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If we were to pause and look back over the ranks of plays and revues which have been presented to the public in New York City since last fall, we would probably be more impressed by the numerical strength of the offerings than by their real merit. There are sixty-two legitimate theatres in New York City, which is reason enough in itself as to why the worthwhile offerings are frequently hard to find. Poor themes, pathological discussions and smutty dialogue - perhaps purposely put in the script to increase ticket sales - and a general state of moral paralysis and unrest seems to permeate the theatre at the present time.

However, there is certainly a wide selection of plays to choose from. New York City is truly the theatrical capital of the world, for where else could we go to find a greater variety of plays and players. This year, for instance, a number of plays have come to us from Italy, namely "La Locandiera", "Naked", "Turandot", and "Say It With Flowers". From Russia has come Chekov's "Three Sisters", and via France "The Brothers Karamazoff", also "The Dybuk" and "The Strange Prince". Austria has sent several very popular Viennese operettas as well as "Juarez And Maximilian". Budapest contributed "The Play's The Thing". British plays in New York are quite common, among them are "The Constant Nymph", "The Constant Wife", "The Pirates of Penzance", "Iolanthe", "Pygmalion", "On Approval", "This Woman Business", "This Was A Man", and "Autumn Fire". To the French we can be grateful for our brief but thoroughly pleasing time with the Guitrys who brought with them an entire French company and sets, playing "The Illusionist" and "Mozart"; also from the French came the not to be forgotten sensation of the year - "The Captive". Germany, Spain, India and the Scandinavian countries have also been represented by one or more plays. This is by no means a comprehensive list, but it will serve to show us how much of the globe is represented in the New York theatre.

Before taking up two or three of the current plays in detail, I want to mention a number which are more or less distinguished and worth seeing.

"THE PLAY'S THE THING" a comedy by Fernec Molnar, featuring Holbrook Blinn, is a play within a play. It is smart and very humorous - giving Molnar a fine chance to have some fun with the French School on the subject of the drama-triangle.

"NED MCCOBB'S DAUGHTER" by Sydney Howard is the Theatre Guild's third offering of the year, with a cast including Claire Eames, Margola Gilmore and Alfred Lunt. It is a story of a plain old New England family living down in Maine, who become engaged in bootlegging. Mr. Lunt plays the part of the tough hooch smuggler from New York. ~~Mr. Lunt~~^{1st} has received a great deal of praise for the fine way he has mastered the character and language in this rather strong part.

"SATURDAY'S CHILDREN" by Maxwell Anderson and the first production presented by the Actors' Theatre, is one of the recent hits of the year, and a close contestant for the Pulitzer Prize. It depicts the struggles of two of New York's children - a typist and clerk - who are entangled by fate. They marry but soon are driven apart by the petty realities of married life in a Bronx flat on \$40. a week - plus their mutual hunger for individual freedom. Apparently, Mr. Anderson is not attacking the characters themselves, but the town in which they are trying to work out their problems and live.

"CHICAGO" is a satirical comedy by Miss Maurine Watkins (a former newspaper writer.) Miss Francine Larrimore plays the lead. I understand Miss Jeanne Eagles^{was} originally intended to star in this play, but as she didn't like it she refused to come to rehearsals, and so someone else had to be found. Aside from the well brought points showing the extreme methods newspaper and cameramen use to feature a murderess and acquire public sympathy for her, and how far from the the truth the actual printed stories often are - I could not see a great deal in the play. As it developed - it tended more and more toward the burlesque.

The Gilbert and Sullivan revivals continue to enjoy the applause of many followers. "Iolanthe" is being presented very Thursday evening and "The Pirates of Penzance" on all other evenings and matinee days. A permanent Gilbert and Sullivan Company has been formed and

for anyone who likes a good musical show of a higher type than the usual musical comedy - I sincerely recommend both of these operettas.

In the line of popular American musical comedies, anyone could not fail to enjoy "Oh Kay", "Rio Rita", "The Ramblers" and as a good revue I would suggest "George White's Scandals".

Eva Le Gallienne is doing a fine piece of work with her Repertory Company down on 14th Street. Thus far, they have produced "John Gabriel Borkman", "La Locandiera", "Twelfth Night", "The Three Sisters", "Saturday Night" and "The Cradle Song" - the latter production has, from what I can judge, proven the most popular.

Several revivals have turned up this year, including Sir James M. Barrie's "What Every Woman Knows". Helen Hayes, playing the part of Maggie Wylie, received very warm praise for her performance. Later, Otis Skinner returned in "The Honor of The Family" which on the whole did not receive very favorable comment. Recently, "Trelawney of The Wells" a revival with an all star cast was produced at the New Amsterdam. Included in the cast are, John Drew, Otto Kruger, Estelle Winwood, Mrs Thomas Whiffelin and many others. One may pause to wonder how, at the height of the theatrical season, a company of such eminence could be found available for a revival of Trelawney or anything else.

