AUGUSTUS THOMAS, ONCE RAILROAD LABORER, IS NOW DICTATOR OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE

From the Baggage Room of a Little Missouri Road to the Highest Single Power in Stage World, Such Is the Rise of the Author of Sixty-three Plays: Was Omea an Uch Plays; Was Once an Usher.

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the highest single power in theatredom!

A long, hard road, through countless experiences, disheartening efeats, stimulating victories-to the position of arbiter of all matters of policy pertaining to the production of plays in this country.

Augustus Thomas, railroad man, reporter, editor, cartoonist, stage manager, producer, playwright, on August 1, in New York, opened the mice of executive chairman of the Producing Managers' Association.

As executive chairman, the new position created for him, he is the guiding head of the largest, in fact the only, important organization of legitimate playmakers in this country.

His new position in the theatre is comparable to that of Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis in baseball and Will H. Hays in the movies, and the power he wields is the cumulative influence of fifty-three of the most influential producing managers of the land.

Mr. Thomas' commanding ability and success as a playwright, his where I do my writing. That bench familiarity with all departments of over in the corner is where I tinker with the theatre, literary, artistic, inter-pretive, promotive and managerial, Mr. Themesel, where I paint." his sympathy and personal acquaint- a large, airy room. The room is the

ance with all members of the pro- size of an ordinary house itself. Along tession, make him the only logical one wall is a large fireplace, with two choice for the position which carries lounges stretching toward it. On the with it, it is rumored, the largest opposite wall hangs a fiftcen-foot seaemolument given to a single person scape by Lionel Walden.

"We'll come back here later." he by the producing interests. "No, I can't say how much it is," said and made for the door. "Commays Mr. Thomas, "but I am quite wolfhound, which pattered up to his atisfied with it." legs. "This is Lux, short for Luxem-

Mr. Thomas, during his long ca- bourg. My son brought him from overreer, has written sixty-three plays: seas. A German police dog. He ac-It so happens, one for each year that companies me whenever I go out for he has lived. His first play he fin- my exercise."

shed when he was sixteen years Mr. Thomas led the way along the old. And he has just completed a back of his house. He pointed to litand he has just completed a play in collaboration with John Taintor Foote, adapted from Foote's story, "The Song of the Dragon."
"I began to write plays." Mr.

directed theatreward." He was educated in the public schools of St. Louis, was a page in the Forty-first Congress, and up to the period of his twenty-second year was in the freight department of various railroads. "About that time Charles Pope built

Mr. Thomas was asked when he words.
I had other duties. I looked after the first play that was produced.
"That one was produced." replied.
"That any one should suppose he would.
Was the best sort of experience."
Mr. Thomas believes he couldn't possibly write a play that wasn't to be produced.
"I 's very signified wonder that any one should want to write a play if it is very signified.
Was the best sort of the Dickson Sketch Colo.
"I 's very signified wonder that a good play.
FROM a checker of freight to the dictator of the stage!
From the baggageroom of a little Missouri railroad to the office of the highest single power in theatredom!
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Augustus Thomas' after-dinner diversion is his book and pipe

S. I am ready to write, and I write un-til 11 o'clock. I find that I can do a good day's work in that time. There are some years when I do not finish a play. And there are other years when I have written two."

Recently a young woman asked the playwright which was the play he him-self liked best. The dramatist hesitated a moment, and said, with feigned hesi-

"That isn't a new joke." he laughed. "It was Oscar Wilde's originally, Some one asked him to make a number of corrections in 'Lady Windemere's Fan,' and he demanded, 'Who am I that I should triffe with a classic?" By this time Mr. There is the integration of the managers is read that the time a play is made to be played. It is possible to overwrite a played that when any one of the managers is read, but which are extraordinary things that I should triffe with a classie?" By this time Mr. Thomas had sep-arated a portion of the tree trunk into three fire logs about three and a half feet in length. The perspiration poured from him. He whistled for his dog ""He'll show up at the house." he commented. "And now we'll go back and I'll take a shower and chat for a

Emotional Reaction Do I Look Like One?"

Is Criterion of Play

a moment, and said, with feigned hesi-tancy, "Of course, it is a difficult mat-ter to decide. I have written so many * * " "That isn't a new joke." he laughed. "It was Oscar Wilde's originally. Some one asked him to makes originally.

"I began to write plays." Mr. ing porches, entered through the win-dow. My wife, incredulous at first, at all, if they simply would play,

Home Rambling House Surrounded by Pines

He was sitting on the wide porch of low branches which his country home, two miles out of struck at him as he went East Hampton, Long Island, and in teisurely by.

he depth of the pine woods. His home "Look out for that is a green frame, rambling building, branch ! The smaller verlooking the Georgiac River. One trees make my exercise undred feet from the house, the house rather difficult. They cannot be seen for the luxuriant growth eatch the ax when I pine trees around it. Mr. Thomas is swing it. I have to cut large man, with a round, joytal face. them down when they're " his gray head slouched a worn felt in the way."



