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The Repertory Theatre Movement,

1907-1917

This thesis is submitted to the University of Warwick
in part-fulfillment of the regulations for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy, under the supervision of
Professor Michael R. Booth.

ALASDAIR F. CAMERON

October 1983

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FOR

PETER AND MY PARENTS

Abstract

In this thesis I examine the development in the theatre outside London, known as the "repertory theatre movement".

I concentrate on the first three theatres founded, the Gaiety in Manchester, the Citizens' in Glasgow, and the Liverpool Repertory Theatre, all of which came into prominence between 1907 and 1917, the ten years which span the life of the Gaiety Theatre.

The roots of the movement are traced to Germany and its network of subsidised theatres, and to the Abbey in Dublin, which played a crucial role as the catalyst for the movement.

The British background to the movement is also explored. A discussion of the theatres' structure follows, with their establishment, organisation, finances, policy, and the audience they attracted, surveyed. I then consider the repertoire of each theatre analysing which plays they performed, which new authors encouraged, and why the emphasis lay on a certain kind of drama.

The backgrounds of the actors and actresses who joined the repertory theatres are discussed, as are their techniques, and how they adapted to the strictures of repertory. Similarly, the directors who undertook a huge workload were forced to find a new way of working which would ensure high artistic standards, while producing a large number of plays. I shall look at this development of a new stagecraft in a historical context and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses.

Finally, I focus on the year 1913, which was crucial in the development of the movement as, at the time when the first three theatres seemed to be in eclipse, there were signs of an upsurge of interest in repertory theatres in many other towns. The role of the First World War as "the great disintegrator", is also discussed and a conclusion assesses the achievements of the repertory theatre movement in a historical perspective.

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Abbreviations used in the text and notes

- H.F. Horniman Festival Scrapbook
- H.S. Horniman Scrapbooks (in John Rylands Library)
- LPL. Liverpool Public Library and Record Office
- MPL. Manchester Public Library
- S.Y.B. The Stage Year Book (various years)
- W.S. Alfred Wareing's Scrapbook

INTRODUCTION

From the middle of the nineteenth century until around 1907, there was little *independent* theatre in the provinces; most of the major towns outside London being served only by touring companies. Between 1907 and 1917, stimulated by the example of the German endowed theatres, and by the foundation of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, new theatres, quite independent of London managements and dedicated to various high artistic ideals, were opened in Manchester, Glasgow, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Plymouth. Encouraged by their example, other cities arranged their own seasons but, because of the First World War, no permanent theatres were established in these cities until the 1920s and 1930s. This upsurge in theatrical activity in Edwardian Britain was usually called "the repertory theatre movement", and at first, the theatres which were established had many features, especially the personnel involved, in common.

The first of these theatres, the Gaiety in Manchester, was opened in September 1908. The theatre had been bought and refurbished by Miss Horniman, the daughter of a wealthy tea-merchant. She had set aside £25,000, which she determined should be used for public purposes, and the Gaiety became the third theatrical enterprise she had funded. The first had been the Avenue Theatre seasons in 1894, in London, at which Shaw's Arms and the Man had its first performance. Then, in collaboration with W.B. Yeats, she bought and equipped the Abbey Theatre in Dublin.

Her time at the Abbey was marred by frequent disagreements with the directors of the theatre, but, through the Abbey, she met Ben Iden Payne, whom she later engaged as her producer at the Gaiety, and Alfred Wareing, at that time advance agent for the tours of Herbert Beerbohm Tree.

Wareing, realising that the Abbey Company was putting into practice his ideal of a return to stock companies which had existed up to the 1850s in most major towns, was stimulated to renew his efforts to found such a theatre. He hoped to start a repertory theatre in Glasgow and tried to enlist Miss Horniman's help in this. When Miss Horniman chose to go to Manchester instead Wareing persevered and, within two months, raised, by public subscription, the money to open the Citizens' Theatre in Glasgow, in April 1909.

Wareing's proselytizing zeal, led him to arrange for the Glasgow Company to perform for a season in Liverpool. But when, early in 1911, he fell ill, the scheme was taken over by Miss Darragh, who had acted at both the Abbey and the Gaiety. She was assisted by another former Gaiety actor, Basil Dean, and when the Liverpool Repertory Theatre was established, Dean was given artistic control.

On December 9, 1911, when the movement seemed to be in full-flood, a conference, attended by, amongst others, Miss Horniman, Alfred Wareing and Basil Dean, was held at the offices of the Stage Society in London. The outcome of this gathering was a proposal to establish a "Repertory Theatre Association", which would be "formed in the interests of the existing repertory theatres", and would "assist in the institution of new repertory theatres". However, the proposed organisation came to nothing.

Despite the similarities in the aims and objectives of the first three repertory theatres, and possibly because of the failure of this proposed association, the Birmingham Post of January 12, 1914, wrote that:

For the practical purposes of the theatre, there is and has been no definite, systematic and organised Repertory Movement...but only a number of local independent and unorganised theatres attempting to carry into practice the Repertory Idea.

The reason for this judgement that no real repertory theatre movement existed, perhaps lay in what the Post called, the "repertory idea". No-one knew quite what it was

According to Harley Granville Barker, a repertory theatre was one, like the Comedie Francaise, at which a large number of productions could be revived, at a very short notice, by actors, directors and technical staff. It became almost a cliché to say that, what were called repertory theatres were nothing of the sort, as they very seldom revived productions. Nevertheless, by 1907, because of the influence of important figures such as Barker, the word "repertory" did have a certain potency. "Repertory" became synonymous with experiment in the theatre and was a useful shorthand to describe any new departure from accepted theatre practice.

The Edwardian theatrical avant-garde felt that the Victorian Theatre had bequeathed them three unfortunate legacies; the long run; the theatrical tour; and the trivialisation of drama. In letters which he wrote to William Archer between 1903 and 1907, Harley Granville Barker claimed that repertory theatres would counter these evils by offering "intellectual work for actors", by offering an alternative to the touring system which was then "at its nadir", and by appealing to "intellectual would-be playgoers who are profoundly bored by the theatre as it is".

It was this last proposed benefit of repertory which turned out to be its undoing. From the start, the label "high-brow" stuck to the theatres and narrowed their appeal. Barry Jackson, who founded the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, crystallised this high-brow attitude when he contrasted the beneficial effects of a repertory performance of Twelfth Night on the minds of an audience, with the potential effect of a popular melodrama such as The Murder at the Red Barn which would be, he said, "not merely valueless, but positively noxious".

By 1913, Miss Horniman was complaining that the word "repertory" had come to mean something "dull, freakish and slightly improper", though Barker still felt he had to "nail repertory to (his) managerial mast". But, by 1922, even Barker was complaining that the word had become a "curse".

However, In 1907, he felt quite confident about the repertory ideal. At a dinner given in his honour, to mark the end of the Court seasons, he told the company that, although repertory would not work in London, on account of the prohibitively high rents, repertory would succeed in the provinces. It was left to others to test this hypothesis.

Chronology of the Repertory Theatre Movement

1906

April Alfred Wareing, on tour in Dublin, sees the Abbey Company for the first time, and is so impressed that he helps to arrange their first tour of Britain. At Cardiff, he meets Miss Horniman for the first time and persuades her to consider setting up a "stock company" in a provincial theatre. Miss Horniman, disgruntled with the Abbey, agrees.

In Germany, Kokoshka's play, Murderer Hope of Womankind, is produced. In Glasgow, Charles Rennie Mackintosh is designing Miss Cranston's Ingram Street Tea-Rooms and starting work on the final part of the Glasgow School of Art.

1907

- Jan. 26 Synge's Playboy of the Western World produced at the Abbey
- June 21 Ben Iden Payne at Abbey, meets Miss Horniman, who sees him as an ally against the Irish
- June 28 End of Barker-Vedrenne management at the Court Theatre
- July 11 Horniman-Payne scheme announced in the Manchester Guardian
- September 16 Barker-Vedrenne management at the Savoy begins
- September 23 Manchester Pilot scheme begins at Midland Hotel
- October Miss Horniman announces the purchase of the Gaiety Theatre
- November- March, 1908 Gaiety Company on tour.

Picasso exhibits Les Demoiselles D'Avignon. Beginnings of The Little Theatre Movement in Chicago.

1908

- March 14 Savoy season ends
- April 13- May 23 First Gaiety season
- June - September Gaiety Theatre renovated
- September 7 Refurbished Gaiety opened with McEvoy's When the Devil was Ill
- December 1 Wareing arrives in Glasgow to begin negotiations for his proposed theatre

E.M. Forster's A Room with a View is published. Third annual portfolio of "Die Brucke" is produced.

1909

- February 15 First public announcement of the Glasgow subscription scheme
- April 5 Glasgow Repertory Theatre opens with You Never Can Tell
- April Trench and Frohman both announce proposed Repertory Theatres for London
- June 7-26 First Gaiety Company season in London at the Coronet Theatre, Notting Hill Gate
- November The Seagull at Glasgow. The first production of Chekhov in Britain
- November 8 New Theatre, New York opened

Charles Rickett's designs King Lear for the Haymarket. Marinetti's Futurist Manifesto published in Paris. Diaghalev's Ballets Russe have their first Paris season at the Theatre du Chatelet.

1910

- January Adelaide Literary Theatre opened
- February Duke of York's Repertory Theatre opened
- February Simultaneous premiere of Galsworthy's Justice at Glasgow and the Duke of York's Theatre in London
- April Miss Horniman completely withdraws her support from the Abbey over the failure of the directors to close the theatre on the death of Edward VIII
- June 17 End of Duke of York's season
- September Granville Barker's Man and Superman at Glasgow
- October Wareing in Liverpool to discuss scheme for Glasgow company to mount repertory season at Kelly's Theatre
- October 11 Gertrude Kingston's Little Theatre in the Adelphi opens

The first "Cubist" exhibition is held in Paris and, at the Grafton Galleries, Roger Fry's exhibition of "Post-Impressionism" opens

1911

- January Wareing's health breaks down and his scheme for Liverpool is taken over by Miss Darragh and Basil Dean
- April 1 Pilot season at Kelly's theatre a success
- May 17 Liverpool Repertory Company floated
- October Ben Iden Payne leaves Manchester
- November 11 Liverpool Repertory Theatre opens with Admirable Crichton

In London, there is the formation of The Camden Town Group of painters; the Ballets Russe performs during the Coronation season at Covent Garden; and Max Reinhardt stages The Miracle at Olympia.

1912

- January/
February Pillars of the Community at Liverpool
- February 12- Gaiety's first visit to North America
March 25
- June 17 Hindle Wakes produced by Gaiety company for
Stage Society
- December/
January Glasgow Repertory season at the Alhambra Theatre

1912 was also the year of Edward Gordon Craig's production of Hamlet at the Moscow Arts Theatre; Max Reinhardt's production of Oedipus Rex at Covent Garden; the publication of the "Blaue Reiter" manifesto; Granville Barker's production of A Winter's Tale and Twelfth Night at the Savoy; and the first performance of Schonberg's Pierrot Lunaire.

1913

- February 15 Birmingham Repertory Theatre opens
- February-May Gaiety Company's second visit to North America
- February-
March Sheffield Repertory Season
- April-May Croydon Repertory Season
- April 11 Mrs. Warren's Profession at Glasgow
- April 28 Wareing leaves Glasgow after the end of his
own season
- May Dean is dismissed by the directors of the
Liverpool Repertory Theatre
- August-
October Barker's Repertory Season at the St. James'
Theatre
- October Julius Caesar at Manchester
- November Casson resigns from the Gaiety

November- Repertory season at Leeds
December

December Douglas Gordon appointed artistic director
 of Gaiety

The Omega workshops are founded; the Rite of Spring causes a riot in Paris; and Victory over the Sun is "performed" in St. Petersburg.

1914

January Casson appointed to Glasgow

March 23 Campbell of Kilmohr at Glasgow

May Muriel Pratt's first season at Bristol
 War declared (Glasgow not to re-open)

August - Pratt's second season at Bristol
November

September Liverpool Commonwealth seasons start

Wyndham Lewis and Ezra Pound publish Blast and launch Vorticism. Granville Barker produces A Midsummer Night's Dream at the Savoy

1915

April-May Pratt's third Repertory season at Bristol

December Plymouth Repertory theatre founded

Eliot first publishes The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufock

1916

June Liverpool Commonwealth disbanded

September Pratt and Bridges-Adams take over the Liverpool Rep

Cafe Voltaire established in Zurich. De Stijl founded

1917

February Liverpool Rep. becomes the Playhouse

April Gaiety closes with Cousin Kate, by H.H. Davis

Freud's lectures on Psycho-Analysis published

CHAPTER ONE

THE ORIGINS OF THE REPERTORY THEATRE MOVEMENT

In the early days of the repertory adventure in Liverpool W.W.Kelly, that splendid old showman, was asked by a curious playgoer "What is this repertory business?" and Kelly, having just returned from a [Basil] Dean rehearsal in which many Continental innovations had been introduced, remarked with a smile, "Repertory, old boy, just three raps and a black-out."

(William Armstrong)

Many theatre historians, from P. P. Howe in 1911, to Professor Jan McDonald in 1973,¹ have expressed the view that the repertory theatre movement grew directly out of the Barker-Vedrenne seasons at London's Court Theatre, from 1904 to 1907. There is, however, a contrary view presented, for example, by Allardyce Nicoll who believed that the Court experiment, while interesting in itself, "did not result in any real profit."² And Huntly Carter, writing in 1912, had no hesitation in pointing to the endowed theatres of Germany as the direct inspiration for the repertory theatre movement.³

¹ P. P. Howe, The Repertory Theatre, (London, Martin Secker, 1910), p. 34 and p. 51. Jan McDonald, "Acting styles at the Court Theatre London, 1904-7," paper read at the World Congress of the International Federation for Theatre Research in Prague in 1973, p. 3.

² Allardyce Nicoll, The English Theatre (London, Nelson, 1936), p. 204.

³ Huntly Carter, The Theatre of Max Reinhardt (London, 1914; rpt. New York, Benjamin Blom, 1964), pp. 304-313.

Historians of both schools are, however, too inclined to emphasise the influence they favour. Howe says that the influence of the Court on the theatres at Manchester and Glasgow is "beyond question," and Professor McDonald talks about the Glasgow Repertory Theatre as, "a child of the Court," which greatly overstates the debt.⁴ Carter, on the other hand, takes too little account of the very important part the Abbey played, in contributing to the establishment of the first two repertory theatres, at Manchester and Glasgow.⁵

The reputation of the Court is largely based on the fact that with its 701 performances of eleven of Shaw's plays, Shaw became Britain's leading dramatist.⁶ Huntly Carter suggested that the Court could have been called a "Shawspielhaus," and Shaw not only benefitted from the seasons, but was in effect the life-force behind the enterprise.⁷ Both Sir John Pollock, who was Shaw's unofficial secretary at the time of the Court seasons, and Ashley Dukes, who attended many rehearsals at the theatre, remind us that much of what later became known as the Court style was inspired by Shaw.⁸ His later reputation as the colossus of the

⁴ Howe, p. 51 and MacDonald, p. 3.

⁵ Carter, Reinhardt, p. 310. The Abbey is given no more than a fleeting mention in this comprehensive survey of the subject.

⁶ Desmond MacCarthy, The Court Theatre (London, A.H. Bullen, 1907) p. 123. The 701 performances were part of a total of 988.

⁷ Huntly Carter, The New Spirit in Drama and Art (London, Frank Palmer, 1912) p. 38.

⁸ Sir John Pollock, Time's Chariot (London, John Murray, 1950) p. 201, "He (Shaw) not Barker, was the producer of his plays and the organiser of the Court's victory." This is backed up by the wealth of detail in, Bernard F. Dukore's Bernard Shaw, Director (London, Allen and Unwin, 1971) For

twentieth century British theatre has helped to produce a distorted view of the influence of the Court theatre on subsequent theatrical developments, and, perhaps it is because of this, that the direct influence of the Court theatre on the origins of the repertory theatres is usually advanced as a self-evident proposition.

But the Court seasons seem not to have had any ^{direct} influence on any of the three people most responsible for the establishment of the first three repertory theatres. Though Alfred Wareing, Miss Horniman and Ben Iden Payne presumably knew something about the Court from newspaper reports, and from its reputation in the profession, there is no record of any of the repertory pioneers having actually seen any of the Court's productions.

Miss Horniman was the earliest backer of Shaw's plays and was also present at the commemoration dinner which marked the end of the Court enterprise in 1907, so she obviously knew something about the workings of the Court. ⁹ She was also on good enough terms with the management to ask John Vedrenne

another view see Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson, Theatrical Companion to Shaw (London, Rockliff, 1954), Appendix 3, Sir Lewis Casson, "Granville Barker, Shaw and the Court Theatre," pp. 288-292. However, Ashley Dukes, in The Scene is Changed (London, MacMillan, 1942), pp. 7-9 supports Pollock's view.

⁹ Miss Horniman was the anonymous backer of Florence Farr's season at the Avenue Theatre in 1894, at which Arms and the Man was first produced. See Rex Pogson, Miss Horniman (London, Rockliff, 1952) pp. 8-10 and Josephine Johnson, Florence Farr (Gerrards Cross, Colin Smythe, 1975) pp. 62-63. Miss Horniman's name appears on the plan, (Table F), for the Complimentary Dinner given to Vedrenne and Barker on the 7th of July, 1907.

to recommend a suitable director for the Abbey.¹⁰ But for most of the life of the Court Miss Horniman was closely involved in the internal wranglings of the Abbey and spent a great deal of her time in Dublin, as she was attempting to found in Dublin, an international art theatre, which was dedicated to the work of W.B. Yeats.¹¹ *Nevertheless*, it seems that she did not even visit the Court to see their production of Yeats', The Pot of Broth *and* ., though she was as fond as Shaw of giving her opinion on matters theatrical she nowhere mentions a visit to the Court, nor does she give any indication in her correspondence that the Court seasons influenced her in any way. Indeed she was so out of touch with the theatrical life of the capital, that before the Court experiment came to an end, she was attempting to found a similar theatre in London, one which would be in direct opposition to the Court. It is doubtful, however, whether this was intended as a direct challenge to Sloane Square, merely another example of the irrationality into which her desire to be revenged upon the Abbey led her.¹²

¹⁰ Ben Iden Payne, A Life in a Wooden O, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1977) p. 65. Robert Hogan and James Kilroy, The Abbey Theatre (Dublin, Dolman Press, 1978) p. 164.

¹¹ Hogan and Kilroy, p. 59. Miss Horniman wrote to Synge, "the (Abbey) theatre was given for the carrying out of Mr. Yeats' artistic dramatic schemes and for no other reasons." For the internal troubles of the Abbey, see James W. Flannery, Miss Annie F. Horniman and the Abbey Theatre (Dublin, Dolman Press, 1970) p.16 and passim. Hogan and Kilroy, pp. 70-75 and passim.

¹² Payne, pp. 78-79.

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Ben Iden Payne was also for a time embroiled in the affairs of the Abbey while the Court theatre seasons were in progress,¹³ and between 1904 and 1906 he was on tour in the provinces with various repertoire companies.¹⁴ He did however visit the Court one afternoon when his company was playing at a suburban theatre and, though he does not appear to have seen a performance at the theatre, he did have a cup of tea with Harley Granville Barker in the A.B.C. tea-rooms in Sloane Square. Payne was committed to a Fabian-type of socialism and was well-acquainted with Shaw's plays in their published form.¹⁵ He therefore sought out Barker, who was presenting those plays, and, though Barker could not offer him an engagement, he did suggest Payne's name to W.B. Yeats who, with Miss Horniman, was looking for a director of "non-peasant" plays at the Abbey. Yeats engaged Payne for a short, fraught, stay at the Abbey, during which time Payne came into contact with Miss Horniman and Alfred Wareing.¹⁶

¹³ Hogan and Kilroy, pp. 164-166 and passim.

¹⁴ See pp. 210-211.

¹⁵ Payne, p. 63. Lewis Casson in, Drama, New Series No. 26, Spring 1953, p. 21, says that Payne was extremely left-wing at this time. See also p.

¹⁶ Letter from Miss Horniman to Yeats reproduced in Flannery, p. 24 see also notes 10, 12 and 13 ~~above~~.

Wareing's name is the thread which runs through the story of the founding of the first three repertory theatres, but he, like Payne, was on tour for most of the time that the Court Theatre was in progress. Therefore, although he did once say that he wanted the standards of production at the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre to be as high as those of the Court theatre under Barker's direction,¹⁷ and he did engage a number of directors such as Norman Page and Madge McIntosh who had worked at the Court as actors, it would seem that he had no first-hand knowledge of these productions. But he no doubt knew something of the work of the Court, through the theatrical grapevine, and he probably knew some of the actors involved in the seasons through his work with Benson.¹⁸

Thus, though there were some links between the Court and the first repertory theatres, there seems to be no direct causal chain connecting them. It might, however, be argued that the very existence of the Court was an important catalyst in the development of the repertory theatres, and some knowledge of the achievements of the Court may well have been useful in building up audiences for the theatre in Manchester and Liverpool.¹⁹ But there is no need to turn, like Allardyce Nicoll,

¹⁷ Glasgow Herald April 5, 1939.

¹⁸ See p. 176.

¹⁹ See, Bristol Times, Oct 1, 1912, "The Repertory Theatre," in the Horniman Scrapbooks, hereafter referred to as H.S. All quotations from the Scrapbooks will have the name of the newspaper from which they come, and the date on which they appeared, as the Scrapbooks have only fitful pagination. Sir Charles Reilly, Scaffolding in the Sky (London, Routledge, 1938), pp. 140-141. Holbrook Jackson, "Manchester and the Gaiety Theatre," Gaiety Christmas Annual, 1911, p.66.

to what he calls an, "intangible Zeitgeist" for an explanation of the foundations of the repertory theatres.²⁰ For, metaphysics aside, the fact remains that, in 1907, Miss Horniman had twenty-five thousand pounds to spend on a theatrical project which she hoped would, "teach those impossible people in Dublin, that I have other fish to fry."²¹ Though the sum was too little to start a theatre in London, as Miss Horniman would have liked, it was more than enough to found a rival to the Abbey somewhere else in the country.

In a memorandum to his fellow directors of the Abbey Theatre, W.B. Yeats wrote that their patron, Miss Horniman, had always had before her the municipal theatre of Germany as an ideal.²² She had started the Abbey hoping that it would develop into an art-theatre, dedicated to the work of W.B. Yeats, just as the Lessing Theatre in Berlin was founded to present the plays of Ibsen. There is also much evidence to suggest that the German theatre was a dominant influence, not only in the founding of the Abbey, but in the establishment of the first repertory theatre, the Gaiety in Manchester. Though Miss Horniman seems not to have visited the Court, she was a regular visitor to Germany.

²⁰ Allardyce Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 56.

²¹ Payne p. 78. The Directors of the Abbey had been anxious to secure this sum for their own purposes. See Hogan and Kilroy, pp. 86-87.

²² Hogan and Kilroy, pp. 86-87.

For Miss Horniman was a Germanophile, fluent in the language, a practised translator, steeped in German culture and above all a devotee of Wagner, missing only one Bayreuth Festival between 1884 and 1914. Her first acquaintance with a repertory theatre came, however, with a visit to the Comédie Française when that company appeared at the Gaiety Theatre in London in 1879. According to her biographer this was felt to have been the first suitably respectable theatrical event which young Quaker ladies of good birth could attend. Miss Horniman was already nineteen and desperate to visit the theatre about which her German governess had told her so much. Perhaps because of the influence of this governess, Germany became her first love and Munich, possibly because of its proximity to Bayreuth, her favourite town. It was there that, in 1889, she saw her first Ibsen play, An Enemy of The People. She went on to acquire a considerable first-hand knowledge of the New Drama as it spread through the German-speaking world and wrote:

In 1890 I was present at the very first performance of Hedda Gabler in Munich, and saw Ibsen called on stage afterwards. I also saw him bow from the dress circle there at a revival of The Vikings of Helgeland.²³

According to her biographer, "the plays of Ibsen and his followers made a lasting impression on her, as did the subsidised theatre and the natural way in which the theatre was treated as an integral part of ordinary life."²⁴ But Germany was for her not only the land of the New Drama, for

²³ Pogson, pp. 4-8

²⁴ Pogson, p. 7

she claimed that it was in Munich that she saw the best performance of a play by Shakespeare that she had ever witnessed. ²⁵

The ideal which the German theatre represented for Miss Horniman was that of the, "civilised", theatre. For Miss Horniman, the civilised theatre was one like the court theatre in Dresden in which one could see, as she said, "both Hamlet and Charley's Aunt in the same week." She continued, "that is a repertory theatre in the true sense. I have seen plays by Goethe, Ibsen and Shakespeare and an entirely new play in one week at that same theatre." ²⁶ Lewis Casson later commented on the failure of Miss Horniman to learn this lesson of the German endowed theatre and mix serious plays with lighter but more financially rewarding fare. ²⁷ The blame for this probably lay with Ben Iden Payne, who was not a man to take kindly to Charley's Aunt. ¶ The idea that the German theatre should provide a model for the new repertory theatres of Britain was present from the outset. For example, in 1889, when the idea of a National Repertory Theatre for London was being discussed, William Archer had urged that:

while plans for an endowed theatre are under consideration some competent person should be allowed to make a round of all the endowed theatres

²⁵ This was presumably a production by Karl von Perfall whose revolutionary productions of Shakespeare, using fixed architectural sets and changing backgrounds were being produced in Munich from 1889 onwards. The remark is from Birmingham Daily Post April 25, 1910. (H.S.)

