"THE BIG CHANCE," AT ADELPHI; DUMAS COMEDY AT GARRICK; MUSICAL COMEDY AT FORREST

Both Sides of the Curtain

THREE new productions next week will relieve the comparative monotony which has been the portion of playgoing Philadelphia during the past fortnight, with only two new attractions between all seven of the dramatic houses in that time. Of these, the last, "Not With My Money," which opened at the Broad last Monday, has been materially accelerated during the course of the week, while the earlier of the two, "The Blue Pearl," abruptly terminates its season here tonight.

THE genial reception accorded "Not With My Money" demonstrates conclusively the congenital goodness of a large proportion of our theatregoers for sentimentality in the realm of the theatre. True, this quality is not so palpable in this farce by Edward Clark as it was in the triumphantly successful "Pollyanna." But a play which deals with the reformation of a veteran "crook" is essentially sentimental, however boisterous its humor or melodramatic its brief bits of "gunplay" may be. Human nature is always gratified at the spectacle of virtue triumphant. It is probable that the generality of those who have seen "Not With My Money" left the theatre far better pleased with the cosmic scheme of things than if they had witnessed a performance of "Ghosts" or "Hedda Gabler." There is nothing disturbing about Mr. Clark's optimistic footlight piece.

NOBODY but the proverbially credulous would expect farce to hold the dramatic mirror up to life with literal faithfulness. But even though its reflection be broadened with humor, the picture mirrored should bear some semblance to possibility. It is the venial fault of "Not With My Money" that its central situation is preposterous, and this fact cannot be blinked, however joyously we might be disposed to regard it as mere frothy farce. Only in "Never-Never Land" is it likely or possible that a totally unsophisticated girl would be left a fortune of seven millions to be given to charity without some suitable guardian to protect and guide her. Yet this is the pivotal point of Mr. Clark's farce, which audiences are gravely asked to accept as plausible.

THE able acting of William Morris, as the "confidence man," intent upon robbing the heiress, works wonders in minimizing the ridiculousness of the plot, but even his suave personality and gracious enunciation fail to relieve the dialogue of its self-conscious and crude attempt to be "smart." Lucile Watson, who also did much to make the piece "go," has now gone herself. She left the company on Wednesday, to be near her husband, who recently joined the Canadian military forces. An abler successor in her role than Jessie Busley could scarcely be found, however, and the slight uncertainty naturally apparent at Miss Busley's first performance on Wednesday has now entirely vanished.

AN ILLUMINATING commentary upon the wary attitude of the public toward plays which smack of the war is to be found in the eleventh-hour announcement of "The Big Chance" as next week's play bill at the Adelphi. There is something at once amusing and pathetic in the press agent's earnest assurance that the piece is "not a war play," although it does deal with the regenerating influence of the war in several lives. The truth is that the public wants precious little of war plays which recapitulate the old, old questions in the threadbare manner, and with the familiar characters. E. Phillips Oppenheim may continue to reap a golden harvest from his successive crops of German spies between book covers. But the public is just about "fed up" with them, as the British would say, on the stage. The recent failure in New York of such plays as "Why Worry" and "Allegiance" constitutes sufficient proof of this, while a year or so ago even so good a melodrama as "The White Feather" was received here with that deadly mildness which Philadelphia can manifest on occasion, simply because it was a "spy play." Had it been revamped as a "crook play" it doubtless would have scored a genuine success. Yet we are certain to be afflicted with many more war plays more or less atrocious and apoplectic in character before the obvious lesson will be learned effectually.

