of Kosienice.

From this town for perhaps ten miles west, and I know not how far north and south, there is a belt of forest of fir and spruce. I say forest, but perhaps jungle is a better term; for it is so dense with trees and underbrush that one can hardly see 50 feet away.

Near Kosienice the Russian infantry, attacking in flank and from front, fairly wrested the enemy's position and drove him back into this jungle. The front was itself bristling with guns. I counted in not over a mile 42 gun positions.

The taking of this line was in itself a test of the mettle of the Russian peasant soldier. Once in the wood the Russian artillery was limited in its effect upon the enemy, and in any event the few roads through the forest and the absence of open places made its use almost impossible.

The enemy retired a little way into this wilderness and fortified. The Russians simply sent their troops in after them.

The Battle of Ivangorod

The fight was now over a front of perhaps 20 kilometers; there was no strategy. It was all very simple. In this belt were Germans and Austrians. They were to be driven out if it took a month. Then began the carnage. Day after day the Russians fed troops in on their side of the wood. These entered, were seen for a few minutes, then disappeared in the labyrinth of trees and were lost. Companies, battalions, regiments and even brigades were absolutely cut off from all communication.

None knew what was going on anywhere but a few feet in front. All knew that the only thing required of them was to keep advancing. And they did. Foot by foot, day by day, fighting hand to hand, taking and retaking position after position. For all of this 10 kilometers of forest I venture to say there is hardly an acre without its trenches, rifle-pits, and now graves. Here one sees where a dozen men had a little fort all their own and fought furiously with the enemy a few feet away in a similar position.

Day after day it went on and day after day troops were fed into the Russian side of the wood, and day after day the intermittent crack of rifle fire and the roar of artillery hurling shells into the wood could be heard for miles. But the artillery played no very great part, for the density of the forest made it impossible to get an effective range. Yet the fire was kept up and the forest for miles looks as though a hurricane had swept through. Trees staggering from their shattered trunks and limbs hanging everywhere show where the shrapnel have been bursting.

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try west of the wood the hotter was the contest waged; for each man in his own mind must have known how matters would fare with the retreat once the open country without shelter should be reached.

The last two kilometers of the woody belt are something incredible to behold; there seems hardly an acre that is not sown like the scene of a paper chase—only here with bloody bandages and bits of uniform. Still there was no more use for the artillery, but the rifle and the bayonet played the leading role. Men fighting hand to hand with clubbed muskets and bayonets contested each tree and ditch. But ever did the Russians systematically, patiently, steadily feed in the troops at their side of the wood.

The end was, of course, inevitable. The troops of the dual alliance could not, I suppose, fill their losses and the Russians could. Their army was under way, and as one sees them these days one feels that they would have taken that belt of wood if the entire peasant population of the Czar had been necessary to feed to the maw of that ghastly monster of carnage in the forest. But at last came the day when the dirty, grimy, bloody soldiers of the Czar pushed their antagonists out of the far side of the belt of woodland—and what a scene there must have been in this lovely bit of open country with the quaint little village of Augustow at the crossroads! Once out in the open the hungry guns of the Russians, so long yapping ineffectively without knowing what their shells were doing, had their chance. Down every road through the forest came the six-horse teams with the guns jumping and jingling behind, with their accompanying caissons heavy with death-charged shrapnel, and the moment the enemy were in the clear these batteries, eight guns to a unit, were unlimbered on the fringe of the wood and pouring out their death and destruction on the wretched enemy, now retreating hastily across the open. And the place where the Russians first turned loose on the retreat is a place to remember. Dead horses, bits of men, blue uniforms, shattered transport, overturned gun carriages, bones, broken skulls and grizzly bits of humanity strewn every acre of the ground.

The Battle is Over

A Russian officer who seemed to be in authority on this gruesome spot volunteered the information that already they had buried at Kosienice, in the wood and on this open spot, 10,000 dead, and as far as I could make out the job was a long way from completed when I was on the field. Those that had fallen in the open and along the road had been decently interred, as the forests of crosses for 10 miles along that bloody way clearly indicated; but back in the woods themselves were hundreds and hundreds of bodies that lay as they had fallen. Sixteen thousand dead means at least 70,000 casualties all told, or 25,000 on a side if losses were equally distributed. And this figured on the basis of the 14,000 dead already buried, without allowing for the numbers of the fallen that still lie about in the woods. And yet here is a battle the name of which is, I dare say, hardly more than known in the United States, yet the losses on both sides amount to more than the entire army that Meade commanded at the Battle of Gettysburg.

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The March of Progress

From the New York Sun.

The town of Lyon, Mass., has a wireless fire alarm system. May it never call the horseless engines to anything but a fireless fire.

SCENT OF ROSES

One night I traveled over mountainous west and feared the menace of Almighty Power. His terrors in the lightning were ablaze. His crashing thunder made the summit cower.

When o'er my path, from out the dark, there blew, Making my heart leap up in clear delight, The thrilling scent of roses cooled with dew, The beauty, Lord, is stronger than thy might.

—William Allen Wood, in the Standard