²⁶ Manchester Courier February 9, 1914 (H.S.)

²⁷ The Stage September 11, 1958.

of the Continent, study the history and constitution of each and draw up a full report. 28

The "civilised" theatre in Germany can be traced to the early seventeenth century and the troupe of itinerant English Players, the "Englische Kommedianten", who toured the German states playing their repertoires of plays, including the famous version of Hamlet, Der Bestrafte Brudermord.²⁹ These players eventually found princely patrons who, like the noblemen of England, retained the actors as members of their household. Another theory traced the development of the endowed theatres to the Commedia dell'Arte troupes which, from the middle of the seventeenth century toured their improvised plays round the German Courts and were adopted in the same way as the English itinerants. Thus the rise of the endowed repertory theatre seems to be linked to the transition of actors from vagrants to valued members of a nobleman's entourage. They brought with them their repertoire of plays which could be staged, like the "Mousetrap" in Hamlet, with very little rehearsal and presumably could be added to without

²⁸ Fortnightly Review No. CCLXIX, May 1, 1889, p.622

²⁹ In 1910, a collection of articles Granville Barker wrote in that year, which he had bound, there is an article from the Times, in which Barker describes seeing and touching the perfectly preserved seventeenth century costume from one of these players. The costume had been owned by the family of a German nobleman for three hundred years, and could have belonged, thought Barker, to someone who had acted with Shakespeare. William Poel revived Fratricide Punished in 1924, Robert Speaight, William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival, (London, Heinemann, 1954) pp. 240-244.

difficulty.³⁰ Whether for reasons of prestige, or from a genuine love of the theatre, by the end of the eighteenth century, the practice of each German Prince endowing his own theatre was almost universal. The scale of the theatrical enterprise varied considerably from principality to principality, but, as the numbers of court theatres tended to overstretch the available human resources, productions at these theatres were seldom notable. Occasionally, as with the theatre at Weimar under Goethe's direction, the fame and influence of the Court theatre spread far beyond the boundaries of the principality. Indeed, so great was the influence of Goethe's regime, that, in his book The Theatre of Goethe and Schiller, John Prudhoe credits him with establishing a repertoire of plays and operas, "which set an example to other theatres and is in no small way responsible for the internationally oriented programme of German civic theatres today, [1973]." ³¹ Occasionally the ruler himself would play an active part in the artistic affairs of his theatre. The most notable example of this involvement was Georg, Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, whose productions, it is claimed, influenced the acting styles of many theatres in Europe and inspired two of the seminal figures in the late nineteenth century European theatrical avante-garde, Andre Antoine and Konstantin Stanislavsky.³²

³⁰ Carter, Reinhardt, pp. 304-305.

³¹ John Prudhoe, The Theatre of Goethe and Schiller, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1973), p. 101.

³² Samuel Waxman Antoine and the Theatre Libre, (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard, 1926) p. 95. Konstantin Stanislavsky, My Life in Art, (Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, n.d.), pp. 156-157.

By the early twentieth century, as a result of the increasing democratisation of Germany, all of the court theatres had become completely accessible to the public, though the local prince continued to subsidise his court theatre out of his own resources. The prince appointed an intendant, or artistic director, who was a member of the ruler's household and who ran the theatre, supervised the large staff, which usually worked in very favourable conditions, and organised the theatre's extensive repertoire which would be frequently changed. In 1908 alone, the court theatre at Stuttgart added to its repertoire, six new opera productions and twenty new plays, mainly new productions of plays which had been recently premièred elsewhere in Germany. In 1911, the Court theatre at Dresden produced 49 operas and 60 plays.³³ The day to day artistic running of the theatres came from the regisseurs, or producers, of whom one theatre might have several. The regisseurs would supervise rehearsals, mount revivals and direct new productions of plays, even of plays which had only recently been premièred in Berlin. This was one example of the decentralisation of the Theatre which found favour with the repertory theatres in Britain, its most celebrated instance being the simultaneous première in Glasgow and in London in 1910 of John Galsworthy's play Justice.

³³ F. Washbourne Freund, "The German Stage" in The Stage Year Book, (hereafter cited as S.Y.B.), 1908 p. 102. Also Freund, "The German Stage," in, The Stage Year Book 1911, p. 76. There is also an unidentified cutting, (Manchester Courier, ? July 1907?) in Ms. 16/17, Manchester Public Library, which says that, "the two Mannheim Municipal Theatres [recently] presented 161 separate works including 93 dramas, 62 operas," in one year.

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Like the German Court Theatres, the Gaiety Theatre in Manchester was essentially the theatre of a private patron, Miss Horniman, who acted as her own intendant, and appointed Ben Iden Payne as her first regisseur. Miss Horniman, however, had much more limited financial resources than the German Princes. The two Court theatre in Munich, for example, together lost some £24,000 every year and the theatre at Darmstadt £10,000.³⁴ Miss Horniman could certainly not afford to lose such sums as she was giving £1,000, almost one third of her annual income to the Abbey Theatre and had only £25,000 with which to start her Manchester venture.³⁵ Ideally she would have been supported by a group of wealthy businessmen who could have shared with her the burden of subsidy, or she could have worked with the City Corporation. Neither plan would have been in the least strange in Germany, where some towns actually possessed a civic theatre wholly owned by the municipality, while in others there were theatres subsidised by a mixture of public and private money. Miss Horniman and Manchester had many examples from which to choose.

The towns of Kiel and Strasburg, for example, both had their own theatre. The town council of Strasburg, appointed the director of the theatre, monitored its running, and then, at the end of the year, paid the difference between the theatre's running costs and its box office revenue. The Burgers of Kiel, on the other hand, leased their theatre to a director, allowing him to run it as his own enterprise, only regulating the seat

³⁴ S.Y.B. 1910, p. 46. Carter Reinhardt, pp. 113-114.

³⁵ Flannery, p. 35.

prices, supervising his repertoire, insisting on schools' performances, fixing the actors' salaries and then, if the theatre made a profit, taking half of it.³⁶ In a survey conducted in 1903, thirty-four towns in Germany with municipal theatres were spending a total of £125,000 a year in subsidising their theatres, by 1914 their average annual subsidy was between seven and ten thousand pounds.³⁷ Until 1942, there was no public subsidy for the theatre in Britain.³⁸

Private theatres were also quite common in Germany and ranged from the West End type of "long-run" commercial enterprises, to suburban theatres, like that at Charlottenburg on the outskirts of Berlin, which was a type of neighbourhood play-house funded by local residents.³⁹ The two most famous pre-1914 German theatres, the Deutsches Theater and the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus, were also privately owned. According to Granville Barker neither theatre seems to have been particularly anxious to divulge details of its finances, but it is known, that the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus was founded by a syndicate of wealthy Rheinland businessmen, who each year made good any deficit in the running of the theatre. Even after the

³⁶ S.Y.B. 1908, pp. 102-104.

³⁷ S.Y.B. 1908, p. 104, S.Y.B. 1914, p. 91

³⁸ The subsidy came from C.E.M.A., Eric White, The Arts Council (London, Davis-Poynter, 1975), pp. 46-54 and Harold Baldry, The Case for the Arts (London, Secker and Warburg, 1981), pp. 13-18. For Alfred Wareing's role in the establishment of C.E.M.A. see White, pp. 18-19; Baldry, pp. 11-12.

³⁹ Basil Dean, The Repertory Theatre (Liverpool, Philip, 1911). A lecture given to Liverpool Playgoers' Society on Friday, October 5, 1911, pp. 7-8.

city of Düsseldorf had contributed about £2,500 to the running of the theatre, the deficit was usually around £6,000, slightly less than that of a municipal theatre.⁴⁰

For theatres to receive both public and private money in this way was however, quite rare, though the city fathers in Bern found it a useful way of ensuring quality theatre without too much burden on the rates. The municipality of Bern owned about half the stock of the municipal theatre and private shareholders the rest, the theatre receiving a municipal subsidy and any deficit being made good by the shareholders of the theatre, mainly citizens of the town whose shareholding entitled them to reduced price subscription tickets.⁴¹ The Deutsches Theater, famous in 1910 as Reinhardt's theatre, was wholly capitalised by private shareholders and on Granville Barker's estimate did not make a profit. It had been founded in 1873 to provide Germany with an unofficial national theatre which could rival the Comédie Française and the Burgtheater in Vienna. Situated in Berlin, it could attract national, rather than local, money, and, by 1907, large subsidies had enabled it to achieve its original aim. The Deutsches Theater would have provided an excellent model for a national theatre in London, had one been established before 1914, as its foundation had led to the formation of a network of emulatory municipal and private theatres, in towns in Germany not served by a Court theatre. One of the main aims of those who were trying to establish a national theatre in Edwardian

⁴⁰ 1910, "Two German Theatres," p. 61.

⁴¹ S.Y.B. 1908, p. 103.

London was to set up a number of similar but smaller theatres in the provinces to try out plays and train actors for the national theatre in the capital. ⁴²

As they were both established with shareholders' money, the organisation of the repertory theatre in Glasgow and Liverpool was in many ways similar to that of the private theatres in Germany; the scale of the finance however, was strikingly different. In 1909, the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre was established with £2,000, one third of the money the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus was allowed to lose every year. Liverpool was more fortunate, and the Repertory Theatre there was founded with £10,000, an amount similar to the annual deficit of a more extravagant German municipal theatre. The German theatres could also rely on their shareholders to buy subscription tickets for a whole season, and this gave the theatres large amounts of working capital, enabling them to plan well ahead. Glasgow and Liverpool had similar schemes, which, had they been more fully exploited, might have eased the cash-flow problems which strangled Glasgow and prevented Liverpool from being truly innovative.

Apart from the scale of their financial backing, one major difference between the repertory theatres in Germany and those in Britain, was that the British theatres tried to introduce new writers to their repertoire, while at the same time trying to build up an audience for more established playwrights.

⁴² Archer and Barker, pp. xi-xiv.

Conservatism in their programme-planning, was the price that the German endowed theatres had to pay for their financial reliance on the goodwill of large numbers of subscribers, and most of the endowed theatres had a repertoire which was solidly based on the classics of the German and European Theatres, with only established playwrights being incorporated into the repertoire. ⁴³

The endowed theatres were extremely complex and costly to run, requiring a large labour force to ensure that they operated smoothly and, because they were run as true repertory theatres, their frequent changes of programme meant that while the acting company numbered about twenty, and in spite of the wide spread use of electricity backstage, the theatre at Bern, for example, employed an average of 86 stage-hands. ⁴⁴ Setting up a new theatre was obviously even more costly and, to provide Düsseldorf, a city half the size of Manchester, with its endowed theatre involved the efforts of a syndicate of wealthy Rheinland businessmen. The wonder is that the British theatres achieved as much as they did with their slender resources.

Although one reads much about the glories of the German theatre in books and articles written before 1914, there is little mention made of them after that date. The First World War has *partly* obscured the extent of the debt which the Edwardian theatrical avant-garde owed to the German theatre of their time and, although no systematic study was made of the

⁴³ For a sample week's repertoire, see p. 32.

⁴⁴ S.Y.B. 1908, p. 103.

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organisation of the repertory theatres of Germany, many individuals benefited greatly from their encounters with the German theatres, using what they learned to advance, not only the repertory theatres, but also many of London's more experimental theatres.

It is on an individual level that the extent of the debt can most easily be seen and assessed and Miss Horniman was only one of the many who had before them the German municipal theatres as an ideal. F. Washburn Freund writing on the theatre in Germany observed that, "each German ruler felt it to be his duty, not only to interest himself in the latest cultural movements, but to further their growth with his help and encouragement." ⁴⁵ This was also very much Miss Horniman's attitude to theatrical projects, and it is probable, having already noticed the similarity between the organisation of her theatre, and that of the Court theatres of Germany, that this attitude was fostered by her frequent visits to these theatres. Miss Horniman was, however, very well aware that the main reason why the Gaiety Theatre could never hope to achieve the high level of the organisation of the repertory theatres in Germany was, that real repertory theatres were too expensive to run. ⁴⁶ Her knowledge of the continental theatre had also made her aware of how backward the British theatre appeared in comparison, and she underlined this in one of her many newspaper interviews:

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 102.

⁴⁶ Manchester Chronicle, February 9, 1914, (H.S.)

In France and Austria there are great theatres where classic plays are performed. We have no theatre in England resembling the Théâtre Française or the Burgtheater in Vienna...dramatic art is not taken so seriously here as it is on the Continent. ⁴⁷

This quotation touches upon two points which were widely discussed by the Edwardian theatrical avant-garde. The first was the need to establish a National Theatre in London like the Comédie Française, the Burgtheater or the Deutsches Theater; the second was how the attitude of the general public to the theatre could be changed and the theatre allowed to take its place as a serious art form. The German attitude to the theatre was widely praised, and praised in terms which, after 1914, would have been unthinkable. ⁴⁸ Echoing Miss Horniman's sentiments, Laurence Irving said, in the course of an address given to the Manchester Playgoers' Society in April 1911, that:

People were beginning to realise that the Germans, whose theatre was to them a pride, who had a theatre in which their minds were concentrated upon what was highest and best, and who derived pleasure and enjoyment from it, not only for the theatre, but in other respects, were dealing with life in a more serious way than we. ⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Daily Mail, February 19, 1914. (H.S.)

⁴⁸ For example, in Speaight, p. 220, William Poel had claimed in the course of a public lecture during the First World War that, "the theatre was more intelligently and more artistically organised in Germany than it was in England," Speaight adds, "Sir Squire Bancroft, who was in the chair, was careful to disassociate himself from this seditious utterance."

⁴⁹ The Era, April 27, 1911, p. 22, col. 3.

Irving's comments on the Germans' pride in their theatre were echoed by Harley Granville Barker when he discussed various examples of the German endowment of major theatres. He had visited Germany in October 1910 as the Times' Special Correspondent at the Berlin International Theatre Exhibition, and in addition to reporting the Exhibition, Barker took a close look at the organisation of the Deutsches Theater and the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus. Investment in either of these theatres was, he said, a matter of pride and, far from wanting the theatres to make money, the shareholders were glad for them to lose money in order that the theatres' high artistic standards be maintained. His article continued:

With us a man is proud of endowing hospitals or libraries or colleges of science or even concerts. But if a man is caught financing a theatre he will speak of it as an amiable weakness and probably try to put the blame on his wife. Until the theatre in England receives some public recognition, there will be little credit disinterestedly investing money in it... I have always wished that the government would somehow recognise the National Theatre Scheme. It is not so much Treasury money that is wanted, though that would be useful too, ⁵⁰ as the simple Hallmark, Public Property... ⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Barker, 1910, "Two German Theatres," p. 61

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According to Barker, the change in attitude had to begin at the top and, if endowing a theatre became respectable, then money for the theatre would flow. This theory was not in the least far-fetched as, in 1914, the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre gave a season of plays under the patronage of the city corporation. Though the theatre had been out of operation for a year, this season, with an official seal of approval, was a great success, and for the first time in their existence, the Scottish Playgoers' Company made a profit. There may have been other factors contributing to the success of the season, but, before 1914, the theatre had certainly been viewed with a definite wariness and a guarantee from the corporation probably helped to allay any fears about the theatre's status. ⁵¹

Although Barker was particularly interested in establishing his National Theatre in London, he did examine some of the provincial theatres in Germany, in particular, the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus. Düsseldorf in 1910 was, like Manchester, a manufacturing town lying at the centre of a heavily industrial area. It had, however, about half Manchester's population and yet it supported and subsidised three endowed theatres, an orchestra and an opera house. The Schauspielhaus was a private foundation which according to Barker did:

so much more than any provincial theatre here dreams of doing, not excepting even Miss Horniman's at Manchester and the Citizen's Glasgow, that comparison is useless. ⁵²

⁵¹ See below p. 261.

⁵² Barker, 1910, "Two German Theatres," p. 60

The theatre produced around forty plays a year but kept each production in the current repertoire for a very short time and seldom revived a play within two years. The repertory of the Schauspielhaus for the week Barker was in Düsseldorf, the week ending 25 October 1910, included Aristophanes' Lysistrata; D'Annunzio's Die tote Stadt; Sudermann's Johannesfeuer; Ibsen's John Gabriel Borkman and Wedekind's Der Liebestrank; a fairly conservative repertoire with only Wedekind representing new developments. Barker thought that the performance of the Wedekind and the D'Annunzio plays would have been a credit to any London theatre and the performance of Lysistrata was better than anything he had seen in London for some time. ⁵³

Barker also highlighted a feature of the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus, which, had local by-laws permitted, would have provided an excellent model for the first repertory theatres to adopt. Each Sunday morning, when the church services were over, a large crowd would fill the theatre to listen to educational lectures on Shaw or the Bach family or any one of countless topics of interest. Consequently, the theatre was used by many more people than its regular subscribers. Had the repertory theatres held similar lectures or tried to reach a wider public in this way, some of the misunderstanding about the theatres and their purpose might have been removed. The large local nucleus of the early audiences for the Shakespeare seasons at the Old Vic, had been built up, partly because the theatre acted as an educational centre, and held famous "penny" lectures upon a wide range of topics, similar to those favoured by the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus. ⁵⁴

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 67-68.

⁵⁴ Edwin Fagg, The Old "Old Vic" (London, for the Vic-Wells Association, 1936) pp. 122-123.

The Schauspielhaus also found favour the next year, 1911, with the last of the repertory pioneers, Basil Dean. Like Barker, he went to Germany to visit the Deutsches Theater and the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus and, like Barker, he was enthusiastic about what he saw, and highly critical of the British theatre in comparison. Moreover, he was able to put into practice something of what he learned in Germany and, though he was only in the country for a fortnight, they proved to be two very productive weeks. He went first to Frankfurt to see Reinhardt's production of Oedipus Rex at the Circus Schumann. After the performance he fell like a votary at Reinhardt's feet and was rewarded with an invitation to Berlin to study the workings of the Deutsches Theater. Dean was given an extensive tour of the theatre and had long discussions with both the administrative and technical staff. He was impressed most by Reinhardt's lighting system which enabled lights to play upon a plaster dome creating effects of light and space, "quite unlike anything to be seen at home," and, within two months, had incorporated a version of this system into the backstage area of the Liverpool Repertory Theatre. ⁵⁵

Another notable feature of most German theatres was the wide foyers through which the audience could circulate in the intervals and enjoy their, "lager beer and ham sandwiches," while they discussed the play. When Dean returned to Liverpool he added his advocacy to that of Professor Reilly, the theatre's chairman, who was trying to persuade the directors to convert, what had been the beer bar of the Star Music Hall, into a spacious and elegant foyer. ⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Basil Dean, Seven Ages (London, Hutchinson, 1970) pp. 81-82. TP's Weekly, November 10, 1911, p. 597, col. 3

⁵⁶ See below p. 12.

Reinhardt's influence on the Liverpool Repertory Theatre was also felt in other ways, such as the figure of death which stalked through the stalls accompanied by solemn music in Dean's production of Hauptmann's Hannele, a touch which Dean admitted he owed to Reinhardt's influence. ⁵⁷

Gertrude Kingston, though she was not directly connected with the repertory theatre movement, was a leading figure in contemporary and complementary developments in the London theatre. Like Miss Horniman she admired the theatres of Munich and, like Basil Dean, she was a devotee of the production methods of Max Reinhardt, in particular of a production of Aristophanes' Lysistrata which she saw on tour at the Künstler Theater in Munich, in November 1909, and described in The Nineteenth Century and After of December 1909. After her visit to Germany, Gertrude Kingston said that she returned with a deep sense of misgiving about the state of the British theatre, heightened by what she saw as the superior repertoire, technical accomplishment, standards of production and organisation of the theatres she had visited; the Künstler Theater in Munich and the Intimate theatre in Nuremberg. In one week at the theatre in Munich, she had seen Lysistrata, Hamlet, The Merchant of Venice and A Midsummer Night's Dream and the plays had been beautifully lit, designed in clean simple lines, the theatre had had a roomy foyer for the audience to circulate and discuss the play, and the auditorium itself was well lit and designed for the comfort of the audience. In comparison, in all these areas, she found the British theatre wanting. ⁵⁸ Less than a year

⁵⁷ Dean, Seven Ages, p. 99.

⁵⁸ The Nineteenth Century, No. CCCXCIV, December 1909. pp. 990-991.

later, however, Miss Kingston was acting in Aristophanes' Lysistrata in the opening production at her new theatre, the Little Theatre, in the Adelphi.

The Little Theatre had incorporated in its design, all those features of the German theatre most admired by Miss Kingston. There was a spacious foyer decorated in the simple classical style which she favoured, and which blended well with the Adam brothers' Adelphi within which the theatre was set. The muted pastel walls and Turkey carpeted floor were complemented by the paintings of Angelica Kaufmann which hung on the wall. There was an elegant cloakroom, in which one could safely leave one's cloak, as draughts were excluded from the Little Theatre both by the thick walls of the old banking hall within which it was built and because the theatre was well heated and ventilated. The theatre contained only roomy stall seats each of which had a large silk pouch sown on to its back, in order that there be no rustling of programmes and possessions during the play. The restraint of the theatre was echoed in the restraint of the first production. This Lysistrata was no bawdy, hilarious, romp, but rather, a tasteful arrangement of colourful, flowing, Greek-style women's costumes, set against a background of subtle horizon lighting, such as Reinhardt had used in The Merchant of Venice, with the members of the chorus arranged to resemble figures in a Greek frieze. 59

59 There was also, "a tea room with walls of soft yellow and decorated with Japanese prints and a smoke-room of subdued lavender." The production of Lysistrata included, "a pretty Greek dance by the Misses Annie and Irene Spong," and some, "charming music arranged by Mr. Brigata Bucalossi," Era October 15, 1910. Souvenir programme of opening, October 11, 1910. Diana Howard's, London Theatres and Music Halls 1850-1950 (London, The Library Association, 1970), p. 137, has a photograph of the interior which shows clearly the spacious auditorium with comfortable seats, and their "pouches."

In view of the absence of low-priced seats, Miss Kingston's theatre was obviously designed for a wealthier theatre-goer. In this it resembled Reinhardt's Kammerspielhaus, part of the Deutsches Theater, where a seat cost around 15/- compared with 10/6d at the Little Theatre. In the course of a lecture to the Liverpool Playgoers' Society in November 1910, Basil Dean claimed that he found the atmosphere of the two very similar, and dwelt lovingly upon the lustrous wood, the crystal lights and the rose-coloured seats of the Kammerspielhaus. Miss Kingston, as a devoted Reinhardtian, might have been flattered by the comparison between her theatre and his. ⁶⁰

Though Reinhardt's first English biographer, Huntly Carter, rightly identifies the young Basil Dean as a disciple of the master's, he tries to fit Granville Barker into the same category. This seems a little far-fetched. Similarities between the work of the two men probably arose from their mutual admiration for the work of Gordon Craig. But there can be no doubt of Barker's deep admiration for a country which took the theatre so seriously and C.B. Purdom, Barker's first biographer, tells us that around 1912, Barker even considered becoming a naturalised German citizen. ⁶¹

⁶⁰ Dean, Lecture, pp. 6-7.

⁶¹ C.B. Purdom, Harley Granville Barker (London, Rockliff, 1955) p. 121.

Although most of the Edwardian theatrical avant-garde did not take their admiration of theatrical arrangements in Germany quite as far as Barker's desire for German citizenship, there were in their ranks, many Jeremiahs, always willing to lament the fate of the British theatre. William Archer was however, only fitfully of their number and in the course of an article written for the, Monthly Review for July 1902, he pointed out that:

The truth is that this idea of an inherent disability for theatrical art in the Anglo-Saxon race is a superstition of very recent origin, begotten of the deep depression which overtook the theatrical life of the country in the middle years of the nineteenth century. It followed on the breakdown of the monopoly system which had since the Restoration (however imperfectly) performed the function which, in France and Germany, is now performed by endowments. ⁶²

Archer's theory draws together the British and European origins of the repertory theatre movement. Before what he calls the, "breakdown," or the de-regulation, of the monopoly system, the patent houses in London did fulfil some of the functions which, it was hoped, would fall to a national repertory theatre. Outside London, the provincial patent houses provided a healthy, vigorous and established theatrical life, in many ways independent of the capital. It was this

⁶² Archer and Barker, p. 175.

provincial self-sufficiency that the early repertory theatres wished to recapture. In London, the patent houses of Covent Garden and Drury Lane claimed an exclusive right, from statutes published in 1660, to perform the legitimate, or serious, drama, and did keep, in however truncated a form, the classics of British drama constantly before the public. Both the endowed theatres of Germany and the patent houses were real repertory theatres, though the patent houses, by virtue of their stock system, were much more flexible and had a far more extensive repertoire than, for example, the Deutsches Theater. The stock system described that form of theatrical organisation which enabled new plays to be mounted or old plays revised using stock scenery or sets designed, not for a particular play, but for a particular location, for example a drawing room or the exterior of a cottage, by a company chosen to play specific characters, such as walking gentlemen, old ladies or the whistling chambermaid. ⁶³

The first repertory theatres had less in common with the patent theatres in London, though these had been run like the repertory theatres of the idealists, than with the stock companies based at the various provincial theatres royal, such as those at Bath, Bristol, Liverpool, Glasgow, Manchester and Edinburgh. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, these companies were well established, had a strong local identity, and members of the company sometimes became leading members of the community. It was these companies that Alfred Wareing had in mind when he began his repertory theatre in Glasgow in 1909.

