

New York Theaters
By PERCY HAMMOND.

New York, Feb. 2. Miss Zona Gale has been repudiated for giving her new play, "Mr. Pitt," a cheerful ending. It is said that, like Henry James, Mr. Tarkington and other conscientious novelists, she is inclined to place her art in the applications to the theater. Of unending recitation where her printed fiction is concerned, she is accused of compromising in her dramas. For instance, Mr. Pitt is the most tragic of the bores. An itinerant vendor of tinned food-stuffs in villages of the midwest, he is ignorant, illiterate, uncouth and utterly without charm. Moreover, he is an unselfish soul, addicted to deeds of kindness. After three acts of tribulation, not ignominiously, the curtain descends on him as the winner of a rich claim in the Klondike and surrounded by admiring friends.

I think I can understand and justify Miss Gale's motives in the matter. She is a woman of great human sympathy and melts easily at the woes of others. Convinced that Mr. Pitt's melancholy career of abject impotence, she could not forbear to endow him with a little happiness. He had suffered grievously through his physical and mental handicaps, and the more so because he was acutely aware of them. Many of the delightful moments made fun of him, and his pretty young wife ran away with a traveling trombonist. For 20 years he battled with adverse fortune in Alaskan wilds and came back to Wisconsin broken in health, penniless and still the dog-eared figure of his youthful days. The poor fellow desired charity, and Miss Gale saw that he got it. Yet, like Mr. Bok and other benefactors, she is subjected to suspicion. Whereas the usual playwright is allowed to dismiss his wretched characters in a glow of sunshine, it is demanded that Miss Gale's Mr. Pitt should continue after the play is over to be thoroughly miserable.

In her curtain speech Miss Gale said that "Mr. Pitt" had many authors. In fact, nearly all the characters were living persons and had reproduced themselves in the manuscript. She herself had known a despairing Mr. Pitt who had beaten against the walls of his hostile personality and tried to get out, just as the poor fellow does in one of the best scenes in the play. . . . The scene is full of "types" photographed by Miss Gale in her studies of small-town life. Some of them are so vivid that you suspect that she occasionally mistakes facts for truth. The tempting trombonist is one of these, perhaps. He is a handsome young man of the big world, possessing all the sophisticated graces of an Italian diplomatist. In his bearing and conversation he is more like a dignified young duke than he is reminiscent of Sousa, P. B. Bonn or Lyon & Healy. Such purple instrumentalists exist, of course, and Miss Gale has seen one of them. He also may have run away with the village house painter's wife; for music does inspire its practitioners to odd adventures. But though a fact, he interferences a little with the truth of "Mr. Pitt."

Mr. Walter Huston, who comes straight from the vaudeville, gives the blundering here a remarkably explicit impersonation. He was coached for the unsympathetic talk by his sister, Mrs. Carrington, under whose instruction Mr. Barrymore prepared for Hamlet.

The dramatists usually agree about the things that happen. The same things have been happening in the theater for a long time, with occasional variations as to the method of their happening. In Miss Clarence Dane's new play, "The Way Things Happen," both the things and their processes are familiar. The difference between it and other transcriptions from life is that it is more literate and more effectively acted. It is not so dramatic a play as Miss Dane's "A Bill of Divorcement," or so poetic as a play as her "Will Shakespeare." But it is more theatrically routine than either.

Miss Katharine Cornell in this comedy is a sacrificial Cinderella, in love with the young man of the London household, into which she has been adopted and of which she is the drudge. He (Mr. Tom Nesbitt) is a superb, a smug, smileless, ill-tempered and aggressive brawler, enamored of one of the most terrifying of the suburban flappers. In order to buy gifts for this siren he steals from his firm, and is detected in so doing by his evil office mate.

What does the poor girl do when that earnest villain threatens to expose the man she loves unless she visits his rooms and gives herself to him? He offers to exchange the incriminating papers for her reluctant caresses. As is said to be the custom in life, as in the drama, the lady endeavors to atone for the man's wickedness. At the end of the first act she throws a scarf around her unwilling shoulders and staggers out into the night, enroute to the sacrificial altar. The scarf, by the way, belongs to her bitterest enemy.

One wonders how Miss Dane's play would fare if the girl were to reverse the customary practices and decline to be so great a martyr—even to save the reputation of the pleasant fellow she loves. Suppose she were to give the predicament deep consideration, and then to decide that it would be better for all concerned if she did not try to make a right out of two wrongs? If she were to recall the lesson, taught her by scores of similar dramas and were to profit by them—i.e. by her more or less unsatisfactory experience, or Nora Helmer's or Mamma Vanna's? That, of course, would be the way that things do not happen. Still, I believe that it might be exemplary if not entertaining to know that Shirley Price in the crisis let down her hair in her own room, instead of that of a beastly marplot, and that she redeemed her erring mate by good advice instead of bad conduct. All these sacrifices are so futile that it is discouraging to know that women yet persist in performing them. Shirley's reward in "The Way Things Happen" is to denounce her unworthy man, to strike him furiously in the face, and then to become engaged to him—a terrible person.