Julia Marlowe, whose theatrical tour Thomas managed in the

late eighties

derby. He wore a rough blue shirt, at the tops of the trees.

users, and heavy brown shoes.

"This is just the time of the day

"You might as well see something

teres rolled to the elbows, worn gruy Cuts Down Dead Pines

Thomas said the other day. "because dow. My wire, increations at first, at all, if they shiply with play makes the average theatregoer say, it never occurred to me that one for myself I had to build one for her "By cracky, that's some play." then it is a good play, though the academician-He picked his way along a narrow is a good play, though the academician-how!.

plays are not plays

footpath under the thick pine trees, produced at a conductor's benefit, with warding off from his face the short. Miss Mitten Willett, later a superb



morning stroll

in St. Louis. I have lost the nanu-in St. Louis. I have lost the nanu-script." He paused in his hewing of wood. "There, look at that! Wood-chop-ping makes me perspire, and it brings

ping makes me perspire, and it brings me exercise and kindling, in the bar-gain. Soon Ull be wringing wet and juite ready for a shower. My probat, a rross between a sombrero and Mr. Thomas rustled about tooking lem, and he pointed to his girth,

one of elimination. And I always welcome the perspiration. I have been here in this home for twenty-two years. I built it myself. Every year I cut down about fifteen of these trees on this

For Wood in Fireplace then I am accustomed to take my his hand on the trank of a foot-thick up? "Ab ! here's a dead one !" He placed ten-acre plot I own. Just count that

Trees Since the Year 1900

Recise. Do you mind coming along tith me? Just leave your coat here." The author of "The Witching Hour" tepped into the corner and grabbed The author of the corner and grabbed The successful to the corner and grabbed to take may be the source of the provide the p

oud-story theatres, not very cotafortable, and as like as not over a dry-

and the old Lyceum were second-story theatres, too. But what is most sigtheatres, too. diffeant about this company is that it brought to the attention of young Charley Frohman "Editha's Burglar, which he bought for Eddy Sothern. It netted me a very small royalty- Look

Tou might as well see something
Tou might as well see someth With a crunching, crackling sound,

able, and as like as not over a dry-goods store, or a meat market or e hardware shop. "No, second-story theatres were quite the thing in those days, even later. Old Daly's of New York was a second-story theatre, the Princess a second-story theatre, the Princess a second-story theatre, the Princess ter. He was tried, but acquitted. Ex-

and I'll take a shower and chat for a sides, and was decidedly the influence while on the porch.

ine dramatist, ten minutes after he the cons to sign a peace agreement for communities, charges the type of the modern play. It must not be much modern play. It must not be much for transers, a white shift, white shoes and black tie. He made a rather imposing figure, standing there with the minutes after he interests of other elements. Consequently, the play must be paired down to its merest cosmillate. posing figure, standing there with the wind from over the Georgiae playing about him. He pointed out his sail-boat, in which he goes to the sea each morning after his work is done, and bathes. "When I found myself in New York there were a number of interesting names in my chosen field. Bronson Howard, author of "Saratoga" was then the standard there with which managers will estimate with which managers in the theatre with which managers were an unself in New York there were a number of interesting names in my chosen field. Bronson

Howard, author of 'Saratoga' was then viewents involved." the biggest of them all; Dien Boucheault Mr. Thomas prom

the big names."

Movies and Speakies Not at Loggerheads, He Says

written in the United States "Playwrights are still going to write faction, bent over and took off hat. He drew his fingers nerves, his forchend. "Well, what have we here?" he asked lightly. And, on an off chance, the casual observer might have said. "You have there, sir, what was once 100 pounds or more of surplus fat in liquidation." "Playwrights are still going to write senario writers are going to write nesting of the screen and for a great

Thomas observed. "Once the tree is gale,

Ethel Barrymore, for whom Mr. Thomas wrote "The Nightingale," the first "screen story"

written in the United States

Ruler of Ameri-

can stage at work

at his desk

With the close of Miss Marlowe's association, which sums up the need our Mr. Thomas became business manager for Washington Irving Bishop, a official co-ordinator, the statement said phenomenal thought-reader.