⁶³ Sybil Rosenfeld, "Stock Company," Oxford Companion to the Theatre, 1957 ed., Nicoll, 1900-1930, p.49. H.A. Jones, Nineteenth Century, No. CCLXXXIX, March 1901, pp. 431-432.

Wareing even called his actors a, "stock company", and in the Introductory Brochure to the first season at the Citizens' Theatre in Glasgow, Wareing recalled the old Stock companies and the consequences of their decline:

One has heard so much about the palmy days of the Stock Company. They are invariably called to memory with a sigh of regret and truly much was to be said in their favour. The touring system prospered because it made sure of more perfect scenic productions and often brought some well balanced companies of actors and actresses as well as some wandering stars. But the fleeting visit to a city gave the portmanteau actor little opportunity of interesting the citizens in his individual performance which was often a parrot-like repetition of a hit made in London... Therefore the re-establishment of a local company has always received the unanimous support of actors and actresses enthusiastic about their art. 64

From the end of the eighteenth century to the 1860s, in most large towns in Britain, there was usually a stock company, run on the same lines as the patent theatres in London, though the average standard of the productions was variable. But to generalise about the stock companies is very difficult and, while Wareing uses the words as a synonym for local companies, in the early nineteenth

64 Alfred Wareing, Introductory Brochure for Spring 1909 season, (Glasgow, n.p., n.p., (first paragraph).

century, a stock company was an acting company of recognised types and the name could have been applied equally well to the companies at Covent Garden or to Henry Arthur Jones's local stock theatre:

Sometimes a leading performer like Toole or Southern came and brought a new piece for trial, filling the smaller roles from the local company. A very unequal and slovenly performance was generally the result... the scenery and furniture were atrociously bad... ⁶⁵

This was at Rochdale around 1860, however, at the same time there was a stock company at Bristol which boasted Ellen and Kate Terry and Mrs Kendal as equal attractions in the same season, and in which, though Ellen Terry does say it herself, the acting standards were extremely high. ⁶⁶ Even at the same theatre, the standard of the stock company could vary enormously from season to season. In 1804 the company at the Dunlop Street Theatre in Glasgow, had raised a general titter when Romeo spoke of the, "beggarly account of empty benches," in a production of Romeo and Juliet, which was, "wretchedly mounted by a meagre company," who also presented a Merchant of Venice in which, "the Senate was represented by four miserable looking dirty reddish figures wrapped in faded gowns." Yet, in 1813 the elder Macready's stock company staged a production of Alladin, only recently premièred

⁶⁵ H.A. Jones, "The Drama in the English Provinces," Nineteenth Century, No. CCLXXXIX, March 1901, p. 433.

⁶⁶ Ellen Terry, The Story of My Life (London, Hutchinson, 1908) pp. 42-43. Kathleen Barker in The Theatre Royal Bristol 1766-1966 (London, Society for Theatre Research, 1974) pp. 150-153, would seem to support Ellen Terry's claim.

at Covent Garden, in which, "no expense was spared in the way of scenic decoration, supernumeries, Chinese costumes or stage effects," and the result was, "a complete triumph... memorable for many a year after its producer slept with his fathers." ⁶⁷

There were obviously certain features of the local stock companies which did not accord with Wareing's rosy view of them as revered and well-established acting companies. The acting company changed considerably from season to season, some heading for London, some for better provincial employment. Lemn Rede informed the aspiring actor that it was often the case that, because of the competition for the best parts at the patent houses, provincial situations were often preferable to London ones. For the provincial audiences, however, London companies were often preferable to local ones. In his Annals of the Liverpool Stage, R.J. Broadbent records that, at the Theatre Royal, Liverpool:

from the first it was the invariable custom... to have only London performers... An effort had been made to have a company consisting only of provincial performers... but an outcry... was raised against the threatened innovation. ⁶⁸

The company which had provoked the outcry contained Mrs Siddons and John Philip Kemble.

⁶⁷ Walter Baynham, The Glasgow Stage (Glasgow, Robert Forrester, 1892), pp. 47-48 and p. 80.

⁶⁸ R.J. Broadbent, Annals of the Liverpool Stage (London 1908, rpt. New York, 1969), p. 71.

In 1805, long before the touring companies came with their versions of London successes, the Queen Street Theatre in Glasgow was advertising a new play as, "now acting in London to Universal applause," ⁶⁹ and in general no attempt was made before the repertory theatres to foster local drama. Only occasionally was a famous play, for example, Home's Douglas, first produced in Edinburgh in 1756, premièred outside London. The habit of the provincial playgoer to demand the seal of London's approval was also felt to dog the repertory theatres. It was often suggested that the only reason for the success of Hindle Wakes was that Miss Horniman's Gaiety Company had premiered it in London. ⁷⁰

The spread of the railways is generally acknowledged to be one of the main reasons for the demise of the local stock companies. The railways allowed London productions to tour the provinces and carried the middle and upper classes to London to do their play-going; leaving the local theatres to decline or turn into touring theatres. While it is not surprising that the passing of local institutions should command a rosy remembrance, the reality was harsher than the legend. Henry Arthur Jones provided his own epitaph for these local theatres; "though I never saw a great performance, I saw many sound and respectable ones," he wrote of his local company. ⁷¹

⁶⁹ Baynham p. 54.

⁷⁰ See below, p. 168.

⁷¹ H.A. Jones, Nineteenth Century, March 1901, p. 433.

Though, in most cases, an epitaph for the stock companies is appropriate, many theatre companies of a similar type did survive up to, and beyond, the advent of the repertory theatres. These were mostly small fit-up companies who relied on stock acting and stock scenery to present their limited repertoire of plays, usually a haphazard collection of classics and melodramas. They were often companies like that of Mademoiselle Gratienne, with which Ben Iden Payne toured in 1904 and 1905.⁷² They were companies which could mount a small number of plays at very short notice, but whose resemblance to an ideal repertory company ended there, due to the fact that, as the owner of the company was almost always its star, these companies became merely less illustrious touring versions of West-End actor managers' companies.

The re-establishment of the best features of the provincial stock companies was therefore an ideal worth striving for. But, when the repertory theatre movement began, it was impossible to ignore contemporary theatrical developments in London. Chief among them were the Barker-Vedrenne seasons at the Court Theatre, and the National Theatre Movement. Both were part of a tradition of London based avant-garde theatre projects, which, while not contributing directly to the foundation of the first repertory theatres, did have varying degrees of relevance to them. The progenitor of the tradition had been the Independent Theatre Society founded in 1891 by J.T. Grein and George Moore who had been directly inspired by Antoine's Théâtre-Libre.

⁷² Payne, pp. 12-26.

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Antoine had founded the Théâtre-Libre in rebellion against the entrenched formalism and arid stylisation of the French theatre in general, and the Comédie Française in particular. He also wanted to, "encourage every writer to write for the stage, and, above all, to write what he feels inclined to write and not what he thinks a manager will produce." Antoine was also aware of his place as part of a European Movement for theatrical reform. He wrote in his memoirs:

The battle that was already won in the novel by the naturalists, in painting by the impressionists, in music by the Wagnerians, was about to move into the theatre... ⁷³

He waged his war using realism and, though he eventually tired of this means of production, it fired the imagination of, amongst others, Otto Brahm.

Brahm founded the Freie Bühne in Berlin in 1889. His theatre was to be pitted against "lies, of every shape and manner," ⁷⁴ and, at first, Brahm concentrated on encouraging a move away from the "classical" acting style which had been established at the Weimar Theatre during the tenure of Goethe. He also, and much more successfully, encouraged new German naturalistic

⁷³ Interview with Antoine quoted in John Stokes, Resistable Theatres (London, Paul Elek, 1972) p. 121 and John A. Henderson, The First Avant-Garde, (London, Harrap, 1971) p. 71.

⁷⁴ Otto Brahm, "To Begin", trans. Lee Baxandall in Eric Bentley, The Theory of the Modern Stage (London, Penguin, 1976), pp. 373-375.

writers, like Hauptmann. ⁷⁵ It was such plays,

in the very detailed productions favoured by Brahm, which attracted Miss Horniman to the German theatre though she saw the plays after the endowed theatres had absorbed the naturalists into their repertoires. ⁷⁶

The grimness of the early naturalistic production plays, and the scandals which attended their première, helped to foster the sense that these new plays were both unconventional and improper. Few plays endured more attendant scandal than Ibsen's Ghosts, with which the Independent Theatre Society chose to open their series of productions in London. The plays they preferred were to be, "free from the shackles of the censor, free from the fetters of convention." Like the Théâtre Libre, the organisation promised, "special performances of plays which have a literary and artistic rather than a commercial value." ⁷⁷

The Independent Theatre Society had its own provincial offshoot in Manchester where the Manchester Independent Theatre Society presented productions both from its parent company, and of its own. Few records of this society have survived, but its work was, to some extent, taken over by Louis Calvert who

⁷⁵ J.L. Styan, Modern drama in theory and practice, Vol. 1 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 45-52.

⁷⁶ Payne, p. 108.

⁷⁷ An Independent Theatre Society pamphlet in Michael Orme, J.T. Grein, (London, John Murray, 1936) p. 76. Grein quoted in N.H.G. Schoonderwoerd, J.T. Grein (Assen, Van Gorcum, 1903) pp. 101-102.

presented several Shakespearean plays and other classics under the auspices of the Manchester Society. It was shrewd of the organisers of the Manchester Society to enlist the help of Calvert who was, as his parents had been, a popular favourite in that city. His casts, with such well-known actors of the avant-garde as Charles Charrington and Janet Achurch, helped to demonstrate the high quality of some of the modern drama.⁷⁸ Calvert's involvement with the New Drama in Manchester possibly led to Wareing's plan for he and Calvert to found what they called a "stock-company", in Deptford, in 1897.⁷⁹

In 1907, when Miss Horniman came to Manchester to inaugurate her pilot seasons, no organisation had superseded the Independent Theatre Society and so, when the call came for those interested in the theatre to rally to Miss Horniman's colours, there were many who answered, like Charles Hughes and Judge Parry, who had served on the committee of the Manchester Independent Theatre Society.⁸⁰

The Independent Theatre Society was wound up in 1898, having failed to find the wealth of new plays which its members felt confident merely awaited an opportunity for production. It did, however, pave the way for the Incorporated Stage Society,

⁷⁸ Yorkshire Post, May 27, 1913 (H.S.). The Manchester I.T.S. was obviously rather exclusive as seats were either, 5s or 2s6d, Schoonderwoerd, pp. 112-114. Mrs. Charles Calvert, Sixty-Eight Years on the Stage (London, Mills and Boon, 1911) pp. 182-190 et passim. The Society produced amongst others Goethe's Clavigo; Ibsen's, The Master Builder and Hedda Gabbler; Love's Labour Lost; Shaw's Candida; and Browning's A Blot on the 'Scutcheon.

⁷⁹ S.Y.B. 1928. Alfred Wareing, "The Little Theatre its Genesis and Goal," p. 11.

⁸⁰ Yorkshire Post, May 27, 1913, (H.S.).

which, having the lessons of the Independent Theatre Society on which to draw, established itself on a much broader footing and was constituted as an Incorporated Society. This removed it from the shackles of the Lord Chamberlain and guaranteed it greater financial stability. The aim of the Society was to secure the production of plays, "of an obvious power and merit which lacked under the conditions then prevalent on the stage, any opportunity for their representation."⁸¹ Established therefore, primarily as a play-producing society, the Stage Society's career began rather spectacularly, with a police raid on its first presentation, Shaw's You Never Can Tell. Ten years later the same play opened the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre, but on that occasion the theatre was open to the public and was filled with Glasgow's leading citizens.⁸²

From 1897, J.T. Grein took his company of German players to Manchester for an annual season. This company presented seasons of German plays, in German, in Manchester and London and their acting was often commended for its emphasis on ensemble playing, which must have pleased the theatrical avant-garde. Their repertoire however, consisted mainly of farces and light comedies such as Alt Heidelberg, better known as the play on which the musical The Student Prince was based.

⁸¹ The Incorporated Stage Society / Ten Years 1899-1909, (London, Chiswick Press, 1909), p. 7.

⁸² Mander and Mitchinson, Shaw, p. 285. "Stage Society, The Incorporated," Oxford Companion to the Theatre, 1957 ed.

Theatrical societies, such as those discussed, were instrumental in the move from the actor-dominated theatre of the late nineteenth century, to the author and director dominated theatre of the early twentieth century. In a literary theatre, the actors had to serve the authors. This was made easier by the Independent Theatre Society, for example, making use of more malleable amateur actors, as well as seasoned professionals who might be set in their ways. By the time the Court Theatre and the early repertory theatres were founded, what had been unconventional to the audiences of the Théâtre Libre and the Freie Bühne, was now more widely acceptable. What these theatres did, was to redress the balance from play to players, and make the quality of their productions equal to the quality of the plays they performed. The repertory theatres hoped to go further and make their plays appeal not only to the limited membership of a society, but to introduce new developments in dramatic writing to the general public.

The National Theatre Movement in London also came to influence the early repertory theatres, though in a rather negative way, as it was possibly the widespread publicity for a National Repertory Theatre, which led people to expect, "real repertory," where no such thing was planned. The theatres at Manchester, Glasgow and Liverpool did fulfil some of the functions, which, it was hoped, would fall to the National Theatre once it was established. Their most important function, was to provide a show-case for the best of contemporary British drama and encourage new playwrights. Sir Arthur Pinero had said that, when the National Theatre gathered together the native drama of the late nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries, it would be seen that Britain did not have too much to be ashamed of in comparison with other countries.⁸³ To a certain extent the repertory theatres did prove this to be the case and a large number of good plays which had been, "languishing for a hearing," were produced. The repertory theatres also acted as a catalyst which gave us some of the best Edwardian plays. In 1904 Barker and Archer's plan for a National Theatre, envisaged the parent theatre lying at the centre of a network of smaller municipal theatres, which would train actors and try out new plays for the theatre in the capital.⁸⁴ This became one of the unintentional functions of the early repertory theatres.

In April 1904, shortly before Barker and Archer's plan for a National Theatre had first been privately circulated, The Fortnightly Review published a list of over one hundred names ranging from William Archer to Henry Irving; from Henry James to Anthony Hope; and from Swinburne to the Duchess of Sutherland; appended to a plea for some kind of National Dramatic Conservatoire and some form of National Repertory Theatre.⁸⁵ This illustrious roll-call had little effect but it is interesting to note that it did not contain the names of George Bernard Shaw or Harley Granville Barker, who were about to establish a theatre which, it was hoped, would serve as a blueprint for the National Repertory Theatre. They ran their enterprise, the Court Theatre experiment, on a modest scale but eventually found that their efforts came to nothing. This was

⁸³ Archer and Barker, p. 168. Fortnightly Review, Vol. 75 New Series, No. CCCCXLVI, Feb 1, 1904, p. 192.

⁸⁴ Archer and Barker, p. xii and pp. xv-xx.

⁸⁵ Fortnightly Review, Vol. 75 New Series, No. CCCCXLVI, February 1, 1904, p. 192.

proof, perhaps, of St. John Hankin's cry that London is full of people who will talk about the drama but will not support it. ⁸⁶

Although the organisation of the continental theatre played a large part in determining the character of the repertory theatres, the most important factor which led to their actual foundation was the disenchantment with, and estrangement from the Abbey Theatre in Dublin felt by Miss Horniman, Ben Iden Payne and Alfred Wareing.

Early in 1904, Miss Horniman had bought the Mechanics Institute in Abbey Street in Dublin and gave this as well as a generous subsidy to the Irish National Theatre Society enabling it to become a full-time, partly professional, theatre company with its own small theatre. The Abbey Theatre opened in December 1904, within a month of the Court Theatre, and there were some similarities between the two. They were both small, the Abbey seating 562 and the Court 670, and both theatres had a very judicious system of opening and trying out new plays, the Court giving matinee performances of new plays and if these were successful, transferring them to the evening bill. The Abbey began by opening only from Thursday till Saturday, so spreading its usually meagre audiences over three evenings instead of the normal six. Both of these systems could have been employed usefully by the early repertory theatres, which often performed new plays in large, half-empty, theatres for six nights and two matinees each week.

Miss Horniman had hoped to establish the Abbey as a, "civilised theatre,"

⁸⁶ Fortnightly Review, Vol. 83, New Series, No. CCCCXCI, Nov 1902, p. 815.

but, by the Spring of 1906, it had become clear to her that she was being used only as a convenient means of subsidising the Abbey, and in all other respects she was treated as an infernal nuisance.⁸⁷ Her first attempt to exercise some authority over the company, to which she was devoting one third of her income, came when she managed a short and successful tour of the mainland in 1905 and this encouraged her to take a much more active part in the running of the theatre. Yeats thought that because she was used to the slick, surface professionalism of the German municipal theatres, all that she saw at the Abbey seemed to be sloppy and amateur.⁸⁸ She identified the main culprit as the stage manager, W.G. Fay, and she hounded him from then on, ignoring the fact that it was his development of an acting style which was both tentative and understated which was the most admired feature of the Abbey's productions.⁸⁹ Matters came to a head on the Abbey's next tour of Britain.

The tour was arranged by Alfred Wareing, Beerbohm Tree's advance manager. Wareing had visited the Abbey in March 1906, and, instead of being appalled at the amateurism of the company, as one might have expected from Miss Horniman's description of the acting and production at the Abbey, he was thrilled both

⁸⁷ W.B. Yeats, ed. Bax, Letters to Florence Farr (London, Home and Van Thal, 1946) p. 60, contains an undated letter from Spring or Summer 1907, "Lady Gregory says that Miss Horniman is like a shilling in a tub of electrified water - everybody tries to get the shilling out." See below pp. 3-5.

⁸⁸ Flannery, pp. 19-21. Hogan and Kilroy, p. 86.

⁸⁹ Flannery, p. 19. W.G. Fay with Catherine Carswell, The Fays of the Abbey Theatre, (London, Rich and Cowan, 1935) p. 225.

by the productions and by the sight of the company doing everything from building their own scenery to sewing their costumes. The Company even worked in the lunch breaks from their regular employment and in this spirit, Wareing felt, Molière, and before him, Shakespeare had worked to produce their plays. Wareing was impressed enough to return to the Abbey to see as many of their productions as his own theatrical commitments would allow.⁹⁰ When he heard that the Abbey were planning a small-scale tour of England, he offered to use his extensive network of theatrical contacts and turn the tour into an extended one, covering most of the major touring towns. His offer was accepted and, after playing at Liverpool and Manchester, the Company went on to Cardiff, where Wareing met Miss Horniman.⁹¹

Wareing could not but have appealed to Miss Horniman. She always admired professionalism and he was the theatrical professional par excellence.⁹² It was at this meeting that Wareing first described to Miss Horniman his dream of founding

⁹⁰ Winifred Isaac, Alfred Wareing. (London, privately printed, 1951), pp. 29-30.

⁹¹ S.Y.B. 1928, Wareing, pp. 11-12. Isaac, pp. 30-33. Alfred Wareing, "Neil Munro and the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre," Queue No. 4, January 1931, pp. 19-20.

⁹² Anna Irene Miller, The Independent Theatre in Europe, (New York, 1931, rpt. Blom, 1966). In a letter to Dr. Miller, when she was writing her book, Miss Horniman included lots of business details, "to make it clear that this is nothing like the semi-amateur Little Theatre elsewhere ... (repertory) has come to carry an impression of dullness, amateurishness, and impropriety ...," p. 218. Miss Horniman considered the Abbey, "amateur," and wanted to found a, "purely professional" theatre, Flannery, p. 24.

a company based on the old stock companies, using an acting company permanently resident in the town to give the theatre a strong local identity. He had twice tried to found such a theatre, first in 1897 at Deptford near his home town of Greenwich. This attempt came to nothing and he tried again in 1900 to found a similar theatre in Glasgow, inspired by the veteran actor William MacKintosh, who had been a member of the stock company at the Glasgow Theatre Royal, in the days when it had contained such famous players as Mr. Kendal.⁹³ This attempt again was unsuccessful. But, by 1906, Wareing's experience as a touring manager for both Benson and Tree, had completely convinced him of the undesirability of the, "portmanteau" actor and of the need of both actor and audience for permanent local companies. Miss Horniman was won over by his ideas and asked Wareing to see if he could secure a suitable theatre for such a venture.

Miss Horniman's reasons for showing interest in Wareing's schemes were not wholly philanthropic. She was in an unenviable position at the Abbey and was by now in conflict not only with Fay, but with Synge, Yeats and Lady Gregory as well. It must have been clear to Miss Horniman that a break was inevitable, and Wareing's scheme was an insurance against total defeat. However, before Wareing could do anything about putting his schemes into practice, the tour of Britain he had organised provided Miss Horniman with inexhaustible cause for complaint. The boisterous company caused her endless trouble, as they were not professional actors and were unused to performing every night.

⁹³ S.Y.B. 1928, pp. 11-12. Queue, No. 4, p. 20. Isaac, pp. 34-35.

Consequently their performances began to deteriorate and Miss Horniman again blamed Fay, accusing him of not calling sufficient extra rehearsals.⁹⁴ According to Synge the productions were slightly imperfect but Miss Horniman showed herself to be completely out of sympathy with the company. She did not appreciate that they were playing in theatres three times the size of the Abbey, and the fact that these were usually fairly empty, put an extra strain on the actors. As Yeats was already rather dissatisfied with Fay's productions of his plays, he added his weight to Miss Horniman's demand that Fay be replaced for all but the production of the "peasant" plays by a director of a much wider theatrical experience.⁹⁵ Miss Horniman went to John Vedrenne at the Court theatre for advice on whom to choose. Vedrenne asked Barker to recommend someone and Barker thought of Ben Iden Payne, whose enthusiasm for the new drama had impressed him.⁹⁶

Early in 1907, Payne was touring Ireland with Benson's second company and Yeats tracked him down in Waterford where, completely unexpectedly, Payne was invited to join the Abbey Company. Payne accepted and joined the company in time for Miss Horniman's break with the theatre and its directors. Her fights with Fay over what she regarded as the company's low standards of acting and production had made her, according to Yeats, very anti-Irish, but as far as Miss Horniman was

⁹⁴ Flannery, p. 19; Hogan and Kilroy, pp. 70-75, includes most of the letters Miss Horniman sent back to the Abbey from the tour.

⁹⁵ Hogan and Kilroy, pp. 97-98.

⁹⁶ Payne, pp. 65-66. Hogan and Kilroy, p. 164.

concerned she had established the Abbey to produce Yeats' plays and, when they failed to do this adequately, they were no longer worthy of her subsidy.⁹⁷ After three years of semi-professional existence, the Abbey company could no longer rely on goodwill and a basic training to maintain their theatrical reputation. When a London actress like Miss Darragh was imported to play *Deirdre*, the spectacle was described by Fay himself as akin to that of a Rolls Royce running an uphill race with mountain ponies.⁹⁸ After this, Miss Horniman felt that, whatever proficiency the company once had was gone, and that Fay was to blame. When Payne failed to provide a cure for the theatre's ills, she decided the time had come to bow out as, "the godmother to this singularly ungrateful theatrical Cinderella."⁹⁹ But bowing out gracefully was not in Miss Horniman's nature.

Late in the spring of 1907 she met Payne on the Abbey's tour of Britain. Their first meeting took place in Oxford and Payne recalls how she regaled him with a catalogue of the wrongs done to her in Dublin. "She had ceased," she said, "to go to Ireland only to be insulted," and she invited Payne to visit her London flat that they might discuss how best to use

⁹⁷ Hogan and Kilroy, p. 87.

⁹⁸ W.G. Fay, p. 208.

⁹⁹ J.C. Trewin, The Edwardian Theatre, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1976), p. 101.

the sum of twenty-five thousand pounds she had earmarked for public purposes. ¹⁰⁰ Wareing, who had been trying to find a suitable theatre for Miss Horniman, had just missed hiring one in Liverpool. In Glasgow, the Royalty, which was available, had too high a rent and had entailing conditions which Miss Horniman felt to be unacceptable. ¹⁰¹ Payne now pressed for Manchester, the city in which he grew up and, since it was the home of the Hallé orchestra and the Manchester Guardian, and had a good record for supporting dramatic causes, it seemed a reasonable choice. ¹⁰² Wareing, though he would have preferred Miss Horniman to found a theatre in Glasgow, helped her to find a suitable theatre. Her first season was held in the ballroom of the Midland Hotel which had also housed the German Players and the Abbey Company, but a friend of Wareing's, called John Hart, owned a rather run-down theatre across the road from the Midland Hotel. This theatre was called the Gaiety and, once he had established that Miss Horniman would not be putting on musical comedies which might tempt trade away from his other

¹⁰⁰ Payne, p. 78

¹⁰¹ The subsequent experience of the Scottish Playgoers' Company showed that Miss Horniman was quite right not to hire the Royalty. See p. 71.

