

NEW ENGLISH PLAYWRIGHT

Maugham, Who Looks Forward to Seeing Pittsburgh.

AUTHOR WITH AN ARTISTIC IDEA

He's Sure There'll Be Beauty in Its Smoke and Chimneys—His "Penelope" to Be Seen in New York.

LONDON, July 2.—William Somerset Maugham (please pronounce as if spelled Momm), who is spoken of in London dramatic circles as the man of the hour, has typical "chamber" on Mount Street W., locally which has historic and fashionable interest, for it is near the celebrated Berkeley Square and a part of Mayfair occupied by Prince Charming by Roman school girls who used to read Owen Meredith's "Ledaic" before the advent of fate.

On the way to the interview, if you have the seeing eye, you will note where once upon a time an escaping horseman evading an unpleasant quarter of an hour for his highland and highwayman methods in Ploceadilly—an object of envy to all succeeding Americans to have never been able to adopt his desirable policy—dashed down some steps and along a passage, where now vertical bars of iron mark his hair-raising flight. You may pass the window in Half Moon street where Shelley used to sit. You will note the house on Charles street, where Mr. Maugham, where Lady Hamilton lived, and not far from the home of Edmund Keane and Macaulay's residence when he returned from India.

Other Places of Memory. If you insist upon repeating the neighborhood, why evade stopping a moment at 11 Berkeley Square, where Horace Walpole lived for more than a decade? At 4, where Clive committed suicide and at 21, the birthplace of "Auld Robin Gray," and on Charles street, which like Mount leads directly from Berkeley Square, where Beau Brummell strolled and ogled, where Lord Lytton wrote, where Fanny Burney immortalized the fashions of the day in "Evelina." You turn Dover street way with envious eye, but a distant chime marks the hour and you have to leave your researches.

Mount street, through which you pass hurriedly, has few landmarks. The hand of the destroyer has been particularly ruthless, but you glimpse the Mount Coffee House, once presided over by the father of Harriet Westbrook, the first wife of Shelley, who furnished more than the allotted nine days' talk to the scandal-mongers.

All this you say has little to do with one of the latest claimants to fame, but who can tell, every stone in the locality has been trod by the feet of the mighty and the invisible prints may have helped greatly in Mr. Maugham's ongoing. At any rate it does no harm to believe so, and he himself does not deny it.

Where Maugham Works. The special environment, up many flights of general-sized stairs to working and living rooms, high enough to particularly elude the sunlight of London, is interesting to harmonize with your expectations. The salon has its easy chairs and divans covered with shiny chaises which recall Clyde Fitch's stage settings and home decorous. Mr. Maugham in appearance is not unlike the Clyde Fitch of eight or ten years ago, as his plays, of which American audiences have seen "Lady Frederick" and "Jack Straw" and will see "Penelope" next season, are not unlike Mr. Fitch's in their clever construction, their more than clever dialogue, and their lack of ultimate shock to the novelty seeking here.

He has a sort of resemblance also to the bronze Narcissus silhouetted against the light on top of a revolving bookcase, for Mr. Maugham is a very good looking young man, with bright brown eyes, a determined chin and a ready, outgoing color. He is of medium height, and wears a loose Norfolk jacket as part of his writing costume. He is in the early thirties, the era when a man refers frequently to the time "when I was a young fellow," which is said by those who have passed on, to be a verbal disease, brief and non-recurrent.

If he does not live up to his blue china, he at least sits up against it, a number of selected pieces forming a desk frieze, and over and about him are numerous interesting pictures, some charming water-colors of the Riviera and Italy, and a portrait of himself by Mr. Kelly. The most interesting object in an extremely interesting apartment is a new painting by one of London's greatest painters, Wilson Steer, who is familiarly called the modern Constable. The owner exhibits it with pride and a pride of a connoisseur. He has, however, a little of the manner of the family man, who has been carried away by the exaltation of an auction's psychic moment, has purchased an Elizabethan bed and then remembers that he lives in a Harlem flat.

"I certainly don't like to move," he says, taking you at once into his confidence, "for I have no room here, and I hardly think chambers make a suitable environment for a picture like this. I suppose it must be a house next time."

the face and eyes of a personality which suggests frequent temperamental accidents. Then you ask malleously if he imagines that American audiences will accept such a cold-blooded portrayal of marital backsliding.

"Why, honestly, I never thought of such a thing. You mean that women in America, that is of the smart, social whirl, expect their husbands to be faithful to them?"

"You nod in your best Star and Stripes manner. "Why, that's awfully interesting; of course we expect the wives to be faithful, naturally, but we are not along as far as you are, or further along, which is it? However, I don't think you can look askance, for you have an easy divorce, which really balances those questions."

