

Office. I am sure all Americans who read this paragraph will appreciate it

The A. R. A. is working at top speed. . . . It has identified itself with Russia to such an extent that you can hardly imagine how the latter will exist when A. R. A. is no longer there to help it going. Its name is on everybody's lips, because there are very few people who have not benefitted by its relief in some way or other, but it is rarely, if ever, mentioned in the newspapers. I daresay some people do not care for it to be known that America is doing such a lot for us. I call it a shame, but it can't be helped. The gratitude we feel is not the less because of the fact that it is a silent gratitude. If you happen to see any Americans, tell them their work is immensely appreciated here by those who can realize its magnitude and its perfect disinterestedness, and if they cannot give an adequate expression to their feelings it is not through any fault of their own.

L. MAGNUSSON.

International Labor Office,
Geneva.

Insanity and Divorce

SIR: In your issue of June 21st, 1922, a correspondent discusses insanity as a ground for divorce, and calls attention to the fact that there are only three states in this country where divorces are granted on the ground of incurable insanity, namely: Idaho, Utah and Washington.

The Legislature of Pennsylvania, in 1905, passed the following Act (Laws of Pennsylvania, 1905, P. L. 211):

From and after the passage of this act, in cases where the husband or wife is a hopeless lunatic or non compos mentis, the courts of common pleas of this commonwealth are invested with the authority to receive a petition or libel for divorce; the affidavit, as now required by law to such petition for libel, to be made by the petitioner; and the service of subpoena in divorce shall be made as now provided, such service to be made upon the committee of such lunatic; and all the provisions of the several acts relating to divorce shall apply to all applications made under this act.

It has been supposed that the Legislature intended by this act to make insanity a ground for divorce in Pennsylvania, but the language of the act is ambiguous and it was held by the Superior Court, in *Baughman vs. Baughman* (34 Pa. Super. Ct. 271), that this act does not create or make insanity a new ground for divorce, but merely extends the provisions of the divorce laws to cases where the respondent is a hopeless lunatic, and the cause of divorce alleged is any one of those existing under the previous statutes.

DAVID SERBER.

Philadelphia.

The Race Question at Harvard

SIR: I hold no brief for President Lowell's method of approaching the limitation of the number of Jews at Harvard, nor his exclusion of Negroes from the freshman dormitories.

A member of the Harvard College Class of 1914 was a young Negro who was liked and accepted by his classmates, and in their senior year was elected Class Orator by their votes. If there were a hundred Negroes in a class, it is obvious that he would have been included in a general ostracism. If a hundred Negroes appeared together at Harvard's gates, to admit them would be a compliance with an *abstract* equality. The individual Negro with ability to obtain admission under any conditions, would thereby be deprived of the *real* equality of opportunity he now enjoys at Harvard. This aspect of anti-Negro prejudice is true, in a greatly modified form, and with qualifications, of anti-Semitism.

WALTER T. FISHER.

Chicago.

The Prompt Book

COMING out of the theatre not long ago we heard a woman exclaiming over the charms of the young hero in the play. "You often see actors with fine shoulders," she was saying, "or with a fine head, but it's not often you see one with so fine a leg." My companion turned to me and observed that we had often heard of the Tired Business Man but the Tired Business Woman we had not met before.

The incident brutalizes the theme a little no doubt, but it trails a point with it. There has been an amiable change in the men of our theatre toward the more casual, the more flimsily natural or journalistic or looser. Time was when actors were romantic, they had something of technique, they were equipped with something at least that had to be learned, if it was only English diction or fencing or entering a room. Sometimes even they were senatorial personages acutely sonorous and masters of the grand manner. But these actors were for romantical ladies. Later came actors who were strong, hardy, with gusto; which at least took exercise for its achievement. That was for the athletic ladies. And then later still the actors were moody, the semblance of a thoughtful brow had at least to be learned. They were for the revolted daughters, the intellectuelles.

But in that matinee of ours with the fine-legged hero one saw women very different from all these. They looked above all else busier. There were rows of more exact-looking women. Women of affairs, artists, buyers, decorators, agents, tea-room managers with college degrees and silver jewelry; women busy about their husbands, their lovers, their clothes, their leisure, their make-ups, or their engagements, as the case happened to be. Women who ate their lunches at the club; women who had telephones; who sat on committees. Most of them had been busy; most of them were tired, just as men are. And just as men did, they wanted relaxation and amusement. They had come to the theatre to be refreshed. In sum the T. B. W.

And the actors that please the T. B. W. are amiable, willing creatures. They may either delight in their persons or may boyishly neglect them—a manly advantage over their poor sisters, who for the T. B. M. must always be attractively set out, must be—if not overwhelmingly Oriental—blond, must be lustrous, massaged and tireless. But like their sisters these actors have no technique. They hustle through their scenes with simple freedom, untouched by the exotic corruption or subtlety of your foreign or high-brow stuff. Like their sisters their business is to please all with pleasant vacuity, nothing too much of anything but that, and to have something for all, to please everybody a little bit—the great secret of our popular art. Nor is there any chance of their becoming artists. The gifted among them soon learn better. Nothing is asked of them but to be themselves; and not even that, for that is a great artistic need; they are asked to give us that side of themselves which could be expressed on a magazine cover; they are to leave us rested, amused, moved just enough; they are to give us something that we seek when we have seen enough of life by being busy all day and want to pass the time. They are the remainder of the table d'hôte.