¹⁰² In, A Talk about the Drama, (Manchester, Manchester Statistical Society, 1911) p. 83. Miss Horniman claims that, "it was settled in ten minutes discussion which of the great cities she should come to." Payne's recollection is very different and only after, "a good deal of discussion," he says, was Manchester preferred to London. Payne, p. 79.

theatres, Hart sold the Gaiety to her.¹⁰³ Then, having helped set the Manchester theatre on its way, Wareing spent some months in the employ of Oscar Asche and Lily Brayton and, at the end of 1908, went to Glasgow to set in motion the events which led to the establishment of the theatre of which he had dreamed for so long and which, in 1910, involved him in the foundation of Britain's third "repertory" theatre in Liverpool.

In, Harry Bergholz, Die Neugestaltung des Modernen Englischen Theaters (Berlin, Bergholz, 1933), p. 167, there is a report of a conversation between the author and Miss Horniman, in which she told him of her great efforts to find a London theatre before she settled on Manchester.

¹⁰³ Queue, No. 4, p. 20.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ESTABLISHMENT, ORGANISATION AND CHARACTER OF THE FIRST THREE REPERTORY THEATRES.

"You wouldn't get folk to come to the theaytr
[sic], if you was to give 'em the Crucifixion
with the original cast"

(Oldham stage-hand, circa 1909) ¹

Although Miss Horniman continued to subsidise the Abbey Theatre until 1910, in the four years which followed her estrangement from Dublin, she, Ben Iden Payne and Alfred Wareing were responsible for the establishment of three new theatrical enterprises on the mainland of Britain. These were, the Gaiety Theatre in Manchester in 1908, the Citizens' Theatre in Glasgow in 1909, and, in collaboration with actors from the Manchester company, the Liverpool Repertory Theatre in 1911.

The reasons for choosing these three cities were, on the surface, obvious. Each city had a long tradition of theatre-going and was a Number One touring date; they were among the largest centres of population in the country; they each had established Universities and were

¹ Payne, p 93.

important commercial centres; and above all, each had a strong local identity. But they also possessed active theatre societies which were interested in recent developments in the drama, and published newspapers which were respected throughout the country and widely read in the local area. Both those factors played an important part in the establishment of the theatres in their respective cities.

The process of establishing the theatres followed a similar pattern in each of the cities. First, a manifesto was issued. The project was then widely publicised, with the help of the city's stage society and the local newspapers, and trial seasons followed. The Manchester and Liverpool projects were then consolidated by the purchase and equipping of a theatre to act as a permanent home. In Glasgow however, the Scottish Playgoers' Society, which had organised the trial season, was unable to afford its own theatre, and decided to continue to rent the Royalty Theatre.

The three theatres at which the three repertory companies were established were similar in several respects. They had all been touring houses; each was situated in the city's centre so that they were easily accessible by tram or by train; and they had similar seating capacities; the Gaiety, 1250, the Royalty, 1314, and the Liverpool Repertory Theatre, after re-construction 1200. Each theatre was of a conventional design with a proscenium arch and a horseshoe-shaped auditorium.²

² See illustrations, Appendix B.

All three theatres, however, had their own very distinctive identity. Miss Horniman, for example, claimed that the Gaiety was the cleanest theatre in Britain, thanks to the introduction of the vacuum cleaner.³ She completely redecorated the Gaiety in the summer of 1908 and the result, while admired by some, was felt by many to be too severe.⁴ The redecoration had been supervised by Frank Matcham and Company and, apart from installing new tip-up seats in all parts of the house except the 6d. balcony, the most notable innovation was the banishment from the building^d all hint of gilt, cherubs and red plush. The Era, described some of the changes:

The old Moresque plaster work has been taken down and a completely new scheme of decoration carried out. The new fibrous plaster-work, illustrates a fine example of Greek architecture, very severe in treatment, but of noble proportions, fine fluted columns with Greek scrolled caps and arches supporting heavy cornices and entablatures...⁵

The ^{decoration above the}proscenium arch was replaced by an "artistic low relief with bronze enrichments," and the whole was lit, "by a soft glow from concealed lights." The predominant colours were white bronze and those, "found in Scagliola marble," but the wallpaper and the upholstery were a "rich red."⁶ Visiting the theatre in

³ Horniman, A Talk, p. 87. Manchester Guardian, April 21, 1908.
⁴ Manchester Guardian, Sept 5, 1908, p. 18. (H.S.)
⁵ Era, Sept 5, 1908, p. 18, col 3.
⁶ Ibid.

The year after it opened, Winifred Blatchford of the Woman Worker, found it to her liking; "the theatre is so cosy and tasteful in its rich, crimson hangings, and the visitors are so very refreshing after the ordinary jaded theatre-goers." ⁷

When Ronald Jeans visited Glasgow, he was equally enthusiastic about the ambiance of the Royalty Theatre:

Not the least important feature of the theatre is the consideration shown to the audience... the substitution of comfortable roomy seats for the cramped rows of stalls common in our theatres, of good music for the usual hackneyed selections... the general air of comfort and consideration which pervades the Citizens' theatre cannot but strike the casual visitor. Mr. Wareing makes a point of mixing with his audience, half of whom he has grown to know personally, on the principle that no suggestion of casual remark overheard is too small for attention... ⁸

Basil Dean, however, thought the Glasgow theatre uncomfortable, though it is uncertain whether he actually visited it and he might have been reporting what he had heard. Dean also felt that the rent which had to be paid for the

⁷ "At a Manchester Theatre," Woman Worker, November 24, 1909, (H.S.)

⁸ Liverpool Daily Post, December 19, 1910. The musical direction was provided by Mr. Albert Cazabon who led, "an Orchestra of Strings, playing good music - classic music - yet music that should be never dull or tedious," Introductory Brochure 1909. In this attention to the theatre's music the Citizens' were following the lead of the Court, Theodore Stier, With Pavlova Round the World (London, Hurst and Blackett, 1927), pp.

Royalty was exorbitant.⁹ He expressed the view that the Royalty's ownership by Howard and Wyndham was its main drawback, for the Company had used the theatre as a touring house and had made no effort to improve conditions backstage with the result that by 1909, the stage equipment was very out of date.¹⁰

The Liverpool Repertory Theatre, on the other hand, was fitted with some of the most up-to-date equipment available. The Liverpool Repertory Theatre had been the Star Music Hall and, when the new owners moved in, it still smelt strongly of beer.¹¹ The theatre was, however, completely rebuilt internally, and the Souvenir Brochure for the first season boasted that the theatre was very satisfactory, both for actors and audience:

It is so compact and convenient in shape, that every part of the auditorium seems to be brought near to the stage and this of itself is likely in time to produce an intimate and individual style of acting ... the decorative style is simple and bright but, down to the mouldings and light brackets, specially designed.¹²

⁹ "The Repertory Theatre Movement," Yorkshire Daily Observer, Oct 4, 1912, (H.S.).

¹⁰ Victor McLure, Letter, Glasgow Herald, April 15, 1939.

¹¹ Dean, Seven Ages, p. 79.

¹² Souvenir Brochure, MD. 45, Liverpool Public Library.

Liverpool also installed tip-up chairs "wherever possible", and numbered all the seats in the house except those in the gallery, so that they could be reserved. ¹³

While the theatre was being reconstructed, Basil Dean arranged that the back wall of the stage be covered with a thin layer of plaster, and this, when subtly lit, diffused the light to give special effects of light and dark, depth and relief. These were often used to great effect, as in the 1911 production of The Pillars of Society, when, "the power of the last act, with its storm and torchlight procession, was heightened by having the tone of the scenes echoed by their lighting." ¹⁴

But the triumph of the theatre was the large and impressive new foyer, modelled on those of the German endowed theatres. A large foyer was felt to be necessary in order for the theatre to become a social centre, and it was very successful and widely admired:

A staircase led from the Dress Circle to the new foyer a triumph of Professor Adshead's. Here, in what had been the beer cellar of the Old Star, was a broad terrace which led down through the columns to a semi-circular space. The columns were decorated with formal festoons and palm-trees of plaster in low relief. The whole was light, graceful and charming and the foyer, one of the most original features of the theatre was to prove one of its greatest assets. ¹⁵

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Grace Wyndham Goldie, The Liverpool Repertory Theatre, (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1935), p. 79.

¹⁵ Goldie, p. 62.

The foyer of the Gaiety was much smaller. It was decorated with polished mahogany, green marble walls, and white statuary, and was just one of the features of the Gaiety in which the Liverpool Repertory Theatre was felt to be superior. ¹⁶ In an article in the Mask, which discussed the two theatres, Edward Gordon Craig much preferred Liverpool:

I think the Liverpool Repertory Theatre better than the Manchester. There is something stronger about it. It seems to have taken trouble over building itself, and, with very little money, Professor Adzhead [sic] has managed to knock an old and ugly theatre into a new and handsome one. Not that it is handsome enough for Liverpool, but Professor Adzhead would be the last person to think so, and considering the small sum at the disposal of the architect, the work is extremely good.

In the front of the house all is simple and the curtain is simple. This is not exactly the case in Manchester.

The curtain in Liverpool is a piece of quiet brocade, not a painted affair at all...

The seats are comfortable, and the prices very reasonable. I found the seats less comfortable in Manchester. Then too, the Orchestra is hidden under the stage, a very good thing, and there is a foyer that has a dignity we often look for in a theatre and find rarely.

It is different in Manchester. ¹⁷

¹⁶ Era, Sept 5, 1908, p. 18, col. 3.

¹⁷ "Foreign Notes", The Mask, Vol 5, No 4, Jan 1913, p. 276.

The Mask criticised Miss Horniman, as well as her theatre. In an article, signed J.S., which Miss Horniman was convinced had been written by Craig himself, she was denounced for speaking out against the Abbey Theatre and for being a suffragette. 18

The attack concluded:

Rosa Bonheur was a bad painter, George Eliot and George Sand disgraceful writers, and Catherine of Russia a disgusting queen. If she wishes to rule let Miss Horniman emulate our loved queen, Victoria, that true Englishwoman; and let her learn that woman is nothing but a selfish accident drifting aimlessly or to the bad without the guiding influence of a man. 19

Miss Horniman never forgave Craig.

Before they gained a foothold in their respective cities, the new theatres in Manchester, Glasgow and Liverpool each issued statements of intent which were very similar. The manifesto for Miss Horniman's theatre in Manchester was made public in a letter to the Manchester City News by her business manager Edwin T. Heys. In the issue of 31 August 1907, he announced that the main features of Miss Horniman's theatre, which was running a trial season at the Midland Theatre, would be:

18 Miss Horniman was a, "less militant" woman suffragist, and often addressed meetings of The Actresses' Franchise League, Daily Despatch March 18, 1911 and Ibid. Sept 9, 1912, (H.S.)

19 "Miss Horniman and Her Repertory Theatre," J. (ohn) S. (emar) (? Gordon Craig), The Mask, Vol 3, No. 4, Oct 1910, p. 84. Denis Bablet in, Edward Gordon Craig (London, Eyre Methven, 1981), p. 100, says that John Semar was one of Craig's many pseudonyms and that Craig wrote most of The Mask, himself.

(a) A Repertoire Theatre with regular changes of programme no matter how successful the play - no 1,000 nights' runs! - not wedded to any one school of dramatists, but thoroughly catholic, embracing the finest writings by the best authors of all ages ... and with an especially widely open door to present-day British writers...

(b) A permanent Manchester stock company of picked front rank artistes ... At present most touring companies consist of a "star" whose name fills the placards and announcements, supported by a lady (in small type) and generally a nondescript collection of inadequately-paid people.

(c) Efficient production, a matter of vital importance; Mr Granville Barker's genius in this direction has made the Court Theatre famous ... Manchester's Barker will be Mr. B. Iden Payne.

(d) Popular prices. The company is fully alive to the many grievances which playgoers have endured for a long time and intends to do all it can to attend to their physical comforts at reasonable rates. ²⁰

Miss Horniman's manifesto is clearly influenced by her admiration for the endowed theatres of Germany. A catholic repertoire, permanent companies, short runs and frequent changes of bill, were all features of their organisation. The offer of, "an especially wide-open door to present-day British writers," is, however, probably the opening shot in Miss Horniman's battle to "show" Dublin that, not only were there better playwrights outside Ireland, but that she was going to discover them. Miss Horniman read every one of the hundreds of scripts which were sent to her, in an effort to find a rival to Synge and W.B. Yeats. ²¹

²⁰ Manchester City News, August 31, 1907. No. 16/17, Manchester.

²¹ Payne, p. 78. Miss Horniman read thirty to forty scripts a week, Daily Mail, Feb 18, 1914, (H.S.).

There were broadly political reasons for specifying that the theatre would use a "permanent stock company." The words evoked the days before the touring companies when each city had its own theatre and resident actors. Though Miss Horniman's company did not want to be a stock company in that sense, they did want to give a local identity to an acting company many of whom were new to Manchester, a city used to companies only staying for a week at a time. A permanent company was also necessary to develop the "ensemble" style of acting which was required by most new plays and in which the Abbey excelled. ²²

The inclusion of a commitment to "efficient productions" was indicative of a great change which was taking place in the theatre. The actor's theatre of the late nineteenth century was giving way to the writer's theatre of the early twentieth. An efficient director was necessary to make sure that the dramatist's meaning was conveyed to the audience and that the actors were made to serve the play. With many new plays to produce, a new repertoire to establish, and frequent changes of bill promised, there had to be someone in overall artistic control. If a great deal of the drama was new, the company could not fall back on traditional "business", as actors in the old stock companies had done. The new theatre had also to prove that its standards of production were far above those of the touring companies it so deprecated. As there were to be no

22 See pp 205 - 206.

"stars" at the Midland theatre, the management would have to rely on interesting, well-acted and carefully produced plays to draw an audience.

The "popular prices" which Miss Horniman meant to charge translated into a minimum of 6d and a maximum of 5/- but, as the Midland Theatre was not raked, and the cheapest seats were at the back of a large hall, it was not possible to do as much as was promised to attend to the physical comfort of all. The situation was greatly improved when Miss Horniman's enterprise moved to the Gaiety, in the autumn of 1908. Patrons found that in the renovated theatre the 6d and 1/- galleries were equally comfortable and consequently a great deal of revenue was lost.

The theatres at Glasgow and Liverpool included many of the same aims in their manifestos but they often had different reasons for doing so. Alfred Wareing for instance, wanted, according to the prospectus of March 1909:

To establish in Glasgow a Repertory Theatre which will afford playgoers and those interested in the drama an opportunity of witnessing such plays as are rarely presented under the present touring system; (and) to organise a Stock Company of first-class actors and actresses for the adequate representation of such plays. 23

²³ Frederick Whelen, Daily Chronicle, Sept 13, 1912, (H.S.), Whelen is quoting from the original prospectus, of which there now seems to be no copy.

Unlike Miss Horniman, Alfred Wareing was not dedicated primarily to the ideal of a Repertory Theatre on the German model. ²⁴

As his experiences as touring manager for various London managements had persuaded him of the undesirability, both for the profession and the public of what he called the "portmanteau" actor, his main concern was for the re-establishment of local acting companies. Wareing felt, that a return to the nineteenth century stock companies was vital but, like the management of the Gaiety Theatre, he wanted to establish a more modern, less rigid version of those companies. He was also as interested as Miss Horniman in encouraging new playwrights. He, however, hoped to find a "stock author", someone who would write plays specifically for the members of his acting company. Both Neil Munro and Graham Moffat tried this, with little success. ²⁵

Alfred Wareing later admitted, that in his desire to found a stock theatre in Glasgow he, "jumped on the repertory band-wagon." The extent of his commitment to a repertory ideal is rather unclear, though he did say that while he had gone to Glasgow to found a repertory theatre, he had to be content with a short-run theatre. ²⁶

²⁴ Wareing did not visit Germany till 1911. In "A Citizens' Theatre," The Stage, March 21, 1912, in Wareing's Scrapbook in Huddersfield Public Library, hereafter referred to as (W.S.), Wareing praises the German, "Theatre of Ideas", and the efficiency of German amusements, which contributed to an all-round national efficiency.

²⁵ Queue, No 4, p. 22. See p. 339.

²⁶ Alfred Wareing, letter, Referee, Jan 18, 1914. (H.S.).

From the very start, however, rather than build up an extensive repertoire of productions, the Liverpool Repertory Theatre planned short runs of plays in order to minimise investors' risks.²⁷ Most of the theatres which became known as repertory theatres, were, in fact, short-run theatres, and perhaps this apparent contradiction can be traced back to the deliberate equating of the terms by the Liverpool Repertory Theatre. The theatres at Glasgow and Liverpool were also much more reluctant than Miss Horniman's to commit themselves to a certain standard of production or a particular range of prices.

Glasgow's guiding principle was, in the words of its prospectus:

To encourage the initiation and development of a purely Scottish drama by providing a stage and acting company which will be peculiarly adapted for the production of plays, national in character written by Scottish men and women of letters.²⁸

It may seem strange that Alfred Wareing, born and bred in Greenwich, wished to set up such a theatre, but there is little doubt that it was on the promise of a Scottish National Theatre, inspired by the Abbey in Dublin, that the theatre was first

²⁷ Souvenir Brochure, MD. 45, Liverpool Public Library, n.p.

²⁸ Daily Chronicle, Sept 13, 1912 (H.S.). See note 23.

publicly launched and supported by such celebrities as Lord Howard De Walden and J.M. Barrie. ²⁹

The newspapers of the respective cities played a crucial part in launching each of the repertory theatres and the enthusiasm of the Manchester Guardian is credited with encouraging Miss Horniman to continue in Manchester even after her trial season at the Midland Theatre had lost money. ³⁰

Eventually the links between the Gaiety and the Manchester Guardian became so close, that when a volume commemorating its famous editor C.P. Scott was written in 1946, a whole chapter was devoted to the role the newspaper had played in fostering the "new drama", much of which concentrated on the Gaiety Theatre. ³¹

Indeed, Miss Horniman was encouraged to choose Manchester in which to found her theatre, largely because of the interest shown by the critics of the Manchester Guardian in the new developments in drama. ³² As the Gaiety developed, the Manchester newspapers all devoted space to its affairs and reviewed each new production at length. In time, there was a reciprocal enthusiasm, and Alan Monkhouse, one of the drama critics of the Manchester Guardian, claimed that he would never

²⁹ Isaac, p. 37. Just how much money Lord Howard De Walden contributed to the theatre is uncertain. The theatre produced his play, Lanval, and he arranged the fights in Romeo and Juliet, but he quickly denied a rumour that he had offered forty thousand pounds to build a repertory theatre in Glasgow. In Lillah McCarthy, Myself and My Friends, (London, Butterworth, 1933), p. 58, Lord Howard De Walden's attitude to patronage of the theatre is described as one of, "noblesse oblige."

³⁰ James Agate, A Short View of the English Stage, (London, Herbert Jenkins, 1927), p. 73. Dean, Seven Ages, p. 50.

³¹ C.P. Scott, (London, Muller, 1946), pp. 134-137.

³² Payne, p. 79.

have been set on his successful career as a dramatist had it not been for Miss Horniman's encouragement.³³ By 1921, the Gaiety had received so much attention from the newspapers, that Miss Horniman had filled sixteen large scrapbooks with cuttings which related to her theatre.³⁴

The Glasgow newspapers, especially the Glasgow Herald and the Evening News, were equally enthusiastic in their support for the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre. From the first they supported the enterprise though, the longer the theatre continued, the fewer were the articles which appeared in the press.³⁵ These articles were, however, usually generous in content and few appeared which were critical of Wareing or of his theatre.

In spite of this, as in Manchester, even a good deal of press interest in the theatres, did not prevent many misconceptions about the theatre arising, the most damaging of which was that they were in some ways amateur affairs and the repositories for "gloomy plays."³⁶ As a positive indication of support for the Citizens' Theatre the editor of the Glasgow Herald, Dr. Wallace bought shares in the theatre.

³³ Gerald Cumberland Set Down in Malice, (London, Grant Richards, 1919), p. 209.

³⁴ The volumes are now in the John Rylands Library of the University of Manchester.

³⁵ In 1909 there were 61 references to the Citizens' in the Glasgow Herald Index, in 1912, 34, though there were fewer productions.

³⁶ Glasgow Herald, November 15, 1923. See also note 10, and Horniman, Talk, p. 85.

This example was followed in Liverpool where the editors of the city's two main newspapers, Robert Hield of the Liverpool Courier and Sir Edward Russell, of the Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury were members of the Repertory Theatre's first board of directors. As the Theatre had benefited from a great deal of publicity during the initial drive for subscribers and their attempts to interest Liverpool in the trial season was held at Kelly's Theatre. As the status of the Liverpool Repertory Theatre developed, and it came to be regarded as a civic institution, so coverage of the theatre's affairs became more critical and less partisan. ³⁷

But in all three cities, after an initial burst of enthusiasm, the interest showed by the press failed to stimulate large audiences and it became apparent that even the Playgoers' Societies, which it was hoped would provide the nucleus of an audience, were not fulfilling this role.

The Playgoers' Societies, which sprang up in various cities at the beginning of this century, seem to have left few traces. But from the little evidence that remains, it seems that the Manchester Society was the most sociable, holding their meetings in the expensive Midland Hotel and often hosting dinners in honour of various theatrical celebrities. ³⁸

³⁷ See p.

³⁸ Some of the dinners they gave were for, Miss Darragh; Sir John Martin-Harvey; J.T. Grein; F.R. Benson; and Sara Allgood. Their programme also included, William Archer lecturing on, "Does the Modern Stage Elevate?" and a reading of Maeterlink's censored play, Monna Vanna.

Of the three, the Glasgow Stage Society was the most short lived lasting only from 1908 to 1910. Its object was, "to foster the study of literary drama and to develop local interest in the more serious side of stage work."³⁹ This statement of aims came in a letter written in support of one, "Master builder", who had written to the Glasgow Herald proposing to found an Ibsen Society which would, "stand as a permanent protest against the prevailing tendency to frivolity in matters theatrical."⁴⁰ "Master Builder", was supported by "Pillars of Society", and "Sea Troll", and it is perhaps rather surprising to find that these earnest people chose as the President of the Glasgow Stage Society, Mr. Graham Moffat, the author of the rather mawkish "Scotch Comedies", Bunty Pulls the Strings and A Scrape O' the Pen.⁴¹ When he received his invitation, Mr. Moffat had just staged two Scottish plays Annie Laurie and Till the Bells Ring in an attempt to become a "Scottish Synge". Though he claimed that he had no idea why he was invited to lead the youth of Glasgow in their search for the, "serious and artistic side of the stage", the fact that his plays had been mounted by an amateur group called the Scottish National Players who wanted to emulate the Abbey Company, may account for the invitation.⁴²

³⁹ Glasgow Herald, July 13, 1908, p. 4, col. 6.

⁴⁰ Glasgow Herald, July 10, 1908, p. 4, col. 7.

⁴¹ Glasgow Herald, August 19, 1908, p. 9, col. 7; July 13, 1908, p. 4, col. 6; Graham Moffat, Join me in Remembering, (Camps Bay, Cape Province, n.p., 1955) pp. 62-64.

⁴² "Convinced", Letter, Glasgow Herald, June 24, 1909.

"Serious dramatic Glasgow," was anxious to make a national contribution to the theatre. ⁴³

The committee of the Stage Society, however, left Graham Moffat in no doubt that his plays were not literature and branded him as, "the Philistine" when he dared to suggest that some of Ibsen's plays were "better than others."⁴⁴ It is perhaps unsurprising that the Glasgow Stage Society did not survive the fulfilment of their call for a, "theatre of intellect at cheap prices," by the Glasgow Repertory Theatre. ⁴⁵

The Society did hold one particularly important meeting on 14 November 1908, at which the president of the London Stage Society, Frederick Whelen tried to rouse his audience into a fury of indignation that, in things theatrical, "London was first and the rest of the country nowhere." He urged the Society to produce its own plays about Glasgow and to agitate for a municipal theatre. ⁴⁶ Shortly after this, Alfred Wareing came to Glasgow to canvass support for his Citizens' Theatre,⁴⁷ and within six months, the Chairman of the meeting addressed by Whelen, Professor Philimore, the Professor of Humanities at Glasgow University, had become a member of the board of Glasgow's own repertory theatre. ⁴⁸

⁴³ The Times, October 19, 1909, p. 8, col. 3.

⁴⁴ Moffat, p. 55.

⁴⁵ Glasgow Herald, July 31, 1908, p. 9, col. 8.

⁴⁶ Glasgow Herald, Nov 14, 1908, p. 3, col. 4.

⁴⁷ Observer, January 11, 1925, (W.S.).

⁴⁸ See p. 158 . Isaac, p. 35, Queue, No. 4, p. 20.