IT WILL be a pleasure to turn next week for brief respite from the mediocrity of several plays seen here during the last few weeks to the polished, if highly artificial comedy of Dumas *pere*, in "A Marriage of Convenience." Written almost three-quarters of a century ago, it has weathered the shifting winds of public taste and whim, although its technique is diametrically opposed to the thought and methods of the modern school of naturalism in play writing. Various English versions of the play have appeared, but that by Sydney Grundy, first introduced at the Haymarket Theatre, London, on June 3, 1897, is generally considered the best. On that occasion the Comte de Candale was played by William Terriss, while the Comtesse de Candale was played by Winifred Emery, the roles played in the present production by Henry Miller and Ruth Chatterton. John Drew appeared in the play in the fall of the same year at the Empire Theatre in New York, on which occasion Isabel Irving played the Comtesse. Philadelphia saw Lewis Waller and Madge Titheradge in it about four years ago at the Opera House. The forthcoming presentation of the comedy at the Garrick will afford an opportunity for comparison.

"A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE" does not show the evidences of haste and carelessness which marred so many of the works of the elder Dumas. But haste and carelessness were frequently inevitable concomitants of his high rate of production. It is doubtful if the actual number of his plays and stories is known, but it is said to be between 1100 and 1200. Indeed, it has been freely charged that Dumas *pere* was the originator of the method practiced by present-day successful authors of attaching their famous names to the output of a staff of "hack" writers, and there are various anecdotes to support this theory. One of the best known figures Dumas *pere* coming down to breakfast and greeting Dumas *fils* with the question, "Good morning, have you read my new story?" Whereupon Dumas *fils* replied, "No, have you?"

THE proprietors of motion-picture theatres here do not share the concern felt by some managers of dramatic houses about the results of the new tax. In fact, it is their belief that conditions will help, rather than hurt, their business. For it is pointed out that if women cannot count upon men to take them to the theater, they will generally turn in greater numbers to the "movies" near at hand as the most available means of wartime relaxation. "Tax it as it may," as George Monroe put it to us the other week, and despite alarm felt over the proposal to double the ten per cent tax on admissions, Philadelphia theatres are enjoying prosperity quite sufficient to justify the two theatres that have been opened within the past year. If enough good attractions were available, it is probable that the city could easily support still more theatres with its great new industrial population, and under conditions that make adequate means of relaxation from the rigors of wartime an urgent necessity.

CHINESE FILM STAR

Lady Tsen Mei Quaintly Reveals Antipathy for Germans

Lady Tsen Mei, who will be seen in the Hollywood Film Company's first production, "Shu the Freedom of the East," at the Stanley next week, has proved somewhat of a "dark horse" among the film players who have come from the Orient. Although she is a lady of rank in her own country, she has not hesitated to appear in motion pictures, and she is essentially unaffected.

Her display of these qualities created something of a sensation in Washington when she was there before the Lafayette Escadrille. A few months ago she and a party of her aides accompanied the performance of a special film for the benefit of the Allied Bazaar, which was held in the Lafayette Hotel. One of the features of the bazaar was a dance by Lady Tsen Mei, during which she displayed a fine form and a skill in the dance which delighted the audience. Lady Tsen Mei is a graduate of the best schools of her native country, and is a skilled equestrienne.

Lady Tsen Mei, while in this country, has taken the name of the new queen of the film screen, Mae Marsh, who will be her sponsor in her first appearance before the film public. She will appear in her native costume, and will be introduced to the audience by her sponsor, who will also introduce her to the audience in a few words.

"But in her first picture she gave a splendid indication of the acting that was to follow. The role revealed a beautiful little girl, with a vivable face, who moves swiftly and naturally from one expression to another, and who is absolutely devoid of self-consciousness. She has a nimble mind and a wonderful faculty for doing before the cameras the right thing at the right time. I consider her one of the big finds of the pictures."

JAPANESE SHOW GIRL

Tokio Maiden Out-shines Many in "Chu Chin Chow"

From faraway Japan, the land of the orange-blossoms and the lotus bud, has come an unusual show girl, whose remarkable type of beauty is at present attracting attention in "Chu Chin Chow" at the Shubert. She adopts the infinite name of Tokio Wa-ka-ba-ya-shi-ka-ya-ma-ka-ya-ka-ka-ka