Miss Cornell is the most alluring of the new American actresses, and she has seldom been so competent and so

AT THE THEATERS



Ruth St. Dennis COMING TO THE BRANDEIS



De Lyle Alda AT THE ORPHEUM



George Graves AT THE WORLD

lovely as she is in Miss Dane's play. But, as is the fate of most young women of the theater, she is acquiring prosperous mannerisms from the stage directors. She is permitting them to tell her the way things happen. Mr. Nesbitt, as the offensive egotist, for whose benefit the sacrifice is made, is too relentless in his exposure for the purposes of entertainment. He plays the role as it is written, entirely without charm. One advantage of his merciless impersonation, however, is that every man who goes to see it will be proud that he is not that sort of person.

"The Gingham Girl" will come to the Brandeis theater February 28 and 29 and March 1. "The Gingham Girl" was the surprise success of the year in New York. It came into New York almost unheralded and practically unknown, for its producers, Schwab and Kusell, were very young men, the authors and composers had not yet achieved distinction and the cast did not boast of those actors fortunate enough to be known as Broadway favorites. But the show was an overnight success, scoring a triumph through sheer merit and real worth.

Under the guiding influence of Arthur Hammerstein, "Wildflower," familiarly termed, "The Bambalina Show," with Eva Olivetti singing the title role, will open an engagement at the Brandeis on February 24, where it will remain four nights and Saturday matinee. Its players, in addition to Miss Olivetti, include Bobby Bernard, Carrie Reynolds, Cliff Heckinger, Adels Keller, Paul Donah, Margaret Wood, Allan H. Pegan, Jack Dempsey and Charles Burrows. The augmented orchestra will be under the direction of Clad Neff of the Casino theater, New York.

Claire DeVine AT THE GAYETY

Garl Young AT THE EMPRESS

What the Theaters Offer

"SAUCY BABY," musical comedy with Billy Graves and company of 30, is the headline attraction in the new vaudeville bill at the World. Included in the cast of principals are George Graves, Gladys Jackson, Marion Gray, Sophie Davis, Joe McKenzie, Fred Bishop, Pick Maloney, Bluey Morey and Fred Algers. Twelve "Saucy Babies" make up the chorus. An even dozen song numbers are introduced during the action of the musical farce. The supporting show is of a caliber to make the program one of the most attractive of the season. McGowan and Knox present "Out of Gas," a pot-pourri of comedy and song numbers. Booth and Nina offer banjo numbers intermingled with stunts of Booth, a trick cyclist. Comedy harmony songs are presented by the Golden Gate Four. "Ye Olden Days" is a song spectacle by Davis and Bishop, supported by a cast of eight. The principal photoplay feature stars Arnie Ayers supported by Mahlon Hamilton in a Paramount picture of laughter under the title "The Heart Raiders."

De Lyle Alda, prima donna beauty of the Zeigfeld Follies, is the headline at the Orpheum this week in an unusual little musical play called "Sadie—One of Those Girls," a travesty on the old Cinderella theme. Miss Alda appears first in tatters as a newsboy, later in society and last as a star in gorgeous gowns. She has the support of Edward Tierney and James Donnelly, dancers, and a good cast of songs and comedians. A featured act on this week's bill presents Fred Fenton and Sammy Fields in a singing, dancing and talking skit. The White Sisters, who hail from Omaha, and who have just completed an engagement as the leading juvenile stars in Fred Stone's production, "Tip Top," appear in a featured act entitled, "Broadway's Big Little Stars." "Compliments of the Season" is another creation of Paul Gerard Smith. A unique story trickles through four scenes, with Garry Owen, well known in vaudeville and motion pictures, playing the leading role. Kenney and Hollis have assembled choice tidbits from college initiations and wrapped them in a bundle which they call "The Two Doctors" and label "a satire on medicine." The three Danoise Sisters are young women who would be taken for anything but gymnasts. They show an unusual amount of daring and agility. Catherine Sinclair does the most startling things in an athletic routine. She is assisted by two men.

Halton Powell and his players at the New Empress this week are offering their laughable musical farce, under the title of "Pretty Papa," in "Pretty Papa." Powell plays the role of "Alonzo Brown," a red-hot sport. The entire company are cast in roles showing them to excellent advantage. The company are seen in new song numbers. Eugene Broussard, tenor; Rita Lawrence, soprano; Elgie Esmond, prima donna; West and Wyse, songsmiths; Patsy Gilson, singer of syncopated melodies; Earl Young, who has been creating a sensation in character comedy songs and the male quartet will all be heard in lively tunes. Next Saturday the company enters upon their fourth week presenting Halton Powell's own success, "Marge." The current photoplay attraction presents Mae Marsh in "Paddy." Here is a human interest story that rings true.

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"Jig Time," at the Gayety theater this week, is really a big musical revue being equipped with 17 scenes that are said to be unique as well as magnificent. Heading the cast is Claire DeVine, who is both the prima donna and comedienne of the show. Moran and Wisner, vaudevillians, do a clever act in a comedy hat shop; the Dancing Donnellys, Artie Mayo, dialect comedian; the Harrington Sisters do songs; and on Tuesday and Wednesday, February 19 and 20.

After six months of study and research, and another six months of putting the results of their study into practice, Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn are ready to go forth with their company of Denishawn Dancers to win fresh praise as the foremost exponents of their art in America, and will appear at the Brandeis theater Harrington Sisters do songs, and on Tuesday and Wednesday, February 19 and 20.

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Edward H. Sothern and Julia Marlowe, the foremost classical stars on the English-speaking stage, will appear at the Brandeis Theater three days, beginning Thursday, February 21.

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Prices Include Tax	Orch.	Bal.	Bal.	2d Bal.
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Halton Powell