"Mr. Thomas' place in the opinion consent, and within an hour after the of both the public and the profession, his familiarity with all departments of

In 'S9 the playwriting business manager extended "Editha's Burglar." originally a one-act play, into four acts. It was sent on the road, with Maurice Barrymore starring. Then Mr. Thomas becau to write alars in a sent manufacture of the important interests in Thomas becau to write alars in a sent to write alars in a sent to the important interests in-the sent to write alars in a sent to write alars in the sent to the important interests in-the sent to the sent to the important interests in-the sent to the important interests in-the sent to the sent to the important interests in-the sent to the s

duly in any one direction, with the in- "And if one thing happens that way, direct effect of standardizing the thea- there are always others to follow," said

ily improving in quality.

"The rest of the work is easy." Mr. directly for the screen and for a great are not in any way comparable with Thomas capable fands, homas observed. "Once the tree is gale," and written for Ethel Barrymore in the world is so sensitive to the art. Dr. Quinn, of Penn.

"The members of the P M.

of heaven Where now it burns '

"And Horatia answers :

the theatre, literary, artistic, in-terpretive, promotive and managerial, we have an electrician, a pointer, a his personal acquaintance with its fore-mist ian to get the effects for us. He Extended One-Act Play, 'Editha's' Burglar,' Into Four with their hopes and ambitions, all in-

olved." write his, would not be a good pluy duction of this pluy. On a few hours, it is believed that the appointment of From one point of view it would be a notice it was necessary to secure a man to fill the part of the leading character.

"He had the fire of genius, but I of every one concerned.

The very fact that theatres today are "the on the porch." which prevailed upon both the pros and in cities, and surrounded by suburban The dramatist, ten minutes after he the cons to sign a peace agreement for communities, charges the type of the

And with the complex stage accom-Mr. Thomas promises that he is not of failure to co-ordinate. The moon the biggest of them and the boundary. Mr. Thomas promises that no is not of failure to cosordinate. The moon way just quitting and Civde Fitch, going to faster any particular kind of doesn't come up at the right time, the Mille boys of today; William Gillett his ability to be careful not to lean un-

ire. He believes that plays are stead-ily improving in quality. "Comparatively, America has more the stage and slowly walled neross it."

Mr. Thomas does not believe that the movies and the speakles are at logger-heads. They can't hart each other, he believes. "Playwrights are still going to write

"The rest of the work is easy. Mr. There has been considerable speculation of the bear of work. I raise the ax and specific gravity helps me being it down the very stars themselves assist the hewer of work. I raise the ax and specific gravity helps me being it down the work will be the producing Mannus harply. Till european of this fellow up in small pieces. "There has heen considerable speculation in the work is assentiated to the theorem." There was 1? Oh, res. Just after to all." he said. "I sum or the theorem of the pay 1 did some newspaper work. I was a reporter on the St. Lonis Post Dispatch some time of the rate. There was a negrote the theorem of the form of the be a car. I don't mind folks to be a car. I don't mind folks to be different. But I am really not she be different. But I am really not be different. But I am really not the be different But I am really not be an car, because there are so for a stime, then a Pineto Sinkespeare tails for a stime, then a Pineto Sinkespeare to the work is an average and lines fam for a time, then a Pineto Sinkespeare tails does not stim the work is an average and lines fam for a time, then a Pineto Sinkespeare to the said does not stim the work is an average and lines fam for a stime, then a Pineto Sinkespeare tails does not stim the work is a statement was made and litere the suited further the theorem of the possible to any particular. "The work will be more in the state and litere the theorem of the possible to any particular." The work will be more in the suite and the theorem of the possible to any particular. "The work will be more in the suite and the theory of the average and lines the advantage of the molern invention." This are isonative, the his first sig-mething and litere the theory of the average and theory of the possible to any particular. The work is a great play, the the that phay. In the has an average of the molern invention. Support the possible to any particular of the possible to any particular the theory the advantage of the molern invention

"Barbara Frictchie," and "When Just after Mr Thomas acceptance the advantage of the modern inventions Theatre, New Jore, has as its theme repertoire." In Mizzoura, by Sam H. Harris, president of the dations. If the scene was at night 1810, president in un bis significant, the need dations of the scene was at night 1810, president in significant. When you same star that's west-ward from the pole
Had made his course to illume that part
1865, partured in no hiss significant, though amusing, tanner the customs of that State. Arizonal produced first June 12, 1859, at Hamlin's Grand Opera House. Chicago, is a better play than any of the one- preceding it, and Mr Thomas may be said to have endied suddenly. I hurried to Philadel-phia to get his wife, who lived there. In my absence a physician held an au-topsy and took out Bishop's brain. And because he did it without any one's "Strain and the strain and an ungligative treatment of literary listery, or The Earl of Pawtucket, "Do you see what I mean? Shakes- 1965, dever treatments of modern life." Perhaps his best-known plays are "The Witching Hour," which

four." which he wrote "As a Man Thinks."

write his, would not be a good play duction of this play. On a few hours in the play. Mr. Thomas stepped in and played the role to the satisfaction

out