With the exception of "Juarez and Maximilian" all of the Theatre Guild plays have proven highly successful: they include "Pygmalion", "The Silver Cord", "Ned McCobb's Daughter" and "The Brothers Karamazov" and lately special matines of Pirandello's "Right You Are If You Think You Are", which is a true comedy with an idea - Truth is what you think it is - It is only relative and cannot be proven. Both the principal characters state the truth, but one is crazy.

"THE ROAD TO ROME" is a comedy by Robert Sherwood, Editor of "Life". Jane Cowl has the lead. The play is a satire on militarism, immoral and exceedingly vulgar in one or two places. Unfortunately, the purpose which the author is trying to convey will probably

go unnoticed by most of the audiences. He is endeavoring to discourage the Roman ideals, Militarism and Materialism, which he feels are on the gain in America - and very dangerous. In brief, Jane Cowl, as Amytis, a lady of Greek ancestry, and married to Fabius Maximus a Roman dictator (who talks and acts like our present day politician) is bored to death by the materialism of Rome. She falls in love with the idea of Hannibal, who is marching against the City. When she hears he is just outside the walls, she goes to his tent and feeds him her rather poisonous philosophy. As a result, the next morning, Hannibal does not take the city. Amytis' argument is 'why all the war and destruction - what good will it do'. But I think her message goes even deeper, attacking the uselessness of all human activity - which if carried out would be fatal. If you don't mind an occasional blush, go and see "The Road To Rome", for it is an enjoyable performance.

"GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES", I need not go into detail about. It is a snappy play. June Walker and Edna Hibbard are perfect. Anyone seeing the performance, may count on a hilarious time.

If you are looking for a good clean play, I would suggest "Two Girls Wanted"; the fantasy "The Devil In The Cheese"; and if you enjoy Walter Hampden, go by all means to "Caponsacchi".

Probably the most distinctive play of the year was M. Bourdet's "The Captive" which was produced and directed by Gilbert Miller, who is a son of the late Henry Miller. Miss Helen Mencken, recently of "Seventh Heaven" fame, took the lead. ~~I need not go into detail concerning the play.~~ We have all read enough concerning it's struggles to stay on the Great White Way, to know what it is all about. And not having seen the production, I can add nothing. Whether it might ~~d~~/splease or not, evidently would depend entirely upon your attitude toward such things - namely - if these abnormal cases exist, ^{is} it better to have them artistically brought before us - or suppressed entirely. With the exception of Professor Phelps, all of the literary critics, whose criticisms I have read, seem to be unanimous in their unqualified praise of the play - especially with regard to the ~~fin~~ and artistic manner in which the problem

is presented.

of the year
Selecting two or three plays which might be considered the most distinctive, aside from "The Captive", was a bit difficult. for people's likes and dislikes in the matter of the theatre are often very far apart. However, from personal choice and as a result of criticisms which I have heard and read, I have chosen "The Silver Cord", "Broadway" and "The Constant Wife".

Of the six pieces produced by the Theatre Guild this year, one of the most popular is Sydney Howard's "The Silver Cord". Mr. Howard is an American playwright of no little renown - the Guild produced his "They Knew What They Wanted" several years ago.

In "The Silver Cord" only about twenty-four hours time elapses during the three acts. The scenes take place in the home of a Mrs. Phelps, who is a rich and respectable widow with two grown-up sons, living well in an Eastern American City. The Phelps household appears rather joyous as the play opens. Dave, the elder son, is returning from Europe with his new wife, an attractive biologist whom he met and married abroad. At home, waiting to welcome them, are Robert, the younger son, and his fiance, and the Mother who seems to be quite happy at the prospect of having two daughters-in-law. However, as the play develops, we find she is a "professional mother", loving her sons too much and inclined to be jealous of any intrusion which her son's wife and fiance may make upon coming into the household. With sly unconsciousness, she exerts herself to be first and foremost in the lives of her sons, leaving the wives to be content with second place. Dave, plans to become an architect in New York, while his bride furthers her work in the Rockefeller Institute, but these plans are objected to by Mrs. Phelps who has ideas of her own for them. First, she persuades the weak son Robert to break with his fiance, and then she starts to wreck the happiness of the older boy and his wife. In the meantime, Robert's fiance, after an hysterical breakdown, runs away from what she calls "this awful house" and falls into an icy pond late at night.