But T. B. M. or T. B. W., why not one as well as the other these days? They have equal rights to be amused and refreshed.

TEMPO

If you listen in the New York theatre you will very commonly hear actor after actor take the tempo of his speech from the speech that has just been spoken. And so it happens sometimes that for a whole scene the tempo of all the speeches have about the same measure. I doubt if the average producer ever thinks one way or the other about the subject.

But the vitality behind dramatic art makes it necessarily true that every part has in itself its general tempo, its time-pattern; and the same is true of every single speech. What is true of visual design is true for the ear also: that every section of a play is a time-centre in itself, to which surrounding parts are related; all these centres in their turn are related to larger centres, and so on.

A study of tempo by our actors would help mend two of the worst faults on our stage, monotony and lack of speed. And the achievement of more variety and speed would help to clear away the idle imitative, the realistic clutter now so much in the way of the art of the theatre. And finally a study of tempo leads to better diction, to more flexible characterization, and to a sharper impress of the dramatic pattern involved.

INCLUSIVENESS

When Mr. Edward Johnson of the Chicago Opera Company conceived the part of Pinkerton he chose the right direction. The character has never been popular with audiences. They have never liked this picture of a young naval officer who betrays the woman that loves him and then sails away and deserts her. What could an artist do, I fancy Mr. Johnson reflected, to make this part less repellent and more tragic and moving? What profoundly human—and so more easily forgiveable or at least understandable—motives might there conceivably be that would account for such an action and such callousness of heart? Mr. Johnson ended by creating a young man lifted and carried away by the glamour of the East, its romance and exotic horizons. Into this world of his imagination the woman came; through it he saw her, and her love for him may have grown to meet this excitement, this glow, this tender intensity in him. He as well as she was the victim of forces stronger than himself. So that his cruelty was one of the defects of an excellence.

This conception of the part was permissible enough, and as true, for that matter, as any other. And it has the advantage over the usual conception of Puccini's hero, the betrayer of the passing-whim-of-a-man theme, because it brings into action more of life; it includes more of what we are or may be. It is not so easy as that average conception, which settles the matter very simply; but it is more persuasive and moving because it is more beautiful. It is darker and more distressing in the end because it covers more of life and is therefore more widely indicative, less incidental or individual, and more fatally expressive. It carries farther and is more tragic because, by depicting them as working on all the characters, it leaves more exposed the forces that are at work. And as the development of a rôle for an artist it all rests on a deeper and more significant method.

Realism is partly responsible for this narrowing and hardening of motives and character-drawing in the theatre. Realism constantly manifests an anxiety to explain. In its anxiety to give an account of things or to present them uncolored by mystery and sentiment, realism remains ill at

ease with the inexplicable. But since their inexplicability is always a part of the vitality of all things, it follows that realism to get its focus must tend to narrow or exclude.

For the average actor this of course is the easiest way to go. It creates a seeming actuality for him of logic or science, with which he can be more comfortable in elaborating his part. It makes life seem to work, to fit into our statement of it. But art of importance never makes life work, never puts things into a plausible nutshell, never quite. The clever and the profound thing for any actor in any part is always, in so far as he does not falsify what is intended by the author, to study the part in the light of human nature at its richest and most luminous. The whole success of every piece of art depends finally on the extent to which the outline of its essential character is kept and yet at the same time is filled with possible implications, with means to enlarge and deepen our response to it.

STARK YOUNG.

From Morn to Midnight

THE undoubted fascination of Georg Kaiser's *From Morn to Midnight*, produced by The Theatre Guild, is due to its daring expressionism rather than to the significance of its content. It is dramatic by virtue of its method. In the play, life is inverted in the sense that what is ordinarily implicit is made explicit; while the relationships of outward circumstances are consciously moulded to give expression to the inward reactions of its central figure. Excepting the absconding bank-cashier, whose short-lived but intense career constitutes the theme of the play, the characters are presented in a natural and realistic light; they are merely a background of people, seen as they see each other, against which the cashier's thoughts and feelings are portrayed.

The action of the play is sufficiently simple. A strange and beautiful woman comes to a small-town bank. The cashier finds himself suddenly intoxicated by the vision of life she represents for him. He steals 60,000 marks, only to discover to his chagrin, that he had mistaken the character of the lady. But he is now carried along by the impetus of his freedom. He would taste life despite the fact that he foresees the end. He leaves his family just as luncheon is to be served. Even this break in the routine of life is a monstrous catastrophe. It kills his aged mother. But he must hurry on. Elegantly attired, he appears in a steward's box at a Velodrome, watching the spectacle of a crowd at the bicycle races. Exhilarated, he would squander his money on the passions of the people. Their outcries, their wild turbulence, however, is nothing but hilarious emptiness which fades into utter silence at the coming of His Highness. Obsequious obedience converts the mob into a servile throng of "hunchbacks." Disgusted, he leaves, to find passion in a private supper-room of a cabaret. The ladies of easy virtue, however, have a passion only for eating and drinking. They lift their masks and they are horrible to look upon. Or, choosing one because he fancies she will dance with a rapture beyond the reach of music, he discovers that she has a wooden leg. The irony is peculiarly German in its grotesque and ugly flavor. He is filled with loathing. We see him next wandering into a Salvation Army hall. Here, on the penitent bench, he finds souls who are at peace. He too would seek salvation. He confesses his theft, and scatters