A similarly speedy answer to their prayers was granted to the Manchester Playgoers' Society. Scarcely four weeks after their president had written an article in the Manchester City News entitled, "The Playgoers' Cry: Wanted a Repertoire Theatre," a call for municipal aid, "to lift the Drama out of the slough of despond into which it had sunk,"⁴⁹ Edwin Heys wrote to the same newspaper with a detailed outline of a Playgoers' Theatre Company season at the Midland Theatre to be backed by Miss Horniman.⁵⁰ Heys, an ex-president of the Stockport Garrick Society, another local organisation interested in the theatre, became the business manager of the venture.⁵¹ The name, Playgoers' Theatre Company, was presumably chosen to capitalise on the popularity of a local society whose interest reflected those of Miss Horniman and Payne, but it was dropped after the first, badly attended season. The links between the Playgoers' Society and the Gaiety Theatre remained strong however, as the Society gave farewell dinners to Payne and to Lewis Casson.⁵² Unfortunately, they failed to provide the nucleus of an audience for the Gaiety.

Of the three Playgoers' Societies, the most vital to the establishment of a theatre was the one at Liverpool, which, by

⁴⁹ Manchester City News, July 20, 1907.

⁵⁰ Manchester City News, August 31, 1907.

⁵¹ In 1910, "The Theatre, The Next Phase," a lecture delivered on June 9, 1910, Granville Barker praises the Stockport Garrick Society, as one of Britains most adventurous amateur companies as they had even attempted King Lear, pp. 632-637.

⁵² See pp. 151-154.

1911 had some 700 members.⁵³ It was set up in 1910 to carry on the work of the Liverpool Stage Club, founded in 1907. This organisation had initially excluded women from membership, though after some advice from Herbert Beerbohm Tree to, "get the women on your side," and perhaps shamed by the example of Miss Horniman in Manchester, it allowed women to become members.⁵⁴ From 1910 the organisation seems to have had a primarily social purpose, and this encouraged the interest of a number of wealthy people in the repertory theatre. Their contributions allowed the theatre to open with adequate financial backing. Membership of the Society was divided between men like Ronald Jeans and Alec Rea, who caught midnight trains from Manchester home to Liverpool after each new production at the Gaiety and others who organised "repertory teas" at fashionable houses.⁵⁵

The great advantage of having to wait five years for a repertory theatre was that the idea had time to flourish and gain local support. In Liverpool this culminated in a trial season which, "with the help of the press...and the generous support of the public...created a record and [filled] Kelly's theatre...to its utmost capacity during the entire six weeks."⁵⁶

⁵³ TP's Weekly, Nov 10, 1911, p. 597. The Liverpool Playgoers' Society had a programme rather like that of the Manchester Society. The syllabus for 1915/1916 included a talk by H.M. Richardson, a Manchester playwright, on "Shakespeare, Ibsen and the Movies," a discussion, "On the function of a Repertory Theatre," a play-reading of Rebellion, by its author, John Drinkwater; and a topical lecture on, "English and French Patriotism." Many of their functions were held in conjunction with the Repertory Theatre. M.D. 45, Liverpool Public Library.

⁵⁴ Pogson, p. 31

⁵⁵ Liverpool Post and Mercury, Nov 10, 1932, p. 6

⁵⁶ W.W. Kelly, Letter, Liverpool Post and Mercury, March 18, 1930.

All three theatres had some form of pilot season. From October to December 1907, Miss Horniman funded a season at the Midland Theatre and, only after she had convinced herself that Manchester would support her theatre, did she carry on.

In Glasgow, Alfred Wareing tried an initial season from April to June 1909, at the Royalty Theatre. He raised most of the money privately but also persuaded a large number of Glasgow's Citizens to support his venture and to fund future seasons. In the spring of 1911, a trial season was held at Kelly's Theatre in Liverpool, a popular venue usually associated with historical melodramas such as A Royal Divorce, and the season yielded a profit of £793. This made it easier to raise money for a permanent repertory theatre, encouraging backers in the view that it would be a profitable venture. ⁵⁷

Miss Horniman's first five-week season took place at the Midland Theatre, a venue not suited to the kind of plays she wished to produce. Although conveniently situated in the centre of Manchester, it was little more than a large, rectangular, rather draughty hall with a raised platform at one end. Its aspect was not helped by audiences so sparse, that the actors feared they would soon be out of a job. Miss Horniman, "seemed quite unperturbed, sitting in one of the side-boxes at every performance and staring at the rows of empty seats with a grim smile." ⁵⁸ Though critical comment was

⁵⁷ See p. 276.

⁵⁸ Dean, Seven Ages, p. 52.

generally favourable, the season lost Miss Horniman a great deal of money and did not attract a great deal of support. But she pressed on with her plans to buy a permanent theatre in Manchester, because, James Agate suggested, of the enthusiastic reception accorded the experiment by the Manchester Guardian. Agate described the newspaper as, "representing all that the Manchester intelligentsia which does not go to the play, might be supposed to think if it did." ⁵⁹ Ben Iden Payne offers the same explanation, but the Manchester Guardian's reception while warm, was by no means uncritically enthusiastic. ⁶⁰ C.E.

Montague wrote of the season:

The mistake would be to suppose that this theatre is to do something miraculous or stupendous or to overshadow all that has gone before. To be chosen of the Playgoers' Theatre does not imply inspirations of a new exclusive kind. ⁶¹

These are words scarcely designed to dispel the gloom of sparse audiences in an incommodious hall, and what probably drove Miss Horniman forward was her desire to "show" the Abbey. Fortunately, during the Midland Theatre season, Wareing was able to negotiate the purchase of the Gaiety Theatre for her, ⁶² giving Miss Horniman the opportunity of

⁵⁹ Agate, Short View, pp. 72-73.

⁶⁰ Payne, pp. 82-83.

⁶¹ Manchester Guardian, Sept 24, 1907, (H.S.)

⁶² "From A.E.F. Horniman," 3 November 1907, Letters to W.B. Yeats ed. Finneran, Harper and Murphy, (London, Macmillan, 1977), Vol. I, 193, "The Gaiety is one of the well-known theatres, in a splendid position ... Everyone is glad to hear that I am buying it and that I intend if possible to arrange for all the seats to be booked." Yeats cast a horoscope for the Gaiety and found that it was, "under good stars," Yeats, ed. Bax, p. 61.

owning and running a theatre, and thus fulfilling a long-cherished ambition.⁶³

Wareing's first season was not strictly a pilot season. The money needed to start the venture, £1000, was raised in six weeks and the Royalty theatre in the heart of Glasgow was chosen as the venue.⁶⁴ Because of its prime site and size, it held 1314 people, the Royalty cost £80 a week to rent and therefore a very large proportion of the initial capital of £1000 went on rent for the seven week season. The season however was fairly well supported and "good houses" were reported for some productions, notably You Never Can Tell and Strife.⁶⁵ On the first night of the new venture, April 5, 1909, there were speeches and celebrations. Letters of support from Beerbohm Tree, Forbes Robertson, Cyril Maude, John Galsworthy and Arnold Bennett were read, and all seemed set fair for success.⁶⁶ But lack of capital forced the theatre to make economies and shorten the first season. However, enough interest had been generated to ensure a further season. New shareholders subscribed another thousand pounds, and most of the original shareholders renewed, and in some cases increased, their initial investment. The season ended well with the Glasgow Herald commenting on the high standard of productions, but saying that it was a pity that the theatre: "caught on just

⁶³ Flannery, p. 24.

⁶⁴ Wareing had agreed that the scheme would not proceed unless £1000 had been subscribed by a certain date. Only on the morning of that day was the final £100 subscribed by John R. Richmond, later a prominent Scottish industrialist. The appeal had been launched at a meeting in the Grosvenor Restaurant at which it had been estimated that the theatre would cost £240.00 per week to run. Glasgow Herald, February 20, 1909, p. 9, col. 4.

⁶⁵ Glasgow Programme, April 24, 1909, p. 3.

⁶⁶ Glasgow Herald, April 6, 1909, p. 8, col. 7.

as it was about to go off." ⁶⁷ The Era added that: "it would be a serious reproach to the citizens of Glasgow if they did not give the... [theatre] their enthusiastic support." ⁶⁸

Before his health broke down in the autumn of 1910, Alfred Wareing had promised that he would send a company from his Glasgow theatre to perform plays from their repertoire in Liverpool. His friend, the theatre manager, W.W. Kelly, had arranged for this visit to take place in the spring of 1911 at Kelly's Theatre in Paradise St. When Wareing was unable to fulfil his promise, Kelly was left with several weeks prime time spare at his theatre. ⁶⁹ Management of the season passed to Miss Darragh an actress who had, until recently, been a member of Miss Horniman's company in Manchester. Miss Darragh was able to take over the season as she had the financial backing of an infatuated admirer, Charles Kenyon. Basil Dean, who had also recently left Miss Horniman's employ, joined Miss Darragh to direct the plays in which she was to star and later, when the Repertory Theatre was established, he took over artistic control from her. ⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Ibid., May 19, 1909, p. 8, col. 6.

⁶⁸ Era, April 10, 1909, p. 15, col. 2.

⁶⁹ Liverpool Post and Mercury, March 18, 1930, and, unidentified cutting dated Dec 19, 1910, M D. 45, Liverpool Public Library. The structure of the season had been shaped by Wareing, and the repertoire, the fund-raising and other arrangements had all been discussed before he fell ill.

⁷⁰ Dean, Seven Ages, pp. 73. Miss Darragh had, like Payne, Wareing and Miss Horniman, been involved in the Abbey before being recruited for the Gaiety. See p.

The Liverpool pilot season had to give the repertory movement in that city both artistic and financial credibility, and on both counts it succeeded so well, that the first season at the Repertory Theatre was something of an anti-climax. Certainly, the first night of the season at Kelly's Theatre was a glittering affair with Lord Derby, the Lord Mayor, in one box and Miss Horniman, who had lent much of the scenery for the plays, in another. ⁷¹ The opening play was John Galsworthy's Strife, and, as in Glasgow, it was tremendously successful. But social functions became the main feature of the trial season for many people, with private parties and receptions held on stage, hosted by Miss Darragh in a picture hat. ⁷²

On the last night of the season, it was announced, that £6000 had been subscribed by 800 people and the Star Theatre in Williamson Square had been purchased with a view to its conversion into a repertory theatre. ⁷³ Throughout the season the Liverpool Press had been sympathetic. The Porcupine, a satirical magazine, said they had "slobbered" over the plays, and perhaps there was an element of truth in this. ⁷⁴ One local journalist, Ronald Jeans, wrote of the season:

⁷¹ Whitford Kane, Are We All Met, (London, Elkin, Matthews and Marrot, 1931), p. 105. Dean, Seven Ages, pp. 75-76.

⁷² Dean, Seven Ages, p. 78.

⁷³ Liverpool Post and Mercury, May, 17, 1911.

⁷⁴ Goldie, p. 59. Porcupine, June 10, 1911, "Never was so much excitement and eloquence expended upon such average performers."

We cannot be too grateful then to this gallant little company of Miss Darragh's; firstly as Playgoers, for six weeks of genuine pleasure in the theatre and secondly as citizens of Liverpool for their untiring exertions which have been the means of proving the advantages and possibilities of a Repertory Company... The end of anything is sad; but it is consoling to know that Liverpool will before long, renew her acquaintance with the Repertory Drama and next time let us hope there will be no end. ⁷⁵

This hope, although it may have seemed almost recklessly optimistic in 1911, has actually been fulfilled because, of the three theatres, only Liverpool lasted beyond the end of the First World War and indeed it survives to this day. ⁷⁶ For the Citizens' Theatre in Glasgow, having to rent an expensive theatre and being at the mercy of the commercial whims of Messrs Howard and Wyndham Ltd., made it unlikely that it would survive long without its own permanent home. ⁷⁷ The Gaiety Theatre was in some ways an alien growth in Manchester, an artistic experiment provided for the citizens of Manchester, rather than a theatre established in response to a public demand. ⁷⁸ Whatever

⁷⁵ Undated cutting, M D. 45, Liverpool Public Library, signed R. (onald?) J. (eans?), if so that would make the newspaper the Post and Mercury. The date must be around May 17, 1911.

⁷⁶ An article celebrating seventy years of the Liverpool Playhouse was published in, The Stage, September 17, 1981.

⁷⁷ See p. 61.

⁷⁸ Lewis Casson, "Saluting Miss Horniman," The Guardian Sept 6, 1958, "The Horniman Festival" (hereafter referred to as H.F.) a cuttings book in Manchester Public Library. Barker, 1910, "The Theatre: The Next Phase", p. 631, "Miss Horniman's Theatre is provided for, rather than by, the citizens."

the Gaiety's artistic merits, when it began to assume the function of a municipal theatre without any municipal subsidy, it was almost bound to end in financial failure, as Miss Horniman had only limited resources. ⁷⁹

When she came to plan the organisation of her new theatre in Manchester, Miss Horniman determined to keep strict control over all aspects of the theatre. She made this plain in a letter which was written in August 1908, just before the newly refurbished Gaiety opened:

Everyone paid and open to dismissal for good reason, no one allowed to feel indispensable. If two men come to blows just before the curtain rises they will 'get the sack'. If the leading man refuses to rehearse with the leading lady, well he won't be allowed another chance. If the stage manager orders me off the stage because I give him a necessary message from the paying public there will be ructions. ⁸⁰

From this it might seem that Miss Horniman had a rather pessimistic view of potential personal relations at the Gaiety. However she knew from bitter experience that such conflicts were the stuff of life at the Abbey. There are stories from Dublin, perhaps apocryphal, which tell of the Abbey's stage manager W.G. Fay and Miss Horniman having arguments on the stage just

⁷⁹ Manchester City News, September 17, 1910, (H.S.).

⁸⁰ Pogson, p. 23, "Miss Horniman at the Gaiety," edited by Arthur Swinson and John Alldridge, BBC, Home Service, March 13, 1953, quotation from letter to Rev. J.O. Hannay.

before a performance. On another occasion a sofa could not be moved on a set because the stage carpenter had fallen out with the cleaning lady and would "die" rather than replace a castor and make her life easier. ⁸¹

Her experiences at the Abbey had also made Miss Horniman determined that, at the Gaiety, "the unfortunate person who paid", would not be, "the only one without any influence." ⁸² She explained during a lecture, that she was in overall charge of the Gaiety and only qualified professionals were employed:

In Manchester it was really very simple. All plays had to pass both Mr. Payne (The Art Director) and herself - if either did not like the play it was dropped at once. Mr Payne dealt with the Actors and Actresses, and the various matters connected with the performances. The advertisements and purely business matters were in the hands of Mr Hayes (sic). At the Gaiety there was a qualified person for every branch - a man who knew his business. If he did anything to which the public objected, the public wrote to Miss Horniman, and she did her best to put it right. *Practically speaking, the Gaiety was run by one person.* [My italics]. ⁸³

Theoretically then, each man was to be in sole charge of his field, responsible to Miss Horniman but free from unwarranted

⁸¹ Yeats, ed. Bax, p. 48

⁸² Horniman, Talk, p. 86.

⁸³ Ibid. p. 87.

interference. With Heys, at least, this seems to have worked, and so pleased was Miss Horniman with the way in which Heys ran the Gaiety's business affairs, that she gave him the provincial rights to Hindle Wakes, the theatre's greatest financial success, as a wedding present. This gift, while undeniably generous, deprived the Gaiety of much needed revenue and ultimately deprived the Gaiety of Heys, who left to administer his marriage portion. ⁸⁴

Though relations between Miss Horniman and her business manager seem to have been very satisfactory, those with her artistic directors seem to have been less so. Lewis Casson for example, left in 1913 after a battle with Miss Horniman over his "Gordon Craigish" production of Julius Caesar. ⁸⁵ Payne, however, had, on the advice of Bernard Shaw, who warned him that Miss Horniman fought with everybody, and of W.B. Yeats, who had known Miss Horniman for a long time, arranged a, "water-tight contract." ⁸⁶ The contract seemed to give Payne control of artistic matters and Miss Horniman the right of veto over any play of which she disapproved. Miss Horniman, however, took a rather liberal interpretation of her role and told a meeting of the Manchester Statistical Society that:

⁸⁴ Lewis Casson "Miss Horniman," Drama N.S., No. 28, Spring 1953, p. 21, comments on the instinctive gesture of generosity. The Stage, Sept 18, 1913, lists five touring companies playing Hindle Wakes as well as the Gaiety Company in Manchester. Ben Iden Payne was given the touring rights to Houghton's, The Younger Generation.

⁸⁵ Lewis Casson, Daily Mail, Sept 12, 1958, (H.F.), added to Sybil Thorndike's unflattering recollections of Miss Horniman, "she put me in charge, but she wanted things so much her own way, that I left the Company in 1914." See illustrations p.324.

⁸⁶ Payne, p. 80

Variety is essential - it is a very difficult matter at the Gaiety to choose plays without annoying someone. I often meet people who scold me for producing a particular play, and then immediately afterwards, I meet others who have really enjoyed it. I always try to make a selection which, if disliked by some, will be enjoyed by many.

In the early years of the Gaiety, Payne tells us that he seldom saw Miss Horniman in the theatre and she was careful to avoid appearing at rehearsals in case she distracted the actors.⁸⁸ They, in turn, seldom if ever saw her, and she seems to have spent much of her time in Manchester reading the hundreds of playscripts which she received, or supervising the domestic arrangements at the Gaiety.⁸⁹ How closely his contract was adhered to, is therefore uncertain and, though Muriel Pratt remembered that at the Gaiety, "the producer was king,"⁹⁰ Sybil Thorndike, who was in the Company at the same time, reported that: "Miss Horniman had been taking such a hand in productions that poor Iden had to leave."⁹¹ In his memoirs Payne says little of this, only mentioning that he had good reason to be glad of his contract.⁹²

⁸⁷ Horniman, Talk, p. 86.

⁸⁸ Kane, p. 94, "After the première of Justice [Oct 24, 1910] a tall, maidenly lady, dressed in a mediaeval green dress and wearing a gold chain with an opal dragon, took a bow from a box. It was Miss Horniman and it was the only time we saw her during the year." Payne, p. 93.

⁸⁹ See p.

⁹⁰ BBC, 1953

⁹¹ Daily Mail, Sept. 12, 1958, (H.F.)

⁹² Payne, p. 80.

Miss Horniman always gave Payne the credit for the artistic success of her venture and we can gauge her non-interference in the Gaiety's artistic affairs from the fact that although she wanted "realism", Shakespeare, poetic drama and Greek plays figured prominently in the early programmes for the theatre.⁹³ Payne also produced a great deal of uncommercial drama and this inevitably led to friction, as Miss Horniman was, as she continually said, in the business to make a profit.⁹⁴ Although she would never disclose exact figures, Miss Horniman did say that, for most of its existence, her theatre did not make her any money.⁹⁵

Two main features of the Gaiety's organisation reflected Miss Horniman's preoccupations, extensive tours of Britain and long seasons at the Coronet Theatre, in Notting Hill Gate, London. The tours of Britain, which started as soon as the Midland Theatre season was over, were usually to towns like Glasgow, Newcastle and Leeds, which had also been visited by the Abbey Company. As they had done for the Abbey, they yielded some enthusiastic reviews which helped to consolidate the Gaiety's reputation. In August 1908, the Leeds Mercury wrote of a performance of Widowers' Houses:

⁹³ Manchester Courier, Sept 16, 1909, (H.S.).

⁹⁴ At his farewell dinner, Casson said that Miss Horniman, "had always put forward what was to a certain extent a legal fiction, that the theatre had been founded for purely commercial purposes, but any profits she made out of it were always put into it again so that it had never been a serious commercial undertaking," Nottingham Express, Jan 10, 1914, (H.S.).

⁹⁵ Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, Feb 18, 1910, (H.S.).
See p.

We must say that last night's performance...
 was a complete gratification of the senses...
 Those who fail to see the present company
 at the Grand Theatre will miss something
 they will afterwards regret, for every part
 is treated with the highest intelligence
 and acted with the most scrupulous
 fastidiousness, a combination of all round
 virtues it is a pleasure to draw attention to...⁹⁶

Others were less impressed by the Gaiety's early tours and
 Harley Granville Barker described them as "rubbish".⁹⁷ But
 reviews such as those in Leeds were ammunition in the constant
 war to "show" Dublin, as were the Gaiety's very successful
 London seasons at the Coronet Theatre, the first of which
 took place in June 1909. Of this season William Archer
 wrote:

I wish to express my deliberate opinion that
 the Manchester Movement is the most important
 fact in our theatrical history since the
 opening of the Vedrenne-Barker campaign
 at the Court Theatre and less important
 than that only inasmuch as it is in some
 sense a consequence of it.⁹⁸

When Payne left the Gaiety, Miss Horniman began to take a more
 active interest in the theatre's affairs, acting as advance
 agent for its first tour of North America in the spring of 1912.

⁹⁶ Leeds Mercury, August 18, 1908.

⁹⁷ Purdom, Barker, p. 77.

⁹⁸ See pp. 11-13.

Unfortunately the Abbey had got there first, with a tour of the main East Coast cities of the United States which was notable for its attendant "Playboy Riots".⁹⁹ The Gaiety tour in comparison, attracted little notice. The tour to North America concentrated on Canada with only a flying visit to Boston, but it is claimed in Miss Horniman's biography that the visits of the Gaiety to North America laid the foundations for the Little Theatre movement in the United States. Others claim this distinction for the Abbey.¹⁰⁰

But whatever long-term good came of the tours, their short term effect was to weaken the Gaiety, by dissipating its energies and tempting members of the company away from Manchester. It would always have been difficult to hold a company together, especially, given the constant attraction of London, the local company promised by the theatre's manifesto. But when, in order to encourage prestigious tours, Miss Horniman split her best actors between two companies, and when her leading actors were signed by London managements, the consequent disappearance of favourite actors meant that the rapport between audience and actors was gradually eroded.

Before 1917, when it changed its name to the Liverpool Playhouse, the Liverpool Repertory Theatre had been run, like the Glasgow Repertory Theatre, by a board of directors who appointed a manager to run the theatre. In their mixing of town and gown on the boards of their two theatres, Glasgow and Liverpool showed a breadth of appeal, though in Liverpool, six of the directors were businessmen and in Glasgow only two.

⁹⁹ Lady Gregory, Our Irish Theatre, (Colin Smythe, Gerrards Cross, 1972) pp. 222-239, "The Playboy in America."

¹⁰⁰ Most American historians point to the direct tradition and example of the Théâtre Libre as the inspiration for the Little Theatres. See p. 287.

The rest of the Liverpool board was made up of the editors of the city's two main newspapers and two professors from Liverpool University.¹⁰¹ This made ten directors in all and Basil Dean the theatre's first director certainly found that too many.¹⁰² The rest of Alfred Wareing's board consisted of two professors, the journalist and author Neil Munro, a prominent city councillor, and the secretary of the Glasgow Art Club.¹⁰³

Given his difficulties with the Liverpool board, Basil Dean should perhaps have followed the example of Wareing and established a "lay" advisory committee such as was founded during Wareing's first year at the Royalty. Before this he had handled

¹⁰¹ Prospectus for shares in "The Liverpool Repertory Theatre Limited" dated May 22, 1911.

¹⁰² See p. 94.

¹⁰³ Among the first to lend their support to the establishment of a Citizens' Theatre were, "Mrs. W.E. Henley and Mrs. Will MacBride at whose flat in Bath Street, where they asked Neil Munro to meet me, the plan came together and was launched. Neil Munro's help was unique as it was powerful. He was the first to join the board and it was he who brought in Professors J.S. Phillimore and MacNeile Dixon and Wright Robb (Secretary of the Art Club) as his fellow Directors. It was Mrs. Henley who got Deacon - Convenor Andrew MacDonald to join our board. The formation of the company was the work of Archie Charteris. It was our aim to get a large number of shareholders and indeed, no great amounts were subscribed. Among the first to come in were Colonel Fred Morrison, A.H. Pettigrew, Robert Wilson, Mrs. Carrie Cagill, Mrs. Hay Wilson, Paul and Fritz Rottenberg, D.M. Stevenson, Clement and John Boyd, Hugh Hopkins, John Keppie, Mr. and Mrs. Fra. Newberry, Hugh Buchanan and Dr. Wallace the editor of 'The Glasgow Herald'." Alfred Wareing, Glasgow Herald, April 5, 1939. Those associated with the formation of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre, were well-known citizens, prominent in the Arts, in journalism, in commerce and in local politics.

all artistic matters himself, and, though the committee ostensibly advised on literary matters, it was later suggested that a committee of young men was chosen: "as a healthy counterpoise to any tendency there might be to let box-office returns too much influence the selection of plays." ¹⁰⁴

Though no one records its actual size, the committee was small and met once a week to lunch at the theatre *and* discuss the choice of repertoire. ¹⁰⁵ Walter Elliot, later a well-known Member of Parliament, but in 1910 the President of the Glasgow University Union and a member of the advisory committee remembered that:

Long arguments went on about what should be played on particular dates; chiefly at certain Glasgow holidays. For then the normal places of refreshment were closed by the magistrates of the city; but the theatre bars were not subject to this ban. Therefore on those days anything would pay. The question was whether we should use up a good piece, since the house would fill anyway, or turn on a piece of slush. People might come back if they saw a good piece. On the other hand it was an awful waste... ¹⁰⁶

That the repertoire of the Citizens' theatre was praised by Harley Granville Barker as the best in the country, suggests that Wareing's ploy of using the advisory committee's approval of good but uncommercial drama to convince the cost-conscious Board of Directors that

¹⁰⁴ Glasgow Evening News, January 12, 1925, (W.S.).

