



"The Jew."

The authors of this play which is at present being presented in America with considerable success, have contrived a Jewish play which rests upon a plot that is free from crude unpleasantness, and that has in it a great deal of first hand observation. "The Jew" gives a picture of a Jewish home—lacking all of the known indices of such a home, but true in essentials—which serves to raise it above the level of the usual Yiddish drama. The characters are clear cut and the plot is rational, though not well articulated. The story moves along with more or less steadiness up to the last act, when it loses its point and becomes banal. But before the last act is reached, the suspense is well sustained, the characters are adequately projected, and many scenes are unusually effective.

The playwrights, Messrs. Edlin and Cooperman, have taken their theme from contemporary events, and from personages that can easily be identified. The hero is a Jewish financier of international repute, who is regarded as the head of the Jewish community, and, at the same time, stands high in the councils of political parties and on the Stock Exchange. His home is a model of culture and tolerance. His children, a son and a daughter, receive and are received by Christians in the same station of life. There is no cloud upon the happiness of the family. The son is in love with a Christian girl, and the daughter is the beloved of a Christian gentleman, whose father and mother are engaged in Christian missionary activities. The hero, Joseph Braun, is a model husband, an accessible and fair-minded philanthropist, who does not disdain to receive in his home, a little *sub rosa* the visits of a Hebrew poet who has all the earmarks of the lamented poet who meandered through, the Jewish world incarnated as Naphthali Herz Imber. The poet is seen in his decay, witless and sodden.

The play opens with the philanthropist's house in good order. Soon the clouds begin to gather. The scion of the house intends making a trip with a number of college friends through Russia, and when he goes, together with his friends, to have his passport vided, he learns for the first time that he is regarded as a Jew and as such cannot be admitted into Russia. This shock upsets him. He cannot believe that he, the son of a multi-millionaire, conducting himself

everywhere as an American, can be classified as a Jew, a member of a despised race. In his mortification, taunted by a few of his friends, he loses himself in an altercation which leads to blows. These two incidents are reported in the sensational press. Stung to the quick by this publicity, and by the fact that he seems to have lost caste with his comrades, he commits suicide. For the first time, the bereaved philanthropist learns that there is a serious gap between Jew and Gentile, and that the possession of wealth and power cannot wholly bridge it.

Then, having consented to the betrothal of his daughter to Prof. Henry Lehman, on condition that the latter's parents give their consent, it becomes evident that such an intermarriage is not pleasing to his intended Christian *machatanim*. He believes in intermarriage, but is not willing that his daughter should marry a Gentile whose parents enter a protest; he feels that in the melting pot all should enter freely, without reservation; there should not be any enforced alliances. The engagement seems to be broken.

The third blow descends in the form of social prejudice of another sort. His wife and daughter are refused admittance to a summer hotel. This hotel is owned by a gentleman named Jeremiah Kenyon, who is one of his rivals in finance. Feeling keenly the outrage, Mr. Braun, becomes revengeful. They have been trusting to his generosity; they have been relying upon his broadmindedness; he had been expected to act toward his Gentile friends as a Christian; he now would reveal himself as a Jew, and for the wrongs heaped upon him he would repay double. The "last straw" is rather weak, but it serves the purpose. The last should have been first, and vice versa.

Braun organizes an attack upon the Kenyon interests. To ruin him, he must destroy Lehman's father, who is implicated with Kenyon. There are many innocent parties destroyed. He plunges along in his mad desire for revenge until he brings Kenyon to his knees before him. In an impassioned harangue he then tells Kenyon that he will hereafter deal with his enemies as a Jew should deal, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. This outbreak of grief for the loss of a son, of anger towards those who destroyed his illusions of equality, is one of the remarkably effective passages in the play.

But after it is delivered, the play melts into sugar-water. Prof. Lehman enters the room, steps between Mr. Braun and the object of his vengeance, and appeals to him to redeem the good name of his father; if he did not rescue the bank, his father would be branded as a defaulter; would not

the Jew exercise the quality of mercy? The Jew relents. He redeems the name of Lehman for the sake of the son. The curtain falls upon the incongruous scene of the daughter of the Jew joining hands with her Christian lover, whose father had been forced to commit suicide by her own father.