The boys hurry to rescue her, despite their Mother's loud cries that they will catch their death of cold unless they come back and put on their overcoats and then go out and save the girl. Right here, it struck me that the Mother showed indifference toward the girl a little beyond human belief. In the last act, we find Hester (the fiance of the younger son) leaving the Phelps home with the parting remark that "she is going to marry an orphan". Dave's bride, believing that he cares more for his Mother than for her, is going with Hester. Neither of the girls can stand any longer the mother-love influence which dominates the household. Before leaving, the young wife tells her mother-in-law in no uncertain terms that she is a self-centered "son-devouring cannibal". In return, the Mother gives a long speech on the passions of mother-love. It is a great conflict between the two. A minute or two after the girls' departure, Dave suddenly appears to realize what has taken place and without a word he leaves his distracted Mother and joins his wife. Robert remains at home, completely submerged by his Mother's influence and ideas.

It is a play of conflicting emotions and ideas, and shows very forcibly what terrific harm can be wrought by a mother loving her sons too much for herself.

As the Mother, Miss Laura Hope Crews gives an excellent performance, although here and there it may seem that she over-plays her part. But certainly she had a very pitiable and obnoxious character to play, for before the first act is over, you almost feel as though the use of a gun in her direction would be rather welcome - and then again - you have only pity for her. Miss Margola Gilmore, as the younger son's fiance, shows us that she is a past master in the art of "emotional acting", but her portrayal in the lighter parts of the play is just as convincing. In fact the entire cast is excellent and ably directed. The play is carefully produced and one which I feel is well worth seeing. Prof. Wm. Lyons Phelps, Mr. Woolcott and Mr. Hammond all consider that "The Silver Cord stands well up in line for the coveted Pulitzer Prize.

The Theaters—By Percy Hammond

(Reprinted from yesterday's late editions)

'Broadway,' a Top-Notch Melodrama of Life Behind the Night-Club Scenery

"Broadway," a play by Philip Dunning and George Abbott, presented by Jed Harris at the Broadhurst Theater with the characters cast as follows:

Nick Verdis.....	Paul Porcasi
Roy Lane.....	Lee Tracy
Lil Rice.....	Clare Woodbury
Katie.....	Ann Preston
Joe.....	Joseph Spurin-Callei
Mazie Smith.....	Mildred Wall
Pearly.....	Edith Van Cleave
Pearl.....	Martha Madison
Grace.....	Molly Ricardel
Ann.....	Constance Brown
"Billie" Moore.....	Sylvia Field
Steve Crandall.....	Robert Gleckler
Dolph.....	Henry Sherwood
"Porky" Thompson.....	William Foran
"Scar" Edwards.....	John Wray
Dan McCorn.....	Thomas Jackson
Benny.....	Frank Verigun
Larry.....	Millard Mitchell
Mike.....	Roy R. Lloyd

MOST of the recreation afforded by the New York night clubs, it appears, is to be found behind the scenes of those jovial pleasure grounds. That, at least, was the testimony given last evening in a mettlesome drama called "Broadway," an absorbing transcript of things as they ought to be in the local halls of iniquity. In addition to the song, dance, liquor and good fellowship prevalent in the wild-oats casinos, there were two bully murders on the stage of the Broadhurst, to say nothing of many other wanton catastrophies usually hidden from the casual celebrant. Altogether it was frolicsome morn in the Paradise Club. The play ought to prove an efficacious ballyhoo for the late-hour centers of skylarking.

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Moreover, it is the conclusion of this amusement seeker that "Broadway," aside from its merits as a tale, is the most completely acted and perfectly directed hall show he has seen in thirty years of professional play-going. Every one of the roles in the numerous cast, from the bootlegging assassin by Mr. Robert Gleckler to the demure chorus girl murderess by Miss Eloise Stream, was a person, easily to be recognized as such. The glamorous photography of the directors, Messrs. Dunning and Abbott, who are also the authors, was consummate, from the ill-fitting Tuxedo of a visiting Chicago dive keeper to the jingle of the short change in the jacket of a waiter. The foregoing enthusiasm, by the way, is not intended to persuade the timorous drama lover to emerge from his cloister. "Broadway" is only for slum goers with a sense of humor, if there be any such. And it seems that there are, judging from the contentment of last evening's congregation. Everybody was happy.

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Particularly Mr. Lee Tracy, an artist whose past, so far as my remembrance

Sylvia Field



In "Broadway," at the Broadhurst

goes, has been one of seclusion. Mr. Tracy appeared as an ambitious cabaret-hooper, with lively feet and a dull head, able to think only of his career as a vaudeville dancer and his affection for a chorus girl in the Paradise Club—the gentle, pretty, unaffected and appealing Miss Sylvia Field. This performer was so wrapped up in show-business that when he was caught with the murderer's gun in his possession he did not understand that he was violating the Sullivan act. "The Sullivan act?" he said to the detective. "What time are they on?" Mr. Tracy, it should be recorded, made the most extensive individual "hit" that any show-artist has made since Mr. — (one forgets his name for the moment)—caused a similar sensation in "The Show-Off." He did act well; but so did all the others, the difference being that he had a fatter though a more ingratiating part.

