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JAMES DUGAN.

"Clinton Street"

The East Side of New York as por-
trayed by the Artef Players.

THE saying goes, about Pall Mall, that
it is less a street than a concept. Those
who have walked through it, and especially
those who ever have entered its aristocratic
clubs, will understand. England has been ruled
from there for a long time, and Pall Mall
reflects class rule. No member of the Carlton
Club would think of comparing it with Clin-
ton Street in the East Side of New York.
The smells, colors, cries, "types," and peculiar
"Americanization" would break his heart. So
much the better. Clinton Street is also more
than a street because it is a symbol. It is
more than the mere accumulation of pushcarts,
peddlers, narrow pavements, deadly brown
firetraps, immigrant tragedies and rebellions.
It is the expression of a type of life.

A good deal of this comes through in the
Artef Players' new production. Some of the
scenes are so rich that they achieve genuine
folk quality. In almost every case, they are
the collective scenes where individuals count
less than the street itself. In some cases the
players add a touch of caricature which does
no harm at all. There is a little comic figure
done to perfection by Louis Freilich, who
needs only to make the slightest movement
with his cheeks to bring on a kind of wistful
laughter in the Chaplin tradition. He did not
come on frequently enough for me. In fact,
the best portions of the play seem to come
when Clinton Street looks at itself with a sort
of ironic lightness, and there are many such
moments throughout the evening.

But the creation of sustained atmosphere,
without a substantial plot, is extremely diffi-
cult. A successful bit may be followed by a
dull one, so that the play as a whole is uneven
and disjointed. The mere locale will not be
enough to bind them all together unless most
of the play is on the same artistic level. This
is exactly what *Clinton Street* lacks. There is
no continuous plot and almost no strong idea,
except the general notion of suffering and
frustration. The two strongest themes belong
to the *Dead End* and *The Gentle People*
school—the gangster son and the dissatisfied
daughter. At the end of the play, a narrator,
who seems to have no useful function through-
out, almost suggests the plot which the play
itself fails to produce.

Clinton Street was adapted by Louis Miller
from the novel by Chaver Paver. The play
would suggest that the book rested mainly
on brilliantly told incidents and local color.

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ALFRED GOLDSTEIN, popular political analyst, discusses the week's news, Sunday, October 22, 8:30 P.M. Auspices Workers School, 35 East 12 Street, second floor. Admission 20 cents.

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The color was certainly transferred to the stage but it might have been wiser to develop one of the incidents into an embracing plot for the specific purposes of the drama. Otherwise, the play would require greater consistency and brilliance of style. Lem Ward's direction of the Clinton Street scenes and the engagement party do have much of that consistency and brilliance. Only when the street becomes secondary to its people does the level fall. The Artef Players have done as much as they could with what they had, and there is enough joy in the characters of the street to make an evening at the Mercury a matter of course for those who love the theater.

T. D.

Light Broadway Fare

"Skylark," with Gertrude Lawrence, and "The Straw Hat Revue."

IT WOULD be difficult for almost anyone to be more superficial about a potentially valid situation than Samson Raphaelson has been in his latest, *Skylark*, at the Morosco (N. Y.). It is a comedy, certainly, but so slight that it evaporates before your very eyes. It would evaporate completely, leaving only a faint odor of violets, were it not for Miss Gertrude Lawrence, whose personal charm and ingenious theatrical technique force you to remember it until the final curtain.

As the neglected wife of an advertising man who loves promoting "Baby Malt" more than he loves his wife, Miss Lawrence carries over to the "dramatic stage" those graces which have made her internationally famous on the musical comedy level. She can throw away her lines more delightfully than almost anyone you can think of; she is personally lovely; she bobs, flounces, bounces, and pirouettes endlessly, and all but goes into her dance. She is charming. Which is more than can be said for *Skylark*.

THE STRAW HAT REVUE

If you are particularly flush, a visit to *The Straw Hat Revue* at the Ambassador will provide an evening of easy entertainment rather on the thin side. The sketches, with few exceptions, do not give the energetic cast headed by Danny Kaye and Imogene Coca much to sink their teeth into, and the music is more easily forgotten than most such scores.

Miss Coca is a delightful clown; Mr. Kaye an engaging comic; the talented Dorothy Bird is not given enough to do, but there is an air of youthful enthusiasm about the entire production that is rarely found in the more professional antics of Broadway. Mention should be made of two satirical dancers amazingly named Meta Mati and Otto Hari; an ingenuous surrealist dance (?) by Lilli Sandan, a well-executed monologue by Marjorie Moffett, and a fine bit of fooling by Maude Davis.

A. B.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACTS OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AND MARCH 3, 1933.

Of NEW MASSES, published weekly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1939.

State of New York } ss.
County of New York }

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Carl A. Bristel, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of the New Masses, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

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2. That the owner is: Weekly Masses Co., Inc., 461 Fourth Avenue, N. Y. C.; Carl A. Bristel, 461 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

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Sworn to and subscribed before me this 9th day of October, 1939.

Martha Fisher, Notary Public.

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