This is a fatal mistake, which destroys the value and the purpose of the play. There are other blemishes on what is otherwise a fair piece of work. The construction is awkward. The Hebrew poet is an unnecessary character. The un-Jewish atmosphere of the philanthropist's home is out of keeping with his position, and weakens the character. There is a lack of clearness in the drawing of the daughter, and of her lover, and of their mutual relations. But the play has much to commend it.

HIS MAJESTY'S

Judging by the success which has attended the first production of the Gilbert and Sullivan season that marks the inauguration of the Williamson Company in South Africa would give the impression that the prophecies which were expressed prior to their advent stand a very good chance of fulfillment. The Company is a particularly well balanced one and the choruses are exceptionally well rendered. It would be superfluous upon our part to refer to the plot since those who are not aware of the *motif* which actuated the composers in their work would be well advised to witness this comic opera without a knowledge of which one's education cannot be said to be completed. Suffice it to say that the delightful melodies are well sung and exquisite scenery enhances the beauty of the production. The orchestra has been largely augmented and is under the baton of Mr. Harry Burton so that the beautiful Sullivan music is heard to the greatest possible advantage. Unfortunately Miss Ruth Lincoln is not yet able to appear but her place is efficiently taken by Miss Mary Morris Smith. So satisfactorily is "The Mikado" being received that it is likely to occupy the bill for some time yet.

THE STRATFORD-ON-AVON PLAYERS.

During the week the talented combination headed by Mr. Henry Herbert and Miss Gladys Vanderzee have been performing a variety of plays to the obvious interest and enjoyment of their audiences. On Monday night Mr. Herbert presented "Richard II" playing the title role, on Tuesday and Wednesday nights he played "Henry IV" at the matinee Goldsmith's brilliant comedy "She Stoops to Conquer" with Mr. Henry Herbert as the amusing Tony Lumpkin was rendered. At the special New Year matinee the stage

was occupied by "The Merry Wives of Windsor" and "Comedy of Errors" while, in the evening, these plays made way for that charming historical play "If I were King." On Friday night, the full text of "Hamlet" will again be rendered the play commencing at seven o'clock, the Saturday matinee will see "Henry IV" played, while this diversified and attractive programme will be concluded for the week by the presentation in the evening of "Richard III." Truly a Shakespearean feast and an opportunity for the witnessing of comedies, farces and tragedies of the immortal playwright that is seldom afforded.

BREVITIES.

Miss Mysie Devine is laid up with a dangerous attack of pleurisy and pneumonia, and is unable to tour as leading lady in Mr. Louis Meyer's forthcoming tour in South Africa.

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Miss Cressie Leonard will be the principal boy in "Sinbad the Sailor" at the New Theatre, Cardiff, this Christmas.

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Next, please! This is the latest announcement: "Artists arriving at the Palace, Runcorn, by aeroplane, can have their machines stored on the roof free of charge."

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The N.B.O. have booked a No. 2 Company to play "Splash Me!" on the African Theatres Trust tour in South Africa. They left Southampton on Saturday, Dec., 20th.

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Beiliss, recently acquitted in the ritual murder trial at Kieff, is stated, says an exchange, to have received an offer to appear on the music hall stage in several European cities.

A SOUTH AFRICAN SONG-STRESS.

We learn that Miss Louie Juta, who has been studying with M. Jean de Reszke in Paris, has been engaged by a well-known New York impresario, and will make her debut in Italy early in January in "Cavalleria Rusticana."

Is there any happiness in the world like the happiness of a disposition made happy by the happiness of others? There is no joy to be compared with it. The luxuries which wealth can buy, the rewards which ambition can obtain, the pleasures of art and scenery, the abounding sense of health and the exquisite enjoyment of mental creations are nothing to this pure and heavenly happiness, where self is drowned in the blessings of others.

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