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At any rate, Mr. Tracy is fortune's favorite this morning and he will read in several journals that he is the player of the season. Last evening his every entrance and exit was greeted with salvos even more enthusiastic than those usually bestowed by the soft-hearted New York first nighters. He earned every hallo that smote his ear. The others of the cast, from the humblest Chicago gangster to the invisible doorman of the Paradise Club, deserved as much. "Broadway" is a great show for the multitude that is, at heart, rowdy.

One of the biggest hits of the season is "Broadway"- a melodrama of life behind the scenes in a night club. It was written and directed by Phillip Dunning and George Abbott, and has been playing to crowded houses since September 16th. The action runs from one evening to the next; the scene does not change, all three acts taking place in the private party room of the Paradise Night Club in New York City. It is a rough story although well told. At times, it becomes rather vulgar and indecent, but certainly, it is true to life in it's portrayal of murdering bootlegger, hoofer, police force, divekeeper and good and bad chorus girls. Before quoting Mr. Hammond's review of the performance, which cannot be improved upon, it may be interesting to state that the play was originally inspired by a wellknown New York Cabaret queen - Texas Guinan. Mr. Dunning tried in vain to get her consent to act in it. The part she was to have taken, that of a harsh cabaret hostess, is played by Clare Woodbury to perfection. The character of Roy Lane - the hoofer - is really that of Mr. Dunning's closest friend; and the character of Steve Crandall, a Manhattan bootlegger and rounder, is another person whom Mr. Dunning knows and cordially dislikes. Robert Gleckler, who takes this part, met the real character thru a little plan engineered by Mr. Dunning, and so had a chance to study the bootlegger's characteristics and mannerisms at first hand. In fact all of the characters were drawn from life, which undoubtedly is the reason why they are so flawless. The plot, in short, was taken from several "close calls" which Mr. Dunning got mixed up in - and later made to fit the Broadway story.

Mr. Hammond pays "BROADWAY" the following tribute:

"THE CONSTANT WIFE", a comedy by W. Somerset Maugham and presented by the Charles Frohman Company with Miss Ethel Barrymore and a cast of eight, had its premiere in New York City on November 29th. It is a play in three acts, all of the action taking place in the dignified and yet homelike drawing-room of John and Constance Middleton in London, England. An interval of a week elapses between the 1st and 2nd acts, and a year between the 2nd and 3rd.

Miss Barrymore as Constance Middleton, the wife of a famous London doctor, has what we would call a rather business-like idea of marriage. She has been married ten or more years, the first few of which were highly romantic, the rest rather dreary, but comfortable. Suddenly, she realizes that her affections for her husband and his for her, are cooling. However, she goes on as the lady of the house, receiving, as she states, board, lodging, dress and a certain position in society - in return for her companionship. Her husband is having an affair with her best friend - Constance is aware of this although her Mother and Sister, and her husband think she is quite in the dark as to what is going on. In the second act, when the enraged friend's husband calls to return the Doctor's cigarette case which he has found under his wife's pillow, the audience is treated to a complete surprise, for instead of becoming hysterical at the news and upbraiding her husband, Constance shields him and his mistress, apparently seeing the logic behind their affair and at the same time rather enjoying her opportunity to make a little quiet fun of them. However, she takes a position with a friend and a year later we find she has earned enough to pay for her board and so released herself from all obligation to her husband, at the same time telling him that she feels that no woman has the right to carry on with one man while being supported by another, but that, when she pays her own way, she has the right to do as she desires. Therefore, when an old sweetheart, lately returned from Japan, asks her to take a six week's motor trip with him, she accepts. Constance tells her husband that she longs to be madly loved and in love again, and that she is going on the trip. Although her husband is furious with her, the author leaves no

doubt in our minds that Constance will be welcomed at home six weeks later. Constance's understanding of men is rather unusual for as she observes, "they abandon their vices, only when advancing years make wickedness a burden rather than a pleasure".

"The Constant Wife" is a comedy of the drawing-room and good breeding. It is not bound by common morality or conventions. It is full of fine wit and keen satire, and would probably promote the old adage that "what is sauce for the gander is sauce for the goose".

Great credit should be given Miss Barrymore and her entire company. Mr. Frank Conroy, as the returned sweetheart, is extremely real, and the sincerity of his acting cannot be questioned. Mabel Terry Lewis as Constance's humorous Victorian mother is one of the best parts in the play. Miss Barrymore plays a part admirably suited to her. She is more radiant than ever, humorous, clever and knows how to handle the text so as to produce an unforgettable effect upon her audience.