In the Matter of Woman. Having in mind the rumor that as a popular bachelor Mr. Maugham is much in demand at social functions, you ask regarding his rather remarkable knowledge of feminine nature, which in "Penelope" is portrayed to the point of making you wonder if the fable concerning the impossibility of understanding the sex is to continue.

He agrees that this polite and pleasant fiction is relegated to the limbo of last year's hats. Women are so different from men; they are of the same clay; they have the same passions, the same emotions, the same principles or lack of principles, so I say give 'em the vote. I intended "Penelope" as a lesson, showing young wives how to treat their husbands, for as a bachelor I feel that I have a perfect right not only to have radical ideas about the marriage state, but also to express them.

It's only time man can, and he ought to make the best of his halcyon days, eh?"

Mr. Maugham hospitably presses upon you sanitary cigarettes with oot on the mouth, which absorbs the nicotine and—indeed. You are forced to decline, although he assures you that he don't mind ash on his carpet, not a bit.

Doctor Gets His. One of the most amusing bits of "Penelope" is the peek behind the veil in the doctor's office, where a strange array of patients are shown and the comedy of which culminates when, having treated a funny old man on whom he has once counted for a fat fee and whose treated visits has prompted Penelope to buy another Paris hat, he learns that she is a doctor's widow, and according to the unwritten law of his profession he cannot accept any payment for his services.

The real reason why I selected a doctor's office as the mise en scene was this: One has to keep one's finger on the pulse of public demand in playwriting, as in other professions, and the popular bent at present among English people shows a decided reaction against the continual portrayal of the lives of the aristocracy.

Advantage of an Aristocracy. "I don't think the reason the aristocratic class has been drawn on so frequently is not because the playwright has any special affiliations with it or has confined his studies there to the exclusion of other classes. It is merely because it is the only class available for his needs. People like to read about people they like to read about, they like the picturesque and the environment which appeals to their aesthetic sense, and in consequence when you use that environment you must people it with that class that you would naturally find there. You can't take a business man, a man who is stock broking in the city, a barrister working out a legal complication in the courts, forcibly remove him, put him in regulation dress and place him in a garden party, or dancing attendance at an afternoon bazaar, now can you? If you want to take a man into the country or to a smart function in order to work out your story, you have to look for that man among the only class who are always at your beck and call. You cannot find such a man except in the leisure class, and I believe that is undoubtedly the reason why he has been so overworked. The doctor's office seemed to me a very possible compromise, and having selected it for the reason given, the comedy came as a matter of course."

How to Write a Play. "You have to have so much more snow of evidence on the stage than in real life. The motive of action must be a hundred-fold more reasonable. In one's daily existence he will do the most absurd things, act absolutely on the impulse of the moment, follow a mood, a caprice, no matter what may happen, but you can't do that on the stage and be convincing, for your audience will not realize the emotion of the moment you portray and the hap-hazardness, without logic or consequentiveness, that ensue. In Mr. Bernard Shaw's play "The Devil's Disciple" there is a case in point, and the reason the play did not make a bigger success I suppose was due to the fact that while the man in it acted as a man of that kind would do under the circumstances, acted emotionally, without thought or care of consequences, the audience looking on and seeing the absurdity of it all could not and would not be convinced. In real life situations are made for us; on the stage we have to make situations and work them out to a reasonable conclusion."

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Another Illusion Shattered. Some Reflections on the Wisdom of Widows in the Matrimonial Game. Another tradition is scattered to the winds by the published record of our latest experimenter in wholesale matrimony. Of the seventeen women whom Christian C. Johnson of San Francisco can remember leading to the altar, only two were spinsters. The rest presumably were widows. Johnson, who practiced polygamy of revenue only, and who, in fact, never married a woman if he could make off with her money in any other way, like the burglar who never slays unless he is absolutely compelled to, lays it down as a general proposition that the conquest of woman is easy. "Treat her a little harsh, and he a little distant, and she will come to you." Of women in general the thing has been said before. But in the present instance, as we have pointed out, for "widows" we must read "widows."

Chloroformed the Snakes. Wise Experiment of a Kentucky Doctor During Mint Julep Season. Dr. W. E. Delaney of State Run, Ky., often called a "right to go into what is known as the Black Forest region, where Weed & Co. have several large lumber camps. The doctor owns a velociped truck, which he rides over a little narrow gauge railroad used to haul logs out of the woods. He can ride within two miles of the camp, these last two miles being cov-

SAFEGUARDING INFANT LIFE

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Under the auspices of the American Academy of Medicine, a conference on "Prevention of Infant Mortality" is to be held in New Haven, Conn., next November. In connection with the campaign inaugurated by the academy, much more hospital care, it is interesting to note that nearly all of the humanitarian undertakings that have had the prevention of infant mortality as their chief aim, have sprung up in this last quarter of the century. It has been only since people have waked up to the possibilities of preventive medicine that the laity as well as physicians have realized that the sovereign remedies of fresh air, sunshine and pure food are the most effective weapons that could be devised in a fight against the appalling waste of life among little children.