¹⁰⁵ Isaac, p. xi.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. xii.

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it was what the public would want, was at least partly successful.¹⁰⁷ Miss Horniman had a less charitable notion of the use of such committees and said:

In Glasgow if people wanted to know anything they worried helpless members of individual committees. The people who really ran the theatre were safely entrenched behind them...¹⁰⁸

Whatever the reason for its institution, the advisory committee was a useful check upon a board of directors who were predominantly interested in the commercial aspects of the theatre, but who were, as James Bridie observes, "not wealthy men and, although they were enlightened and courageous, they lacked the fanaticism that enabled Wareing to enjoy a forlorn hope as much as a victory."¹⁰⁹ This committee eventually, in the spring of 1912, terminated Wareing's contract when they felt that losses, then an accumulated deficit of £3000 on a turnover of £36236, had gone far enough. Bridie tells us that at different times both Wareing and Mrs. Wareing had to fight the board to get their way, but after the 1914 season, Lewis Casson, fresh from his fights with Miss Horniman, paid tribute to the

¹⁰⁷ Glasgow Herald, November 13, 1909, p. 11, col. 3.

¹⁰⁸ Horniman, Talk, p. 87.

¹⁰⁹ Isaac, p. vi.

board of directors at Glasgow, and told the final shareholders' meeting that it was not true that there was no satisfaction to be had from working with a board of directors. ¹¹⁰ Casson's season had consisted mainly of popular comedies and had made a profit, so giving the directors no cause for complaint.

Basil Dean's experiences at Liverpool were in some ways similar to Wareing's at Glasgow. Dean was only twenty-three when he was appointed over the head of the majestic Miss Darragh, who, Professor Reilly says in his autobiography, tried to use some of her charms to woo the directors when they were choosing an artistic director for the new theatre. ¹¹¹ The directors' wives favoured Basil Dean and he won the battle. Dean was, however, very young and inexperienced and his board were no more experienced than he, in how to run a theatre.

The Board tried to run the theatre like a very efficient business. Unfortunately, there was ^a division between those who favoured experiment, within a limited budget, and those who were all for any commercial play which would help the bank balance. Basil Dean's claim, that the Liverpool Repertory Theatre's most consistent policy was one of producing modern comedies, shows that the more conservative directors carried the day. ¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Ibid. Glasgow Herald, April 27, 1914, p. 8, col. 6.

¹¹¹ Reilly, p. 150.

¹¹² Basil Dean, "The Problem of the Repertory Theatre," Poetry and Drama, Vol. 1, No. 4, Dec 1913, p. 446. Seven Ages p. 89.

Unfortunately for Dean, the directors did not only fight amongst themselves, they also fought the theatre's first "controller", as Basil Dean was called. His day of dread was Thursday, when he had to report to the board:

Those weekly Thursdays came to be regarded in my mind as a kind of man-hunt but unfortunately I was the quarry....As the months went by and the real difficulties of our situation became more apparent, the lust for disciplining the unfortunate theatre director seemed to increase. ¹¹³

Dean's main problem was, that the directors expected to be presented with estimates of a, "knife-edge accuracy" on the running of the theatre and, as he was not an accountant, and was directing every one of the theatre's productions, the burden of work became unbearable. His workload was lightened at the end of the first season in 1912 when another director, or stage manager, Laurence Hanray, was appointed from within the company and Lascelles Abercrombie, the poet, was appointed as "dramaturg" or play reader, to make suggestions as to the theatre's possible repertoire." ¹¹⁴

Eventually, after the 1912-1913 season, during which the theatre had suffered heavy losses, a production of Hauptmann's Hannele, for example, lost over £800, Basil Dean was replaced

¹¹³ Liverpool Post and Mercury, November 10, 1932.

¹¹⁴ Reilly, p. 157

as producer by Hanray and Godfrey Edwards took over running the theatre.¹¹⁵ Hanray seems to have been fairly pliant and very much to the liking of the Liverpool directors, as was Edwards who, in Dean's words, "loved the theatre with all the wrong-headedness of the amateur,"¹¹⁶ and worked for nothing.¹¹⁶ At first they supported a policy of nondescript plays by well known authors, which it was hoped would make money, but failed. Eventually, a scheme which combined good plays and a rigorous repertory system was approved. This enacted a miraculous recovery of the theatre's fortunes.¹¹⁷ But just when the theatre seemed to be satisfying both its shareholders and its intellectual supporters, war was declared and the directors' first instinct was to close down the theatre.¹¹⁸

Estelle Winwood was in the company which had been recruited for the autumn season of 1914.¹¹⁹ She had become one of Liverpool's favourite actresses, and together with the theatre's business manager T.J. Piggot and the director of the season, Madge MacKintosh, she set up a "commonwealth". The venture was given the blessing of the theatre's directors who continued their

¹¹⁵ Drama, Feb 1923, M.D. 38. Liverpool.

¹¹⁶ Liverpool Post and Mercury, November 10, 1932.

¹¹⁷ See pp. 265-266.

¹¹⁸ The Liverpool Commonwealth Seasons, (Liverpool, for the Repertory Theatre, 1915), p. 6.

¹¹⁹ Estelle Winwood later went to the United States where she attracted the attention of Dorothy Parker, who wrote of her performance in The Admirable Crichton, "Miss Estelle Winwood, as Tweeny, gave a performance such as would cause your fourteen-year-old sister to be black-balled for the high-school dramatic club, did she attempt to emulate it," The Penguin Dorothy Parker, (London, Penguin, 1977), p. 443.

guarantee at the bank. Each member of the acting company paid one pound, and each member of the theatre's staff one shilling to establish the commonwealth. A low minimum wage for all was agreed, with extra to be paid in proportion to the profit which the theatre made.¹²⁰ The commonwealth was a great success and carried the theatre over that uncertain time when all the men seemed to be leaving for the war and everyone was unsure of what was happening. Liverpool rallied round its theatre and the success of the venture meant that wages were seldom lower than those paid before the war. When the Commonwealth ended in 1916, after the initiators of the scheme decided that their aims had been fulfilled, a celebratory booklet was published in which Madge MacKintosh described some of the achievements of the experiment:

When I found myself faced with the problem of directing the Commonwealth season, I felt strangely pessimistic as to its ultimate result. Common belief has it that in the routine of theatrical undertakings self and self only predominates and that the average actor or actress lives only for self-advancement. The unique success of our season proves the injustice of such a belief for we could never have brought this our great adventure to so triumphant an issue had it not been for the loyalty and devotion, the total lack of personal aims of every individual member of company staff and orchestra towards this our Commonwealth. We have been able thanks to such loyalty to fill our theatre in these dark days, to keep many people employed and also to further the advance of the Repertory Movement. Mr Granville Barker who paid us an informal visit in October was amazed at the overflowing audience and informed me that we were doing better business than the majority of London theatres.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Commonwealth, p. 7.

¹²¹ Ibid, p. 9.

When, shortly after leaving Liverpool, Basil Dean came to consider the organisational problems of the repertory theatres, he concluded that the friction between financial and artistic considerations, had a detrimental effect on both Liverpool and Manchester. He felt that without, "some measure of relief from immediate financial exigencies," especially in the early years of a theatre, the high standards demanded of the repertory ideal could not be achieved. Artistic ideals should, he felt, come first:

The English Repertory Theatre is engrossed with the problems of organisation and finance. The artistic problem comes second. How to manage with fewer artists? Where to find plays with shorter casts? Will this play pay? Can I find three indifferent plays to pay for one conscientious effort before Christmas? These are the most pressing questions with the English repertory manager. They should be secondary considerations. His primary anxieties should be: Is the theatre maintaining the standards set forth at the beginning? is our company strong enough? Dare we attempt a production of Hamlet? Is Miss-So-and-So ready yet for Nora? and so forth. In Manchester, thanks to her own pluck, Miss Horniman has been enabled to set up certain standards, some good, but all less firm, less constantly maintained than would have been possible had that courageous lady received either from one or more private individuals or from the municipality the financial endowment which is her undoubted due. 122

122 Basil Dean, "The Repertory Theatre," Poetry and Drama, Vol. 1, No. 4, December 1913, p. 444.

The particular character of repertory brought a kind of financial difficulty not experienced by other theatres for they had not the problems of how to publicise shows which only ran for a limited period. Ashley Dukes recalled that in Germany the endowed theatres advertised all over the towns on distinctive kiosks, with playbills in large Gothic script." The public knew to look there for information about cultural events and the theatre's weekly repertoire.¹²³ Miss Horniman tried to advertise always on eye-catching, green-edged posters but, having to vie with large commercial hoardings, they were not a success and afterwards the Gaiety, "did not advertise largely". Liverpool also tried advertising on large, distinctive posters but with a similar lack of success.¹²⁴

The season which followed the end of the Commonwealth, autumn 1916 to summer 1917, saw a change in the theatre's name to the Liverpool Playhouse. This reflected the move from the more challenging policies of Basil Dean's first two years, and the season contained exactly the kind of plays which, by the 1930's, one came to expect from Britain's provincial repertory theatres. The season had a mixture of classics, like The School for Scandal, recent West End successes, for example, What Every Woman Knows, and potboilers, like Iris Intervenes. The season was the responsibility of Muriel Pratt and W. Bridges Adams and, though many of its plays were well attended, the Christmas play was a failure and the season lost £1440.¹²⁵

¹²³ Dukes, The Scene is Changed, pp. 15-16

¹²⁴ C.H. Reilly, "The Repertory Theatre and its Aims," Education, August 16, 1912, p. 98, (H.S.)

¹²⁵ Goldie, pp. 115-117.

Another European innovation tried by Glasgow and Liverpool was a system of selling subscription tickets. The European theatres used this method of selling tickets in advance of the season to raise money which would launch new productions and to guarantee a sizeable audience on most evenings. The incentive to buy these tickets in advance was their reduced price, but both Glasgow and Liverpool made the mistake of offering, for example, ten 5/- tickets for 40/-, rather than offering tickets for specific nights or specific productions as the German theatres did. This had several unfortunate consequences. First, too few people took up these subscriptions because the system was unfamiliar. Then there were endless problems with customers who wished to change their tickets, or to obtain refunds on tickets bought and not used. The theatres also found that most people used their tickets for successful productions and did not take risks with unfamiliar works. The Citizens' theatre had made the mistake of offering too generous a discount and, so Granville Barker claimed, the shareholders ended up, "tipping" the coupon ticket holders. ¹²⁶

Wareing's main innovation was to produce introductory brochures for each season. The brochures, which each had a specially designed cover of topical theatrical interest, were available from shops throughout Glasgow. ¹²⁷ They were

¹²⁶ Glasgow Herald, November 13, 1909, p. 11, col. 3.

¹²⁷ Liverpool also introduced a booklet entitled, "Liverpool Repertory Theatre, Its Plays and Players", in the autumn of 1911, but did not repeat the experiment.

produced for the general theatre-goer and aimed to introduce the company and the repertoire for the coming season. Each contained short biographies of the members of the company, together with photographs, a synopsis of the plays to be performed with a little of their history or a note about the author, and a section on the Citizens' theatre and its policy. The idea must have been a fair success as it continued until Wareing left Glasgow and, when he took over the Theatre Royal at Huddersfield, he introduced the practice there. 128

Though all the theatres tried to appeal to a general public, and their dependence on box-office returns made this inevitable, the audiences which they attracted, whether lured by newspaper advertising or posters, word of mouth, or reviews, was as difficult to define as to attract. One section of Liverpool's audience was described by Godfrey Edwards in the course of a lecture he gave on the repertory movement:

Strange as it may seem certain limitations of the Repertory Movement have been caused by some well-wishers, whom I will set down briefly as cranks. They admire, or pretend to admire, only the gloomy morbid drama; they write to the papers and talk about the 'Advanced Theatre' or the 'Intellectual Theatre'. Unfortunately they consider a Repertory Theatre should be run only according to their ideas...When a play after the hearts of the cranks is staged, and you expect the theatre to be crowded with these mystic enthusiasts, they... stop mysteriously away and the theatre is filled only with the echo of their voices from outside... 129

128 For example, Before the Curtain Rises, (Huddersfield, Theatre Royal, 1921).

129 "The Repertory Theatre, What it has done for our city." Porcupine, March 1914, 'Special Supplement, n.p.

But when the repertory theatres first opened, an "advanced" or "intellectual" audience was certainly encouraged. Perhaps the repertory theatres were misled by the audience which had attended the Court Theatre. Max Beerbohm had described this as the middle class paying: "to see that which is seen and approved by the English upper class, and (more especially) to see the English upper class."¹³⁰ Since the Gaiety's repertoire contained plays by Shaw, and other Court dramatists, such a public might have been hoped for. Indeed, the founders of the Manchester Gaiety hoped that, "its crush-rooms will be the meeting place of the most active and brainy men and women." When this kind of patron failed to materialise in large enough numbers, and it was wondered why, the Manchester Courier answered:

To compare it [the Gaiety] with the Court Theatre is simply absurd. The Court was able to subsist on a very special artistic public which one finds in all the great capitals of the world. The Gaiety has no such opportunity, it has to live on the Manchester public. ¹³¹

Part of the confusion over exactly what sort of audience the Gaiety wished to attract, came with the theatre's attempt to woo back to the theatre: "those who have lost the habit of theatre-going because of the fare provided," a public consisting of: "intelligent people of all ranks and classes," without making

¹³⁰ Max Beerbohm, Around Theatres, (London, Hart-Davis, 1953, p. 40.

¹³¹ Manchester Courier, August 27, 1907 and Sept 9, 1913, (H.S.).

any special effort to ascertain whether or not such a public did exist and without realising the difficulty of breaking down prejudice against the theatre in a strongly non-conformist town like Manchester. ¹³²

The concern to attract thinking people to the theatre was emphasised by Ben Iden Payne in the socialist weekly the New Age in September 1907, three weeks before the season at the Midland Theatre began. He had written in response to an article by Mr Haden Guest which had called for the foundation of a, "thinkers' theatre" in the provinces, and Payne wrote to tell readers that such a theatre was on the point of being established. "I also believe," he added, "that we should use the drama as an aid in propaganda work; I am quite sure that we have no more potent force at our command." ¹³³

Alfred Wareing almost fell in to the same trap as the Gaiety, but, while some of his pronouncements as to the audience his theatre should attract were redolent of the dramatic missionary, Wareing was eager to widen the appeal of his theatre. He also cultivated connections with the University and his links with other institutions, like the School of Art, the newspapers and the Corporation. It would seem that Wareing wanted to secure

¹³² Paul Thompson, The Edwardians, (London, Granada, 1975), offers examples of families who shunned the theatre because of their religious views pp. 135, 141 and exceptions, p. 112. He also points out that many families could not afford to go to the theatre p. 323.

¹³³ Ben Iden Payne, Letter, The New Age, Sep t. 26, 1907.

local support in order to ensure proper funding for his theatre and to turn it into a municipal, or even national, institution. He made this clear in a speech delivered in 1912:

Ultimately when we succeed in convincing the thinking man and woman of the value of the work we are doing, we shall almost certainly reach our goal of State or Municipal-aided theatres, playing nightly in every considerable city, fine and artistic works of the highest social and intellectual value. 134

Wareing did therefore, have a very good reason for encouraging cultured and thinking people into his theatre as they would have the means to bring pressure to bear on city institutions to provide support for his theatre. But Wareing was anxious that his theatre should be a true Citizens' theatre and should stand comparison both at home and abroad with Glasgow's other great achievements in the arts. Wareing made a direct link between his theatre and other cultural institutions in Glasgow in the Introductory Brochure for spring 1911. In the final section, he drew attention to Glasgow's high reputation in the fine arts and suggested that the Citizens' Theatre was part of a continuing, "progressive" Glasgow tradition.

To us it is a most natural thing that our Art Galleries contain some of the world's masterpieces, inspiring citizens and attracting strangers from all parts. We are not surprised at the sure position held by the Glasgow School of painters and the Fine Art Institute; we feel that such things are

134 The Stage, March 21, 1912.

only to be expected - they are part of our heritage as a great and progressive community. And what has been done for Art has been begun for Drama.

For two and a half years Glasgow has had its own Repertory Theatre. To some the claim of the Repertory Theatre to the title of "The Citizens Theatre" may have appeared presumptuous. Our justification lies in the wide nature of the appeal we make to each type of mind. We hold a brief for no party; we cater for no clique...all our work is based on an appeal to the great common instincts of mankind. "Everything human is interesting". 135

The desire to give their theatres a tone of culture and civic respectability, and to attract educated people, that section of society by whom, Miss Horniman said, "theatres such as [hers]... rise or fall," was also apparent at both Manchester and Liverpool. 136 Such considerations seem to have been in Sir Edward Russell's mind when he wrote, in an open letter designed to encourage shareholders in the Liverpool Repertory Theatre, that the theatre would:

supply dramatic amusement and cultivation to the vastly increased audiences of our times. It would bring to intellectual people, intellectual, dramatic and histrionic achievements... 137

135 Brochure, Spring 1911, n.p. Also, The Stage, March 5, 1912.

136 Daily News, June 20, 1914 (H.S.) and Liverpool Post and Mercury, October 8, 1912, M D. 45, Liverpool, Hogan & Kilroy, p. 75

137 Reprint of a "Leading Article by Sir Edward Russell in the Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, March 15, 1911," M D. 45, Liverpool.

From such statements came the feeling that what the Repertory theatres offered was, "intellectual improvement," a tag which, as Godfrey Edward's lecture, quoted earlier, shows, continued to haunt the repertory theatres. Miss Horniman eventually came to have a horror of the words, "intellectual" and "improvement" and to endlessly complain that her theatre was associated with things, "dull, freakish... and slightly improper." 138

To a certain extent the early pioneers of repertory only had themselves to blame if people were given the wrong idea of what audience their theatres wished to encourage. Miss Horniman was, as Lewis Casson said, "basically a do-gooder," 139 and her theatre attracted an appropriate audience, described in a semi-serious article in The Gaiety Annual for 1909:

The trouble is, that for some mysterious reason, the Gaiety has become known as the home of advanced thought... and the consequence is that everyone who regards himself or herself as an advanced thinker considers it a duty to go to the Gaiety... In any ordinary theatre it is usually safe to chat to the man next to you if you are feeling lonesome, but in the Gaiety it is absolutely perilous. You may be asked for an opinion on anything from The Communist Manifesto to Thus Spake Zarathustra or the relative food values of beans and broccoli... 140

138 Manchester Courier, Feb 9, 1913.

139 Manchester Guardian, September 8, 1958. Miss Horniman wrote in a letter to Tom Bass, "there must be a real use in doing one's best to help people think for themselves," Miss Horniman, Letter to Tom Bass, August 27, 1919, MPL.

140 "That Audience," Harold Lake, The Gaiety Annual 1909 p. 24.

But while the Gaiety audience was congratulating itself on being "advanced" there were others who took a different view. Alan Monkhouse, one of the dramatic critics of the Manchester Guardian, wrote that the one great failure of the Gaiety audience was that they were, "plaguey slow in educating themselves into intelligent receptive playgoers." Advanced thinkers they may have been, but, according to Monkhouse, not only did they not know how to behave in a theatre; "there [was] nothing that could not be laughed through and hardly anything that [could not] be misunderstood."¹⁴¹ This could point to two different factions in the audience: the intellectual elite on the one hand and another section of the audience who went to the gallery of the Gaiety one night and to the gallery of one of Manchester's other theatres the next. Unaccustomed to seeing tragedy or even faintly gloomy plays in any other theatre, they might laugh at the Gaiety's plays, rather in the way that Dublin audiences laughed at the Irish accents in the early productions of Yeats' plays, simply because any Irishman seen on stage up till then had been a figure of fun. Miss Horniman herself often spoke out against what she called, "horse-laughter" or, the "wrong kind of laughter," in the theatre,¹⁴² and she may have had in mind the section of the audience described by Penelope Wheeler as:

¹⁴¹ Alan Monkhouse, Letter, Manchester Guardian, Dec 9, 1913, (H.S.)

¹⁴² Manchester Guardian, January 16, 1914 (H.S.), Miss Horniman was especially incensed by the audience laughing through the love scene in Mas@field's Nan.

an interesting element in the Manchester theatrical audience... the presence in the sixpenny gallery-where seats can be booked - of factory lasses, who are very faithful adherents of their favourites - actresses as a rule and not actors - who come to the theatre with the greatest regularity on Mondays and Fridays... ¹⁴³

It was perhaps this "unschooled" section of the Gaiety audience which was responsible for the inappropriate laughter, especially if the primary reason for their visit to the theatre was to see a stage favourite, rather than to seek intellectual uplift. ¹⁴⁴ Such support however, shows that Lewis Casson's claim that, "Manchester never took the Gaiety to its heart," is not strictly true. ¹⁴⁵ Stanley Houghton provided the mill-girls with a tribute to their independence of spirit, in Hindle Wakes, and, fifty years later, the Lord Mayor of Manchester recalled that there had been tears on stage and in the audience when Sybil Thorndike had announced she was leaving the Gaiety. ¹⁴⁶

C.B. Purdom also mentioned the fellow feeling between the audience and actors at the Gaiety and Basil Dean, one of the actors, remembered the waves of enthusiasm which used to sweep from the audience to the stage,

¹⁴³ Yorkshire Evening News, Sept 21, 1910. Robert Roberts in, The Long March of Everyman (London, Penguin, 1978), p. 164, confirms both the independence of spirit and financial independence of the mill-girls.

¹⁴⁴ The Guardian, September 6, 1958, (H.F.)

¹⁴⁵ Cutting in, (H.F.).

spurring the actors on to greater heights.¹⁴⁷ In The Gong, the magazine of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, one correspondent remembers sitting in the circle of the Gaiety with a man in Dress clothes on one side of him and a man in oily overalls on the other.¹⁴⁸ This encapsulates the idea of the audience the Gaiety should have attracted, if they had lived up to their manifesto. Their failure to do so, whether a reflection on the theatre or on Manchester, shows the danger of becoming a coterie theatre in a town where that coterie is very small; a situation well summed up by the Manchester Playgoer in 1912:

At present... [the Gaiety is] content with thin audiences of ardent Manchester intellectuals. Such audiences spell failure...they are sterile. Could not someone in the Repertory Movement produce a common thing in a splendid way...?149

¹⁴⁷ C.B. Purdom noticed in the Gaiety Theatre, "a feeling in the audience more like the understanding and affection of a company of friends, than the bored and distant attitude of the usual theatre audience. There was a similar feeling about the Court Theatre during the Vedrenne-Barker management and something very like it has been felt in Gertrude Kingston's Little Theatre." C.B. Purdom, A Proposal for a Town's Theatre, (Letchworth, Arden Press, 1911).

¹⁴⁸ Gerald Petrie, "The Influence of the Gaiety," The Gong, Vol. 1, No. 5, April 1922, p. 205. Petrie does add this experience was never repeated.

¹⁴⁹ Holbrook Jackson, "Uplifting the Theatre," Manchester Playgoer, NS., Vol 2, No. 2, December 1912, p. 65. Before the theatre opened, Annie Bellis, Letter, Manchester Guardian, July 26, 1907, had asked whether there were enough of the, "intellectually elite," in Manchester to support a new theatre, given the meagre audiences for Ibsen and the Abbey Players. "I do not know who Miss Horniman is, but I hope she will not be disappointed," the letter ended.

The answer to that question could have been provided by Alfred Wareing who found that for a repertory theatre to produce lighter plays was self-defeating and that his productions of Mrs Corringe's Necklace and His Excellency the Governor for example, did less well than his "repertory plays." The simple reason for this, was that well-rehearsed, though mechanical, companies with, "star casts" and the, "London Production", could better perform this sort of polished comedy than the hard-pressed actors at the repertory theatres.¹⁵⁰ In The Regent, Arnold Bennet included a character called Mr Marrier, a theatre manager based closely on Alfred Wareing and at one point in the novel Mr Marrier echoes Wareing's sentiments:¹⁵¹

"You see." Marrier broke in, with the smile ecstatic, almost dancing on his chair. "There's no use in compromise. Compromise is and always has been the curse of this country. The unintellectual drama is dead! - dead. Nobody can deny that. All the box-offices in the West are proclaiming it----"The day of the unintellectual drama is over. The people won't have it. We must have faith in the people, and we can't show our faith better than by calling our theatre by its proper name-- 'The Intellectual Theatre!'"¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ The Stage, March 5, 1912 (W.S.)

¹⁵¹ In, Queue, No. 7, p. 25, Wareing says that Bennett told him that he had based the character on Mr Marrier on him. But, in a letter, "To Alfred Wareing," 10 March, 1913, Collected Letters ed. James Hepburn, (London, O.U.P. 1968), p. 326, Bennett denies this source of inspiration, though possibly the tone of the letter is teasing.

