

THE PAST THEATRICAL SEASON

And the Six Best Performances

by Unstarred Actors

What lessons do we draw from the past theatrical season?

In the first place, the success of *The Wanderer* proves that the day of the small and intimate production is over and that what the public wants is the large spectacle. In the second place, the success of *Oh, Boy!*--(I hate to refer to it, as I am one of the trio who perpetrated it; but, honestly, we're simply turning them away in droves, and Rockefeller has to touch Morgan for a bit if he wants to buy a ticket from the speculators)--proves that the day of the large spectacle is over and that what the public wants is the small and intimate production.

Then, the capacity business done by *The Thirteenth Chair* shows clearly that what the proletariat demands nowadays, is the plotty piece and that the sun of the bright dialogue comedy has set; while the capacity business done by *A Successful Calamity* shows clearly that the number of the plotty piece is up.

You will all feel better and more able to enjoy yourselves now that a trained critical mind has put you right on this subtle point.

No review of a theatrical season would be complete without a tabulated list--or even an untabulated one--of the six best performances by unstarred actors during the past season.

The present past season--that is to say, the past season which at present is the last season--has been peculiarly rich in hot efforts by all sorts of performers. My own choice would be: 1. Anna Wheaton, in Oh, Boy! 2. Marie Carroll, in the piece at the Princess Theatre. 3. Edna May Oliver, in Comstock and Elliott's new musical comedy. 4. Tom Powers, in the show on the south side of 39th Street. 5. Hal Forde, in the successor to Very Good, Eddie. 6. Stephen Maley, in Oh, Boy!

You would hardly credit the agony it gives me to allude, even in passing, to the above musical *mélange*, but one must be honest to one's public. In case there may be any who dissent from my opinion, I append a supplementary list of those entitled to honorable mention: 1. The third sheep from the O. P. side in *The Wanderer*. 2. The trick lamp in *Magic*. 3. The pink pajamas in *You're in Love*. 4. The knife in *The Thirteenth Chair*. 5. The Confused Noise Without in *The Great Divide*. 6. Jack Merritt's hair in Oh, Boy!

There were few discoveries among the dramatists. Of the older playwrights, Barrie produced a new one and an ancient one, but the

Shakespeare boom, so strong last year, petered out. There seems no doubt that the man, in spite of a flashy start, had not the stuff. I understand that some of his things are doing fairly well on the road. Clare Kummer, whose "Dearie" I have so frequently sung in my bath, to the annoyance of all, suddenly turned right round, dropped song-writing, and ripped a couple of hot ones right over the plate. Mr. Somerset Maugham succeeded in shocking Broadway so that the sidewalks were filled with blushing ticket-speculators.

Most of the critics have done good work during this season. As for myself, I have guided the public mind in this magazine soundly and with few errors. If it were not for the fact that nearly all the plays I praised died before my review appeared, while the ones I said would not run a week are still packing them in, I could look back to a flawless season.

As you can see, I have had a very pleasant theatrical season. The weather was uniformly fine on the nights when I went to the theatre. I was particularly fortunate in having neighbors at most of the plays who were not afflicted with coughs or a desire to explain the plot to their wives. I have shaken hands with A. L. Erlanger and been nodded to on the street by Lee Shubert. I have broadened my mind by travel on the road with a theatrical company, with the result that, if you want to get me out of New York, you will have to use dynamite.

Take it for all in all, a most satisfactory season, full of pregnant

possibilities--and all that sort of thing.

POEMS

DAMON AND PYTHIAS

A Romance

Since Earth was first created,
 Since Time began to fly,
No friends were e'er so mated,
 So firm as JONES and I.
Since primal Man was fashioned
 To people ice and stones,
No pair, I ween, had ever been
 Such chums as I and JONES.

In fair and foulest weather,
 Beginning when but boys,