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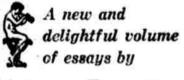
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ENGLISH DRAMA, PAST AND PRESENT

MODERN AMERICAN PLAYS AND WHERE THEY FAIL

In an Effort to Be Realistic the Playwrights Overlook That Genuine Realism Not Found in Mere Actualities

By FELIX E. SCHELLING

from time to time and, over a late sup-per, decide by vote what we should resentatives of the accepted American ilke and what we should advertise by our disapproval. Professor George P. Baker, of Harvard, did something quite drama, so far as such a thing as drama can be fostered, by precept and collegiate guidance, and he has long since justified his experiment in the turning out of several playwrights whose work is alike a credit to dramatic craftsmanship and a practical and accepted success upon the stage. Under these circumstances Professor Baker is peculiarly the man to collect, for the general reader, a group of American plays which shall stand as representative of our drama in its present state of development. This drama, so far as such a thing as drama its present state of development. This be has done in a volume with the title of "Modern American Plays," prefixing to the text an all too brief introduction daily speech; because their personages on the plays selected and the reasons for their selection.

SUCCESS on the stage is Professor Baker's first criterion of selection, and his second is variety. The opening play of the volume is "As a Man Thinks," by Augustus Thomas, a com-edy of contemporary life, which touches on prevalent feminism, lightly but sureis on the lip of the current feminist. say it, not all of the world's a stage. In its essence this play is didactic, "a

and realizes at least one character of a holding personality. And Mr. Mas-scy's "Plots and Playwrights" is satire of plays in a play, a time-honored species, old when Dryden was ridiculed in "The Rehearsal" and older still by the time that Sheridan plagiarized that sa

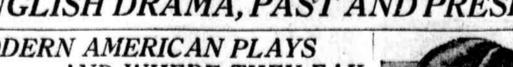
drama is, by the most honored of all flats pussyfooting repetition and was a graduate of the first Platts figures, the mirror of human nature, however we leave that mirror at times to tarnish in neglect, however we may to tarnish in neglect, however we may

Jewish Children

Vivid and interesting pictures of a Jewish boy's life in Russia are to be found in "Jewish Children," by a wellknown writer, Shalom Rabinovitz, under the pen name of Aleichem, whose works have caused him to be called the Yiddish Dickens. It is a series of nineteen steries told by a boy of his experiences at home, at school and in his sports with his companions. A thread of romance runs through it, for it begins with an account of his affection for a tirl. Busic, who has come to live in his home, and ends with an intimation that cirl. Busic, who has come to live in his home, and ends with an intimation that they were married. From his love for her he is constantly reminded of verses in the "Song of Songs." The only reference to Palestine is in a prayer that the Mesalah should come, "and we would go back to the Land of Israel, where we should be happy." Of the religions festivals, and especially of the Passayr, there are constant reminders saver, there are constant reminders FEWISH CHILDREN. From the Yiddish that on Attechem. Authorized vertion of Hannah Berman. New York: Alfred A. Knorf. 12.

YOUTH storms up to VICTORY over the battlements which life erects against it. In this story of the upper and nether sides of life, of the struggle of the old against the new, of the love that came to Willie Cameron and Lily Cardew, Mrs. Rinehart has created a brilliant romance of the new spirit of America.

A POOR WISE MAN



A MERICAN drama!" and we hold up our hands in protest and begin to talk of commercialism and theatrical trusts. Or we start down the deally lane of parallels and glow in comparative praises of the drama in France, in Germany, in Russia, anywhere. Or we inaugurate movements, following the English afar off in pageantry or civic plays. Or, if we do none of these things, at least we start a society proviling qualified tasters who visit the theatres from time to time and, over a late sup-

ilke and what we should advertise by our disapproval. Professor George P. Baker, of Harvard, did something quite different from all this, it is now a goodly number of years ago. He started his "47 Workshop" in a quiet and industrious endeavor to foster our the stage, both English and foreign. the stage, both English and foreign. Prof. Baker is right when he says that "drama is a collaborative art," one in are so obviously like everybody or any body whom you or I are likely to meet because they do not employ it habitually and his second is variety. The opening in discussions with Margery, those who resent soliloquy and the aside—like Mr. Shaw—because they do not happen in edy of contemporary life, which touches on prevalent feminism, lightly but surely, with not quite the glib solution which the world and, even if Shakespeare did the world and, even if Shakespeare did

time that Sheridan plagiarized that sa tire in his "Critic."

PLAYMAKING in the English language has been variously presided over in different times. To avoid rising out of our topic into the region of the divinities, Dryden, greatest of English satirists, ablest of general poets of his time, theorist and translator, was once the foremost playwright. At a subsequent time that post was occupied by Nicholas Rowe, poet laureate, who "followed Shakespeare," but a long way off; at still another by equally forgotten set still another by equally forgotten. Sheridan Knowles, whose most veritable dramatic asset was his borrowed surname. Later times bring us triumvirates and oligarchs in the annais of the drama and we become bewildered among the Barries and the Shaws, the Pineros and the Joneses of times which are now, or were not very long ago.

In America we may be a little less of the strict sense of the only bit of pathos in them all—and that ironical interest. Of especial note is the fact that the book is really authoritative without being in the strict sense of the word "official." Captain Thomas' manuscript has been read and passed by several commanding officers of the call—which occurs in the extravaganza. "Plays and Playwrights." With all our chatter about the freedom of the cerning special units or arms of the cerning special units or arms of the are now, or were not very long ago. "Plays and Playwrights." With all In America we may be a little less our chatter about the freedom of the In America we may be a little less distraught, howsoever there are precious few of us who have not written, are writing or planning to write at the very least a farce or a pageant. But it would seem that it is not long since that our master playwright was the late Clyde Fitch, and who shall deny that we are still under the benign and versatile sway of Mr. Belasco? Now, of such an art we must at least confess such an art we must at least confess there is more real drama in the rooms that it has had its ups and downs, and of a New York lodging house than in that the amplitude of its vibrations, to all the theatres of the Great White that it has had its ups and downs, and that the amplitude of its vibrations, to put it in another way, has made various prises in the world whereof some have heen high and others not so high. Nor can we expect it to be otherwise. The drama is, by the most honored of all figures, the mirror of human nature, honover we leave that mirror at times.

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