¹⁵² Arnold Bennett, The Regent, (London, Queensway, n.d.), p. 52.

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Unfortunately, however, the box-office at the Glasgow Repertory Theatre did not proclaim the birth of the intellectual drama in Scotland. Wareing had some success in changing public taste in drama, and recalled that:

When Mr Butt came to Glasgow to open the Alhambra, he told me he was bringing Granville Barker down to play some of Schnitzler's Anatol sketches, adding frankly that he expected to capture the public he was good enough to say I had created...¹⁵³

But the problem Alfred Wareing faced in trying to build up a regular audience was slightly different from that which confronted Miss Horniman and Iden Payne in Manchester. Whereas their problem was getting Manchester to accept the Gaiety as its own, the Glasgow theatre was always to some extent a Citizens' Theatre in more than name, attracting full-houses for plays such as J.J. Bell's Wee MacGregor and Oh! Christina!, and Neil Munro's MacPherson. These were plays with local appeal and popular authors. On the other hand, estimates of the audience on one night for Chekhov's The Seagull, the first British performance of any of his plays, vary from four to six.¹⁵⁴ For some reason Wareing could not persuade the large Glasgow audience for Scottish plays to come to any other sort of drama. Because the

¹⁵³ The Stage, March 5, 1912.

¹⁵⁴ Glasgow Bulletin, November 26, 1930, (W.S.). Ashley Dukes, who helped with the production, tells the story. Bridie, Isaac, p. vii, tells a slightly different version.

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theatre's resources were limited, an extensive publicity campaign for every new author was out of the question. However, authors like Shaw, Bennett and Galsworthy, being well-known names even then, advertised themselves.¹⁵⁵ It is also possible that the audience found the changes of bill too frequent and confusing, though in the city where several touring shows arrived and departed each week this seems unlikely.

In spite of a great deal of newspaper interest in the theatre, many people did not know what to expect at the Royalty. One such visitor, who knew nothing of the theatre before he visited it remembered: "the shock of delighted surprise I felt when I dropped in to the Royalty one evening and saw Arms and the Man, after that I returned again and again and was never disappointed."¹⁵⁶

One problem for the theatre, was that newspapers which showed most interest in the Citizens' Theatre, the Glasgow Herald and the Glasgow Evening News, were the newspapers of Glasgow's middle classes who either went to musical comedies at the Kings Theatre or not at all, having "lost the theatre-going habit because of the fare provided."¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ In 1912, Payne and his wife toured with a repertoire described on the posters only as, "Plays by Shaw", Payne, p. 113. Galsworthy, though popular, did not experience a dramatic rise in sales until the war, "induced a mood of nostalgia for the past", Derek Hudson, "Reading," Edwardian England, ed. Simon Nowell-Smith, (London, Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 315. Bennett was much in the public eye both as a journalist, and a, "celebrity," Queue, No. 7, April 1931, p. 25.

¹⁵⁶ Glasgow Herald, April 10, 1939

¹⁵⁷ Manchester Courier, Aug 27, 1907.

In the autumn of 1910, as the theatre was getting established, Alfred Wareing's health broke down and his wife organised a short season at the King's Theatre. This made a profit and introduced the company to a wider audience, and the next season saw a great improvement in the theatre's finances. 158

A similar change in fortune took place after a short season around Christmas 1912. The theatre had been in abeyance throughout the autumn of that year and at Christmas a season of plays was presented as part of the programme of the Alhambra, Glasgow's most lavish variety theatre. It was very successful, drawing attention again to the repertory plays and players:

In many quarters this experiment was viewed with misgiving. For four weeks the Repertory Company were to offer their delicate vintages to a public accustomed to swilling shandy-gaff. Frequenters of music halls are a simple and long-suffering folk, not niggardly of applause even towards artists who little deserve it. But would they appreciate the glimpses given them by the Repertory Players of what dramatic art really means? In the stalls would probably assemble many supporters of the Repertory movement. Would the plaudits of the stalls find an echo in other parts of the house?

158 Wareing's own season was to some extent the beneficiary of the publicity from the Alhambra season, but, G.F. Insh, Letter, Glasgow Herald, December 15, 1923, says that the Alhambra season paved the way for the phenomenally successful 1914 season," p. 7, col. 7.

From their ordeal the Alhambra audiences emerged with a greatly enhanced reputation. Night after night they packed the house: they followed the Repertory plays with the keenest zest; they were instant in their applause. The success of the experiment was due, no doubt partly to the skill with which the Repertory programme was varied. 159

From the remark made about the repertory supporters in the stalls, it is apparent that they were thought of as predominantly middle class. But it is clear, that the plays were also enjoyed by the gallery.

The core of Wareing's audience however, seems to have come from the students of Glasgow. Wareing's first approaches to a city institution had been to the University, and Walter Elliot, then President of the Students Union, remembered Wareing:

was to us all a very unusual phenomenon. To begin with he was English, a figure almost as unfamiliar as a Zulu... He proposed to found a theatre in Glasgow, it would have been easier and more respectable to found a mosque... The Glasgow Repertory Theatre was about to promote art and letters...those were the objects for which the University existed. It was not possible that the University should be uninterested. Accordingly he enveloped the whole University, Professors and students alike in a broad and comprehensive affection... 160

This affection manifested itself in very concrete ways, in for example the appointment of two Professors to the board of directors of the theatre and the appointment of students to the

159 "A Repertory Experiment," G.F. Insh, Independent Theatre-goer. No. 6, February 1913.

160 Isaac, pp. x-xi.

advisory committee. Wareing also arranged special student performances, gave students cheaper tickets, and in some cases allowed them in for nothing.¹⁶¹ One student with whom Wareing formed a close friendship and who won several prizes for criticisms of various repertory productions, was James Bridie, who was then a medical student at Glasgow University. After Wareing left Glasgow, they continued to correspond and in 1928, Bridie wrote to Wareing that "all the old Repertory crowd" had been at a performance in Glasgow of The Sunlight Sonata; "the only difference was that the theatre was turning money away."¹⁶²

In the course of a lecture given at the Glasgow Repertory Theatre, Granville Barker voiced his conviction that the theatre was, "a middle class concern," and nowhere was this more true than in Liverpool, the only theatre which succeeded in encouraging, and keeping, a middle-class audience as soon as it was realised that the stalls subsidised the gallery.¹⁶³ At first the gallery cost 1/-, 6d more than in Glasgow and Manchester and this drew outraged complaints in the newspapers. There were also long

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p.v. N.W. in the S.Y.B.1911, also says that Wareing has done a great deal for the younger generation in Glasgow, especially in broadening their educational outlook, p. 24. The Glasgow University Magazine for January 13, 1911, carries an advertisement which says that, "Friday, 20th Jan., 1911, Students' Night," at Colin in Fairyland.

¹⁶² James Bridie, Letter to Alfred Wareing, March 30, 1928, Manuscript Letters, National Library of Scotland.

¹⁶³ Glasgow Herald, November 13, 1910.

waits for the rest of the audience, while the people in the circle and stalls circulated in the new foyer as no stairway connected the gallery to this architectural showpiece. ¹⁶⁴

The Liverpool audience, however, contained both the followers of fashion and the followers of dramatic art. An illustration of the great divide between the two sections of the audience, is provided by Whitford Kane in his autobiography, Are We All Met? The play which opened the season at Kelly's theatre in the spring of 1911 was John Galsworthy's Strife, and it seems that the audience took sides with the actors, some supporting Roberts and Labour, and some Anthony and Capital. There had been a prolonged dock strike in Liverpool and feelings on the subject were running deep, so deep in fact, that the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, Lord Derby, only invited those members of the cast who had been portraying the capitalists to the reception which followed the first night. This meant that both Whitford Kane and the owner of the theatre W.W. Kelly were not invited; Kane, as he was playing Roberts and Kelly, as his wife, Edith Cole, was playing Annie Roberts. ¹⁶⁵

The Liverpool Repertory Theatre itself was opened with a production of J.M. Barrie's The Admirable Crichton, not a play to appeal to Liverpool's intellectuals, but one which, dressed by Worth, appealed to the large audience of dignitaries who

¹⁶⁴ Porcupine, December 9, 1911.

¹⁶⁵ Kane, p. 105-106.

thronged the large new foyer of the Theatre.¹⁶⁶ This new germanic innovation took a little getting used to, but, "the social atmosphere created by the opening festivities lingered about the theatre throughout the season." When well-known authors came to the first nights of their plays, the occupants of the stalls usually wore full evening dress, the men in white tie and tails and the ladies, "en grande tenue."¹⁶⁷ One visitor to the theatre described it as being full of the "rank and beauty of Liverpool" adding that there was also, "a smattering of the rank and file." Grace Wyndham Goldie remembered from her own experience that:

...the fact that it has remained to some extent 'the thing' to visit the repertory theatre in Liverpool has prevented it from being associated with the too drab seriousness which has killed some other repertory ventures...¹⁶⁸

The Liverpool Repertory also had a large core of support in its 1300 shareholders - Glasgow started with only 200 - who formed the nucleus of an audience. By 1915 the core of the audience was so well established that in Ronald Jean's revue, Higgeldy Piggeldy, the company produced a sketch, performed before a backdrop representing the interior of the theatre, which burlesqued well-known and typical members of the theatre's audience. Liverpool was fortunate that of all the repertory theatres it could afford to laugh at, as well as with, its audience.

¹⁶⁶ See illustration, Appendix B.

¹⁶⁷ Dean, Seven Ages, p. 90.

¹⁶⁸ Goldie, p. 66.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PLAYS OF THE REPERTORY THEATRE MOVEMENT

... he depicted, first the horrors of the streets of Manchester, and then the bare, immense moors on the outskirts of the town, and then the scrubby little house in which the girl would live, and then the professors and the miserable young students devoted to the more strenuous works of our younger dramatists, who would visit her... ¹

According to James Bridie, when Wareing came to plan the repertoire of the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre he had, "more playwrights of the first quality to draw on than had existed in the British Isles since the days of good Queen Anne." ²

As a result of the pioneering work of the Stage Society, he had also a large number of translations of foreign plays from which to choose. Added to these, he had had his own plans to encourage the writing of Scottish plays and to discover new playwrights. Wareing appointed an advisory committee to help him choose the plays to be performed and the result of their deliberations was a repertoire described by Harley Granville Barker as, "by far the

¹ Virginia Woolf, Night and Day, (London, Penguin, 1969), p. 9.

² Isaac, p. vi.

most creditable record that had yet been produced in this country." ³

The problems which the advisory committee at Glasgow faced were similar to those confronting the selectors of the repertoire at Manchester and Liverpool. They had to decide how to balance their programme, how many new plays to present, which writers to encourage in the hope that they would produce something worthwhile, which plays would most attract the audience to whom they wished to appeal, and how to cultivate links with established playwrights whose work would guarantee good houses.

The theatres were also committed to building up a large repertoire of worthwhile plays and to do this they had to draw on all available sources of good drama. This meant that the theatres presented plays from several traditions within the independent theatre movement both in Britain and on the Continent. The tradition most often represented, however, was the one deriving from the Freie Bühne in Berlin. This theatre, although inspired by the Théâtre Libre, was founded in order to stem the flow of vapid French plays on to the German stage, and to encourage the writing of German plays. The pieces which found most favour at the Freie Bühne were the rather grim and realistic early plays of Gerhardt Hauptmann. Gradually his style became accepted by the endowed theatres of Germany, and naturalism became the predominant literary form in the German theatre. ⁴

³ Glasgow Herald, November 13, 1909, p. 11, col. 3

⁴ Thomas H. Dickinson, An Outline of Contemporary Drama, (Boston, Mifflin, 1927), pp. 152-164. Ashley Dukes, Modern Dramatists, (London, Frank Palmer, 1911), pp. 78-93. Oscar Brockett and Robert Findlay, Century of Innovation, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1973), pp. 101-107.

Miss Horniman's admiration for the naturalistic methods and plays of the German endowed theatres is well documented and it is not surprising that many plays performed at the Gaiety were of this kind.⁵ However, the nationalistic aim of the Freie Bühne was also echoed by the repertory theatres, especially by the Abbey Theatre and the Citizens' at Glasgow. Seeing the Abbey theatre at work had given fresh impetus to Alfred Wareing's attempts to found a similar theatre in Scotland. Wareing's main aim was the initiation of a purely Scottish Drama, and both Manchester and Liverpool hoped to create a local school of drama, as well as attempting to provide an alternative to the insipid London successes hitherto exported to the provinces.

The repertoire of the new repertory theatres was required then, to fulfil three main functions. It had to be of a better quality than that to which provincial playgoers were accustomed, it had to have a wide appeal in order to ensure good audiences and it had to have a local flavour to give it a distinctive identity.

One of the results of following the policy of the German endowed theatres and choosing to attract a wide general audience was that the early repertory theatres could not be experimental. This limitation on any theatre which catered for a broad audience was recognised by Barker and Archer who foresaw in their Schemes and Estimates for a National Theatre, that the National

⁵ See p. 18 ; Payne, p. 108

Theatre would not be a centre of theatrical experiment:

IT IS NOT AN "ADVANCED" THEATRE THAT WE ARE DESIGNING. The great subsidised theatres of the Continent are not "advanced" theatres. It is not their business to be far ahead of the time, but to be well abreast of it. Sometimes, no doubt (as in the case of the Berlin Schauspielhaus), they fail even in that duty; but, as a rule, they perform it reasonably well. They follow, more or less cautiously, more or less eclectically, in the wake of the "advanced" theatres; and that is as it should be. ⁶

The desire to be institutional rather than experimental, shared by the pioneers of the British repertory movement, affected the kind of plays they chose. It also explains the emphasis on realism and naturalism to be found in the repertoires of the early repertory theatres. Nevertheless, the rather conservative repertoire of the endowed theatres and the repertory theatres did not prevent them from presenting new plays. It did however discourage them from deviating greatly from accepted theatrical forms. In 1907 the dominant form was a kind of social realism or naturalism, whether a drawing room or a scullery was the scene of the action. The prevailing conservatism of the theatre-going public was summed up by a citizen who wrote to the Manchester Courier saying, "we have no room either for post-impressionism or futurism in drama in Manchester." ⁷

Henry Arthur Jones also advocated a conservative repertoire when he spoke to the Sheffield Playgoers' Society which wished to start a repertory theatre of its own:

⁶ Archer and Barker, pp. 36-37.

⁷ Manchester Courier, September 10, 1912, (H.S.).

A repertory theatre should not be mainly an experimental theatre... untrodden paths of the drama should be chiefly left to the Stage Society and to kindred societies of advanced playgoers... a repertory theatre should as far as possible devote itself to plays that have already established themselves as money-making successes on a fairly high level, working from there to a still higher and higher level... ⁸

Jones wrote this in 1913 with the benefit of six years of repertory experience to draw on and he gives a fairly accurate summary of the theatres' policy on choice of plays.

He omitted to mention, however, that it had proved extremely difficult for the repertory theatres to put on plays, "that have already established themselves as money-making successes," as they did not find it easy to secure the rights to them. London managements would not release the rights to new plays as it was felt that, if a play had been produced in the most important provincial towns, there would be little chance of organising a profitable tour.

Another problem which the repertory theatres had to face in deciding which plays to produce, was how to cater for the audience which the theatre most wanted to attract. The theatres hoped that their patrons would become regular theatre-goers and they also aimed for an audience able to afford the more expensive seats. ⁹ But they also wished to produce plays

⁸ Municipal and Repertory Theatres, "A lecture delivered to the Sheffield Playgoers' Society," Henry Arthur Jones, (London, Bell, 1913), pp. 27-28.

⁹ See pp. 67-68.

which were more than mere entertainment. "We asked for no more than a local theatre which would appeal to intelligent audiences," one Glasgow journalist recalled and the initiators of the Manchester and Liverpool theatres would have concurred with these sentiments.¹⁰ But this presented problems, as the theatres quickly gained a reputation for being places of "improving" entertainment, as was inevitable with their repertoires designed, as Wareing said, to appeal to people who had, "been educated to enjoy themselves." He elaborated on this theme in a talk he gave about the Citizens' Theatre:

the whole difference between cultured people and uncultured people was that cultured people knew how to enjoy themselves and uncultured people did not; they had never been taught how to enjoy themselves. We were our brother's keeper; we were responsible for dealing with street promenading and other dangers, and it behoved us to use every means in our power to remedy those evils and leave the world better for our having lived in it. The theatre was a force which must be employed in that. People in a theatre could get proper instruction without knowing it.¹¹

As subsequent developments through the century have shown, Wareing was right to stress a link between the theatre and education and more especially the need to educate people to appreciate difficult plays. Writing in the magazine Education, in August 1912, Professor Charles Reilly, a member of the Board

¹⁰ Glasgow Evening News, February 20, 1926, (W.S.).

¹¹ "The Theatre: A force," unidentified cutting in (W.S.)

for the first Liverpool repertory seasons, while allowing that:
 "in general the Repertory Theatre is not a proselytising
 institution," echoed Wareing's desire to appeal to the cultured
 classes for a slightly different reason:

If it had only been the uncultured folk who abstained from the theatre in the nineteenth century all would have been well. Instead, however, it was the more serious and solid section of the community, with the result that the theatre was left to serve only the more frivolous. It was thereby degraded from an instrument of art, capable of affording the highest pleasure and appealing to the deepest emotions, to one of mere amusement. That our theatres to-day whether in London or the provinces are so largely concerned with the less serious - the less real - forms of dramatic art, such as musical comedy and sensational melodrama, is directly due to their neglect by the best educated classes, who are not generally to be found at either end of the social scale. 12

Later in his article Charles Reilly applauds John Masefield's description of the theatre as, "a temple of the mind"¹³ and from this one can deduce that the Liverpool theatre's choice of plays was guided by the desire to appeal to the minds of a prospective audience. This they followed to such an extent

¹² Education, August 16, 1912, p. 97

¹³ The phrase comes from John Masefield's Ode specially written for the opening of the Liverpool Repertory Theatre. The ode was declaimed by Aida Jenoure attired like Mrs. Siddons in Reynold's painting of The Tragic Muse. The opening lines were: "Here in this house, to-night, our city makes/something which must not fail for our sakes,/or we begin what men have been too blind/ To build elsewhere, a temple for the mind," Goldie p. 63.

that some of wealthy Liverpool at first thought of the Repertory Theatre as "a nice thing" for the poorer classes, and patronised it as such. ¹⁴ Basil Dean however, talking to Leeds Playgoers' Society had told them that the Liverpool Repertory Theatre was seen by those lower down the social scale, as, "something diverting for the rich," and they did not patronise it for this reason. After 1912, Miss Horniman, in her public speaking often made a point of warning repertory theatres against being thought, "superior". ¹⁵

At Glasgow, too, a correspondent in the Glasgow Herald had written of the need for plays to have a wide appeal and not be the preserve of a coterie, and added that if the 'intellectual' theatre could not succeed at the Royal Court Theatre in London, it could not succeed elsewhere in the country. He concluded, "if London fails to appreciate the 'new drama', Glasgow won't succeed in doing so." ¹⁶

The problem that faced the repertory theatres was finding plays which were at once stimulating and entertaining. At Liverpool they wanted to produce plays, "which in ordinary circumstances Liverpool playgoers would be denied the opportunity of witnessing." ¹⁷ but the plays they chose appealed

¹⁴ Education, August 16, 1912, p. 97.

¹⁵ Yorkshire Post, November 18, 1913, (H.S.)

¹⁶ Relling, Letter to Glasgow Herald, August 19, 1908, p. 9, col. 7.

¹⁷ Unidentified cutting in M D. 45, Liverpool Public Library possibly December 1910. The cutting also states that the theatre is to be an exact replica of the Glasgow Citizens'.

largely to a middle-class audience or at least demanded that the audience had a good level of education. Although the founders of Liverpool hoped that they would appeal to the audience created, "by the huge upsurge in popular education,"¹⁸ they needed to raise large sums of money to establish their theatre and this meant that fund-raising concentrated on the middle and upper classes. Idealism was tempered by realism, but the theatre soon acquired the reputation which Miss Horniman so feared of being "superior."¹⁹

This reinforced what Harley Granville Barker had said in a lecture delivered at the Glasgow Repertory Theatre in 1910, in which he recognised the part that a middle-class audience would play in re-establishing worthwhile drama. Outside London, however, an independent theatre could not subsist on its middle-class audiences alone, but Barker did not mention this:

The theatre is a middle-class concern and any improvements in its organisation would have on the whole to be done by that great middle-class, but the theatre did not recognise this fact.²⁰

¹⁸ Souvenir, 1911, n.p. See also Arnold Bennett, Preface to Cupid and Commonsense, (London, Frank Palmer, 1909), p. 22.

¹⁹ In Beryl Bainbridge, The Dressmaker, (London, Fontana, 1975), a novel set in Liverpool in the early 1940's there is the following exchange: "Valerie had met him at a dance a week ago and he'd taken her out nearly every night since, to the State Restaurant...to the Repertory Company, to some hotel over on the Wirral very posh.... 'The Repertory Company?' said Madge bewildered. 'To a play' said Mrs. Mander, 'with actors.' 'He must have money to burn.'"

²⁰ Glasgow Herald, November 13, 1911, p. 11, col. 3.

The Liverpool Repertory Theatre did understand this however and they appealed in their choice of play to the slightly snobbish side of educated people, an appeal which seems to have worked. Their advance publicity said:

(The Repertory Theatre) would supply dramatic amusement and cultivation to the vastly increased audiences of our times. It would bring to intellectual people, intellectual dramatic and historic achievements...It would probably improve theatrical tone by creating better and more rational theatrical demands. ²¹

But Liverpool, as Glasgow and Manchester had before them, needed to tap various sources for their supply of "rational" plays to improve the "theatrical tone" and in 1911 there were three main sources, the Stage Society, the plays of Shaw and the other dramatists associated with the Court, and new playwrights either discovered or encouraged by the other two repertory theatres.

At a Stage Society dinner in April 1910, Sir John Gorst, the writer and politician, before a toast to the repertory theatres was proposed, outlined the functions of the Stage Society as a supplier of plays:

It strove to be a kind of leader and guide of public opinion in the matter of dramatic art. It had also assumed the duty of discovering talent both in playwrights and in play-actors which, but for the Stage Society, might, perhaps, go unrecognised. A third function was to discover for the British public the merits of plays written by foreigners. In that way the Society had

²¹ Liverpool Post and Mercury, March 16, 1911, reprint in M D. 45, Liverpool.

shown the British public that there were plays written by Russians and Scandinavians and Germans and French people which, though they would escape the ordinary Englishman who spoke no language but his own, were deserving of the highest merit, and were capable of being translated to amuse even an English audience. Last of all, the Society was a slight check upon the Censor, for it actually dared to criticise his decisions and sometimes produced plays which he had refused to license. On all those grounds he thought the Society was doing a very useful work. ²²

As an experimental theatre, the Stage Society performed a considerable service to the repertory theatres by supplying good new works, in particular, translations of successful foreign plays. The Society also claimed as its "progeny", Barker, St. John Hankin, Charles MacEvoy, Somerset Maugham and Arnold Bennett, all playwrights whose work was regularly presented by the repertory theatres. ²³

As a private club, the Stage Society was free from the censor's restrictions and were able to draw on a much wider range of plays than the public theatres. Between 1899 and 1909 they produced plays by most of Europe's leading playwrights including Hauptmann, Sudermann, Brieux, Gorky, Gogol, Wedekind and Maeterlinck. Most of these dramatists also came to feature on the programmes of the early repertory theatres. There were however some surprising omissions. The repertory theatres produced no play by Brieux, for example, in spite of Shaw's

²² The Times, April 18, 1910, (H.S.). Huntly Carter wrote of the Stage Society, "this propagandist organisation completed the dullness of the English Sunday," New Spirit, p. 38. John Palmer also criticised the Society's record, especially their lack of interest in Strindberg and Chekov, The Future of the Theatre, (London, Bell, 1913), p. 40-41.

²³ Incorporated Stage Society, Ten Years, pp. 8-9.

championship of this author and a lavish production of False Gods by Beerbohm Tree at His Majesty's.²⁴ Also surprising was the neglect of Wedekind after his initial production by the Stage Society. Basil Dean, however, strongly recommended a production of Spring Awakening he had seen at the Kammerspielhaus in Berlin to the Liverpool Playgoers' Club. The play was, he claimed, "akin to a religious festival."²⁵ But in view of the play's rather shocking sexual content, it is doubtful whether the censor would have made this imaginative link between religion and reproduction. The Gaiety in Manchester, however, favoured other German playwrights, and Hauptmann and Sudermann, for example, appear frequently on their lists, a sign perhaps of the interest of the Manchester German community in the work of the Gaiety.²⁶

Miss Horniman's season at the Midland Theatre opened with David Ballard, a play premièred in London in the spring of 1907 by the Stage Society. W.B. Yeats commented sourly to Florence Farr:

Miss Horniman is starting in Manchester.... with that play of Cockney life by MacEvoy the Stage Society brought out a while back. I don't know what else she has but she claims to have lots of plays - they must be pretty bad if she has.²⁷

²⁴ There is an illustration of the set in, Michael R. Booth, Victorian Spectacular Theatre, 1850-1910, (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), Plate 23.