Just as the excessive mortality due to tuberculosis was formerly looked upon as a visitation of Providence, so the terrible mortality among the babies was regarded as due to divine intervention, to be accepted with passive resignation. But the work of the visiting nurses, of the day nurseries, the floating hospitals, the fresh air homes, the establishment of milk depots, the inspection of the sources of the milk supply by enlightened boards of health, the sanitary inspection of tenements, all show, that given a fair chance, the baby can be depended upon to do his share toward making good physically.

Effect of Educational Campaign. Proof of this is shown in statistics collected by Dr. L. Emmett Holt of New York. His table is for New York City and covers the period from 1881 to 1900. During 1881, when the population under five years amounted to 188,722, the mortality of children under 5 was 13,222. The number that the number of deaths for every 1,000 children under 5 years of age was ninety-six. In 1886 the number of deaths had come down to eighty-five per 1,000; and in 1900 it has been reduced to sixty-seven, a total decline of nearly thirty per 1,000 in ten years. Though the number of deaths under 5 years had increased 5,000, the actual decrease in deaths of children under 5 years was 1,000. This decrease is attributed to the wider diffusion of knowledge of infant feeding and hygiene; to the more enlightened care given to the babies during the summer; to the bettering of the milk supply, and to the many agencies that are at work to secure more favorable conditions for the babies in the overcrowded sections of the city.

Nearly every civilized country has been struck at the appalling mortality among the babies, and in many places special efforts have been made to lower that death rate. One of the most conspicuously successful of these was tried in England, and is now generally spoken of as the Huddersfield plan. But there is just as much cause to call it the Roadblock plan, for it was a leading member of Huddersfield, who announced on the day of its election in 1908 that he would give a prize of about \$5 to the mother of every child born during his year of office. It was stipulated, though, that the child was to be alive and well and to be brought to the town hall on the appointed day as a means of insuring intelligent care for the children, a committee of women was appointed, who visited the mothers and gave them simple, practical instruction in the proper hygiene and feeding of the babies.

A Great Success. When the exhibition day arrived 100 lively, healthy babies were entered in the baby show, and their mothers received the promised award. Incidentally, when the town clerk made up the mortality records for the year it was found that the death rate of 134 babies in 1,000 had gone down to 54 in 1,000. Small wonder the municipal "baby show" was voted a great success!

In many parts of Germany, while the baby show does not figure conspicuously in the municipal records, the baby care by instructing the mothers through a regularly appointed board of visitors. In some of the German cities, among them Cologne, if the circumstances of the family are such that the mother is compelled to be one of the bread winners, arrangements are made for her support for the first month of the baby's life, so that the baby can be sure of having the mother's care during the first few critical weeks of its life. In our own country the education of the mothers is one of the most important features of the work of the visiting nurses. In some municipalities the up the babies by the distribution of educational leaflets by the local boards of health on the birth of the baby. The carelessness with which vital statistics are usually kept, and the delay on the part of physicians in recording births, makes this method less effective than it could otherwise be.

Plans of the Conference. The conference to be held at New Haven will be on the general subject of the prevention of infant mortality. The possibilities of such prevention by medical, philanthropic, institutional and educational means will be discussed by men and women who have made a special study of these problems. The officers of the sections are: Medical, Dr. J. H. Mason, of the Johns Hopkins medical school, Baltimore, chairman; Dr. Richard A. Urbarger, Baltimore, secretary; philanthropic, Edward T. Devine, editor of the Survey, chairman; Miss Lillian Brandt, secretary; institutional, Homer Folks, secretary of the New York State Charities Aid association, chairman; Miss Mary Vida Clark, secretary; educational, Prof. C. E. A. Winslow of the laboratory of sanitary research, Massachusetts institute of Technology, Boston, chairman, and Dr. Henry I. Bowditch, Boston, secretary.

Executive, advisory and other committees of the conference include many well-known specialists in children's diseases, social workers, educators and health officers. Among them are: Miss Jane Addams of Hull House, Chicago; Prof. Irving Fisher of Yale university, president of the One Hundred on National Health, Dr. Charles R. Henderson of the University of Chicago; Dr. Helen C. Putnam of Providence, R. I., chairman of the executive committee, and Dr. James Morgan Roth, professor of pediatrics at Harvard.

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