²⁵ Dean, Lecture, p. 12.

²⁶ See Appendix A . When the First War was declared the Gaiety audience was decimated, as the "cosmopolitan" members of the audience were from various consulates and many were still German citizens. Clarion, August 2, 1914, (H.S.)

²⁷ Yeats, ed. Bax, p. 60.

One of the plays Miss Horniman had was Shaw's Widowers' Houses. Shaw and the other Court dramatists were another source of plays for the repertory theatres, but relations between the avant-garde in London and that in the provinces were not easy. As late as 1913, J.J. Shute, chairman of the board of directors of the Liverpool repertory theatre mentioned the lack of commitment to the provincial repertory theatres on the part of the leaders of the advanced theatres in London:

It was really very difficult, though, to get practical support from these gentlemen in London. They might talk a great deal and deliver lectures and so on, but when it came to practical effort the result was disappointing. ²⁸

One of the causes of the difficult relations between them was explained by Shaw in a letter to Ben Iden Payne written just after the season at the Midland Theatre had started. The letter, unpublished in this country, explains that Shaw's loyalty is to the Vedrenne-Barker management and not to a theatre which, Shaw seems to imply, is a direct threat to that enterprise. His attitude is equivocal, but presumably would have been hostile, if Miss Horniman had had the means to start a theatre in London, as she apparently would have liked to have done. The letter clearly shows Shaw's firm grip on the economic realities of the theatre and compares with Arnold Bennett's almost accountant-like interest in the financial aspects of his books and plays:

²⁸ Liverpool Post and Mercury, November 17, 1913, (H.S.).

It is quite impossible for me to give you the rights of Plays, Pleasant and Unpleasant. I have already explained to Miss Horniman and to Charles Hughes the deadlock which is being produced between the Vedrenne - Barker enterprise and the Manchester one. The only possible way of keeping the London campaign going is to feed its exchequer by provincial tours. I daresay you are in the same predicament; but I cannot smash Vedrenne and Barker by giving you the provinces. Already Vedrenne has come to me in consternation to say that he has been refused a date at Preston because they have already booked a Shaw season with you, and they think one is enough. I presume this means that you are taking *Widowers' Houses* there; and you will see by this instance how difficulties arise even when you and Vedrenne are not handling the same plays. I cannot let you tour *Arms and the Man*; it will be produced by V. & B. at the Queen's Theatre in London on Boxing night and will be toured by them in the autumn in 1908. *The Philanderer* will follow next but one. *You Never Can Tell* is already in their touring repertory; and *The Man of Destiny* is a star piece. So you see there is practically nothing left for you. I am sorry for this, as not only am I bound to Miss Horniman personally and publicly by a cordial acquaintanceship and a strong former obligation, but it is to my own interest to encourage and help every enterprise like the Playgoers' Theatre Company. But I am quite powerless against the existing economic system. Your enterprise is not, thank Heaven, dependent on my plays. The enterprise of Vedrenne and Barker - which means the fortunes of our cause in London - is at present completely dependent on my plays. I cannot give them to both. If I withhold them from you, so much the better for the Cause in the long run, because your business is to discover fresh authors and conquer new territory, not to exploit the conquests made by V. & B. If I give them to you, I ruin V. & B.: a thing not to be thought of. 29

There were, then, purely financial reasons why Shaw could not give his wholehearted support to the new repertory theatres and the problem of obtaining the rights to London successes was not confined to the commercial drama. After seeing Payne's production of Widowers' Houses, however, Shaw found, in the "infamous" production and its inadequate acting, other reasons to deny his plays to the repertory theatres. ³⁰

Basil Dean, in his first season at Liverpool, also incurred Shaw's wrath and in his autobiography he quotes the letter Shaw sent to him after seeing the repertory company perform You Never Can Tell in the summer of 1912.

You really mustn't ask me to allow you to murder *Arms and the Man*. The truth of the matter is, you have no producer. If you do the production yourself, believe me when I assure you that you are the most infamous producer as yet born on this planet. The performances of *You Never Can Tell* at Manchester made me swear that I would never let another play of mine come within ten miles of the Liverpool Repertory Theatre. There were all the materials for an excellent performance, and it was the worst on record. *Brassbound* I say nothing about; You must know that it was utterly disgraceful, and that it would have been an open calamity if Miss Achurch had not pulled it through. I daresay you don't believe me, but when you have had twenty years' experience you will know better. Any how I not only refuse *Arms and the Man* most vehemently, but solemnly forbid you ever again to produce a play of mine on any terms or under any circumstances whatsoever.

It is no use you arguing about it, as I leave the country tomorrow and shall not be back until the middle of September. ³¹

³⁰ Ibid, p. 20.

³¹ Dean, Seven Ages, pp. 94-95.

The year before Shaw had written to Barker expressing his bitter disappointment with the repertory theatre movement and its failure to keep up artistic standards.

The old game is up, I think; and the local repertory theatres will never be able to handle the current output of the higher drama otherwise than provisionally. ³²

Shaw's gloomy prediction seems to have been borne out by the increased numbers of literary plays which were presented on the West End stage in the years before the First World War. But these plays were often by authors like Arnold Bennett, whose reputations as playwrights had been consolidated by performances at the various repertory theatres. Authors had also been given the chance to improve their craft and re-write their plays to make them more commercial, as a result of seeing their plays performed outside London.

Granville Barker however was rather more generous to the repertory theatres than Shaw. Although he had little to do with Liverpool except to add his weight to the campaign for the establishment of a repertory theatre and less to do with Manchester, he did act with his wife Lillah McCarthy, and direct, at the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre. ³³

³² To Harley Granville Barker, July 6, 1911, Letter from George Bernard Shaw, The Shaw-Barker Letters, ed. C.B. Purdom, (London, Phoenix House, 1956), p. 175.

³³ Barker directed The Witch and acted with Lillah McCarthy, in Man and Superman, in September and October, 1910.

In the autumn of 1910, he directed Man and Superman and Masefield's translation of The Witch, as well as acting the part of Jack Tanner in the Shaw, while his wife re-created the part of Ann Whitfield but was unable to take part in The Witch as planned. The whole venture was carried out against Shaw's better judgement as he made clear in a letter to Barker:

M. & S. is not a bit of use without a really considerable Ann. If Lillah will get up and go, there may be something in it, but such a performance as Wareing can scrape together for a week will not do him any good or you any good (bar the immediate cash) or the play any good. And to flourish your conviction that Ann doesn't matter and never did matter is most unhygienic just at present. The physical strain on you would also be very considerable, though the mere change might do you good. Your provincial reputation is the most important asset you have; and you ought not to flatten it out by appearing in second rate productions, as this will inevitably be. Wareing might just as well put up Harben as Tanner if he hasn't an adequate Ann - or Lloyd. Like all Romeos you think Juliet doesn't matter; but she does. If Wareing will engage Fred Terry and Julia Neilson he may get his money back; but to get you alone for £50 is folly: a ten pound Tanner will do just as well for a "literarie success" as Trebitsch calls it. What have you to urge against all this? ³⁴

Later Shaw seems to have relented somewhat, presumably in view of Barker's "urging" that the Glasgow project be supported, perhaps because there were actors like Madge MacKintosh at Glasgow on whom Barker knew he could rely:

³⁴ Shaw-Barker, ed. Purdom, Letter of November 3, 1909, p. 159.

I bar Man and Superman at the Coronet. It is played out on the old lines; and a revival would add nothing to your or its reputation and would be too stale to add much to my income... Glasgow is another matter. I have no objection to Wareing's project; but a share of profits is not much to the point where profits do not occur; and an appearance in Glasgow for Lillah is not an appearance in London. Still, it is Misalliance at the Coronet or M. & S. in Glasgow: take your choice. 35

Shaw, as he was an admirer of Mona Limerick's acting, also relented slightly in his attitude to Ben Iden Payne and allowed them to play in Man and Superman, hoping to see Mona Limerick as Ann Whitfield. 36

In the course of an afternoon lecture at the Royalty Theatre, Barker offered Glasgow playgoers his opinions on what constituted a good play. His specifications reinforced the choice of repertoire the theatre was making, and reflected the naturalist's concern with "content" as opposed to form.

Theatre would only flourish because it was close to life (extraordinarily near to modern life)... The theatre was the way in which one learned about the myriad problems that the world presented. The average theatre went on the assumption that no-one was interested in anything other than love and 99 out of 100 plays were on this topic... What was wanted was a play clarifying the Poor Law Receipts. Unless they had been some organisation such as the Repertory Theatre different from the ordinary supply and demand organisation, they could not have any plays like False Gods... 37

35 Ibid, Letter of August 20, 1910, p. 169.

36 "To Iden Payne," Buffalo Studies, pp. 126-127, the letter ends, "Assure Mona of my unshaken devotion."

37 Glasgow Herald, November 13, 1909, p. 11, col. 3.

Barker's linking of the theatre and "real life" touches on a recurrent theme surrounding the choice of plays to be performed by the repertory theatres. On the first night of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre, Arnold Bennett had sent Wareing a telegram which read: "Go to it and give them all the real life they can stand," and this policy would certainly have suited Bennett and his plays.

In 1911, Glasgow premièred The Great Adventure, a commercial success on the West End Stage in 1913, though not for the Glasgow Repertory Theatre. The first season at the Citizens' included a production of Cupid and Commonsense by Bennett, which though a success in Wareing's eyes, yielded less than its author expected, as one reads in his Journal:

Thurs. May 13th.

Lunched with Frank Vernon Wednesday 5th. He has produced "Cupid and Commonsense" in Glasgow on the previous Thursday and told me of its striking success on the first night. I heard later that it played to £188 during the week. This seemed to me small but the theatre people regarded it as very good. ³⁸

A review of Cupid and Commonsense in the Glasgow Evening News showed it to be in many ways Barker's quintessential repertory play, as it was close to life, uncommercial and would not have been performed without the repertory theatre. The reviewer wrote that the play:

³⁸ The Journals of Arnold Bennett, ed. Newman Flower, Vol. I, 1896-1910, (London, Cassell, 1932), p. 317.

deals honestly for the most part with modern life and the mise-en-scene is not luxurious... nor are the characters titled - nor rich in the common understanding of the term. Only the existence of a repertory theatre makes the production possible. One may safely say that the verdict of our modern theatrical entrepreneur would be given not on its merits as a picture of life but summed up in the phrase, "there's no money in it"... 39

Bennett however was grateful to the repertory theatre for their many productions of his plays. In the Autumn of 1913 John Vedrenne, who had been Barker's partner at the Court, tried to stop a production of What the Public Wants by Milton Rosmer at Leeds, as Vedrenne wished to produce it in London. Bennett felt it his duty to support the repertory venture and wrote to his literary agent J.B. Pinker:

Milton Rosmer writes me from the Theatre Royal, Leeds, complaining that there is some risk of *What the Public Wants* being taken from him. My opinion is that at all costs Rosmer ought not to be put to this inconvenience. The right was given to him quite a long time ago, and he had made all his preparations for beginning a difficult repertory enterprise at Leeds... it is the sort of thing that I am out to encourage, and it must not be forgotten that had it not been for these repertory movements *What the Public Wants* might have been passed into limbo long ago. 40

In a letter written to Pinker two months before, he referred to repertory productions of his plays and re-affirmed his support for such theatres just as strongly:

39 Glasgow Evening News, April 30, 1909.

40 Letters of Arnold Bennett, ed. James Hepburn, Vol. I, Letters to J.B. Pinker, (London, Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 197.

I think that if Miss Horniman pays the same terms for *What the Public Wants* as she did before, it will be all right. What these terms were I have not the slightest idea.

I shall be glad for Iden Payne to do *Cupid and Commonsense* at the Fine Arts Theatre, Chicago, on condition that he guarantees a minimum number of performances during his season...

I should like you to treat Milton Rosmer with as much consideration as you can. He is not a strong man, but it seems to me that enterprises such as his ought to be encouraged by authors such as I. ⁴¹

This letter suggests that there were special terms which Bennett allowed the repertory theatres, and while it is gratifying that he should be so generous in his support for the repertory theatre, his position as one of Britain's most highly paid writers of fiction allowed such philanthropy not to result in his bankruptcy. However, poorer and younger dramatists writing for the repertory theatres, could not afford to be so generous. Plays at the repertory theatres had such short runs and sporadic revivals, even of successes, that royalties were not sufficient to guarantee a regular wage. St. John Ervine explained the problem, in detail, in The Stage:

The chief factor in the dramatist's grievance against the repertory theatre is the short run. A play takes some time to write; some plays have been written in three days - and the fact was obvious; others have occupied the dramatist for a year. I wrote a play for the Gaiety, Manchester, on which I spent about six months. I understand that it is one of the more successful of the plays that have been produced by Miss Horniman.

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 193.

It was performed thirty-three times in the year in which it was produced, and my royalties amounted to £59.2s.10d. that is to say, 22s.9d per week, a wage at which any self-respecting navvy would turn up his nose. If the reader will think of the poor dramatists whose plays do not achieve the "phenomenal" run of my play, he will understand clearly that the occupation of repertory dramatist is one which should be scheduled under the 'Sweated Industries Act'. If the number of performances of *Jane Clegg* had been consecutive, or had been given in one place, the amount of the royalty would probably have been larger; but they were broken up as follows:-

- 7 performances in Manchester.
- 4 performances in London.
- 16 performances in London (several months later)
- 3 performances in Oxford.
- 7 performances in Manchester (revival)

It is clear, I think, that a system of producing plays which results in the author of what, from the repertory point of view is a successful play, receiving a wage of 22s.9d. per week for his work is not likely to retain that author if he can persuade a West End manager to purchase one of his plays. A dramatist of my acquaintance who adapted a thoroughly bad foreign play for a West End manager, received ten times as much money for his adaptation, though it only ran for a fortnight, as I received for my play! The repertory theatre, as it is now constituted, simply cannot stand against the West End theatre either in the manner of keeping players of quality, or of obtaining plays; and if the repertory movement is to go on a very radical change is necessary. 42

Part of St. John Ervine's answer to ensure regular royalties lay in the exchange of repertory productions, but to this

suggestion: and to his complaints about insufficient remuneration Miss Horniman made a brisk and uncompromising response:

There is nothing to prevent an author from obtaining a West End production of a play produced at a repertory theatre. The late Stanley Houghton's plays, "The Younger Generation" and "The Dear Departed" were produced at my theatre long before they were produced for lengthy runs in London. But if I were to do, as some authors suggest, turn the Gaiety into a 'lodging-house' theatre, that scheme would suit admirably the authors of popular pieces, but it would close our doors to plays which are not popular, although they may be as good as, and possibly better than, those which are. I do not think that authors are lured from the Gaiety by the prospect of gaining a footing on the London stage. ⁴³

The Repertory companies did provide a notable increase in the number of performances of plays by British authors. Between 1907 and 1917, Galsworthy's plays had about 118 performances in London but approximately 238 in the repertory theatres at Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow. Similarly the plays of St. John Hankin had 75 performances ^{in London and 180} at the repertory theatres outside London. ⁴⁴

Hankin placed great faith in the repertory system and died before he could become disillusioned as so many did. In an article he wrote the The Era in 1910, he explained why he thought the repertory theatres would be of benefit and

⁴³ Bostonian Transcript, March 4, 1914, (H.S.)

⁴⁴ These figures are as accurate as possible but, as a large number of tours took place, exact details are difficult to obtain.

encourage new writers. He contrasted the West End unfavourably with the repertory theatres, seeing in London no hope of salvation for the dramatic author!

...West End plays have to run at least one hundred times and be seen by approximately eighty thousand people to be accounted a success, therefore new playwrights cannot survive as the dramatist is at the mercy of the audience and the costs of mounting etc must be recouped... repertory theatres are better because an expensive production will enable an author to gauge the worth of a play and if it fails then the repertoire is there to fall back on..... (but one) presumes an appealing repertoire with several sure-fire successes, Frohman however had none while Glasgow for example had You Never Can Tell and Strife... ⁴⁵

Despite his mention of Glasgow, Hankin was really writing about an ideal theatre and one which was never to come into existence.

The Gaiety's attempts at "real repertory" continued to be disliked by their authors, especially the new writers the theatre was trying to encourage. H.M. Richardson, in a letter written to the Manchester Guardian in December 1913, pointed out that if a new play had only a limited first run, then there was no time for publicity to work in its favour. He drew a lesson from the career of Hindle Wakes:

It is no disparagement of poor Houghton's "Hindle Wakes" to say that had it been produced first at the Gaiety it would have run for a week, to nightly increasing

⁴⁵ Era, July 24, 1910, p. 18.

'business', until on the Saturday the theatre would have been full. Then it would have been taken off and "put up" again, perhaps six months later, by which time many would have forgotten it, and the same process of building up the business would have had to be repeated. That is the weakness of the repertory theatre. Many a good play which fails in a week would pay if it were played for three weeks continuously, because three weeks is sufficient to allow news of a good thing to go round.⁴⁶

Perhaps it was because of the problem of publicising new pieces that the plays which were most successful at the early repertory theatres were those written by well-known novelists such as Galsworthy, Bennett and Neil Munro and those of established playwrights like Shaw or Hankin. The public are more likely to be interested in seeing a play if its author has a high reputation for good work. Alfred Wareing said that most of his successful plays fell into this category but that the quality of the play was also a factor as well as the fame of the author. He had produced mainly:

comedies, but comedies with a stiffening of ideas. Leaving financial results out of the question, the most successful have been Shaw's *You Never Can Tell*, *Arms and the Man*, and *Man and Superman*; Arnold Bennett's *Cupid and Commonsense* and *What the Public Wants*; George Calderon's *The Fountain*, and St. John Hankin's *The Cassilis Engagement*. These plays you will observe are comedies of the lighter order, but they are alike in enunciating a philosophy of life - a quality which every permanent work of dramatic art must

⁴⁶ Manchester Guardian, December 15, 1913, (H.S.)

possess. All our would-be "pot boilers" with the exception of *Lady Windermere's Fan*, have failed more or less in their object. In this class fall *Dandy Dick*, *Cousin Kate*, *His Excellency the Governor*, *Mrs. Corringe's Necklace*. *The Adventure of Lady Ursula*, and *Pilkerton's Peerage*. My experience is that such plays lose money and do not bring credit, and a theatre such as ours succeeds best when it pursues the idea it sets out to attain. 47

Almost 70 percent of the plays performed at the repertory theatres could be classified as comedies, giving the lie to the theatre's reputation for dullness. 48 The most popular of the more serious plays were those of John Galsworthy, especially Strife and Justice, the former a, "sensation" at both Glasgow and Liverpool, the latter Irene Rooke and John Rosmer's greatest triumph at Manchester. Both these plays conform to Barker's dictum that one must write from "real life" and both dealt with political issues of great contemporary interest, namely industrial disputes and the use of solitary confinement in British prisons. 49

From their reputation as hotbeds of left-wing

47 The Stage, March 5, 1912. In a review of The Adventures of Lady Ursula, the Glasgow Evening News, February 14, 1911, said that it was: "magnificently staged.... (with) striking costumes ... a highly polished production that might easily be found round all the provinces."

48 Glasgow Herald, April 15, 1939.

49 The Edwardian era was a difficult one for the Trades Unions. The Taff Vale Decision (1901) severely curtailed their activities. Even the subsequent Osborne Judgement did not fully restore all powers to them. In the preface to Heartbreak House, Shaw said that the Edwardian attitude to Trades Unions was like that of a gondola trying to stop a 20,000 ton liner, (Penguin, ed., p. 10).

The story of how the Home Secretary Winston Churchill revised the rules over the use of solitary confinement in prisons after seeing Justice at the Duke of Yorks, is well-known, Howe, p. 90.

sympathy and from, for example, Miss Horniman's active support for the issue of women's suffrage, one might imagine the repertory theatres would have produced many radical plays, but the truth is rather surprising. As Lynton Hudson said of the Gaiety dramatists:

It is an interesting comment on the basic solidarity of the Victorian system and the English temperament that they were not inspired to copy Shaw and write Socialist propaganda drama. But Labour had not yet acquired a capital 'L', and Manchester had just thrown out the Liberal candidate, Mr. Winston Churchill, at a by-election and returned a Conservative. *Theirs was a drama of rebellion, but not of political revolt.* (my italics) What stirred them was the repression of the individual by the conventions of a narrow-minded Puritanism. It was a rebellion against the doctrines of submission to work and duty and of the worship of material success. It was also a rebellion of youth against the tyranny of age: against the doctrines of original sin and unquestioning filial obedience. Not only boys but girls were restless and impatient. It is worth recalling that at that time Manchester was the storm-centre of the Suffragette movement. ⁵⁰

The drama of youthful rebellion was the special preserve of Stanley Houghton. His plays conform to Agate's description and contain a rather generalised political awareness. But Houghton chose not to write about any of the particular political issues of the time and nor did any of his contemporaries. If Edwardian England was a period of great social unrest, of the threat of civil war in Ireland, of intense labour disputes, and

⁵⁰ Lynton Hudson, The Twentieth Century Drama, (London, Harrap, 1946), pp. 46-47.

of the Suffragette movement one would get little hint of this in the contemporary drama. The Edwardian playwrights seem as unaware as the mass of the population of any underlying social tension or approaching catastrophe. It is almost impossible for example to find any play on the subject of Women's Suffrage, surely the single most important social issue of the period, in the repertoire of the repertory theatres. An omission all the more surprising, since Miss Horniman and some of her actresses were keen suffragettes. The best-selling author, Victoria Cross, was tactless enough to send Miss Horniman an anti-suffrage play which was rejected, not because of its content but because, Miss Horniman said, "it contained language such as I would not permit in my theatre." ⁵¹

Glasgow offered a play by Lady Randolph Churchill, Mrs Cornwallis West, called The Bill, which was another anti-suffragette satire. However, it was set at Westminster and, because of the lady's inside knowledge of the workings of Parliament, it gained quite an audience eager to see if well-known personages would be recognisable. They were disappointed, however, and the play, though liked, was dismissed as, "scarcely in the line of repertory drama." ⁵²

Not only did the young writers of the repertory theatres decline to follow Shaw and write "socialist propaganda" but, when socialism was used as the theme for a play it was almost invariably treated either as a joke, as in Kingsley Tarpey's

⁵¹ Manchester Courier, November 27, 1913.

⁵² Glasgow Herald, April 27, 1913.

play The Amateur Socialist; or made the subject of an over-earnest tract like Kampf's Before The Dawn, a supposedly serious study of revolutionaries in Tzarist Russia in which one-dimensional figures blurted out over-wrought emotions. This play had the distinctions of having been banned as seditious by the censor in several European countries.

The problem of getting a play past the censor was felt to prohibit "men of letters" taking the theatre seriously. It was felt that the censor would remove any serious subject matter which concerned sex, politics or religion and this did not give a dramatist much scope. But Galsworthy showed that it was possible to write relatively freely about serious political issues, providing you kept, as Shaw in Press Cuttings had failed to do, living, named, politicians out of the list of dramatis personae.⁵³ The production of Strife at Liverpool in 1911 had shown that an audience was quite capable of extracting local relevance from a play and when, for example, the Liverpool theatre produced The Riot Act by James Sexton, a prominent local trade union leader, who wrote about the Mersey Dock strike, it lacked the impact of Galsworthy's more universal drama.

⁵³ Two of the characters in Press Cuttings were Balsquith and Mitchener, a mixture of Balfour, Asquith and Kitchener.

In the Woman Worker, November 24, 1909, Winifred Blatchford wrote that Strife, "paints in awful colours the heartbreaking lot of the socialist teachers."

⁵⁴ James Sexton was later knighted and continued to write plays, one being returned by Shaw with a note, "My, Dear Jimmy, I hasten to return your play lest I be tempted to steal the plot," Sydney Jeffrey, Golden Jubilee Souvenir of the Liverpool Playhouse, (Liverpool, n.p., 1961), n.p. At the time of writing, the copy of the play in the British Library is unavailable, due to asbestos contamination in the room in which it is stored.

In spite of the problems the repertory theatres had in organising an interesting and attractive repertoire, they did achieve a quite remarkable scope with their choices. Even without access to Shaw's most lucrative plays, they succeeded in producing all of the best contemporary dramatists, from the harsh poetic drama of Masefield's Nan, to the delicate sentimentality of J.M. Barrie's The Admirable Crichton. The repertory theatres also introduced a large number of new Continental dramatists to the provinces and revived many classics of English drama. In addition to this, they produced almost 200 new plays, creating what James Bridie called, the "golden age" of the repertory theatres. ⁵⁵

The repertory theatres also introduced new foreign plays to the provinces, and revived British classics. Manchester produced amongst others Sheridan's The School for Scandal, The Rivals and The Critic; Ben Jonson's Every Man in His Humour; Beaumont and Fletcher's The Knight of the Burning Pestle; and Shakespeare's Measure for Measure and Twelfth Night. Glasgow and Liverpool produced many fewer British classics; Liverpool in its first three seasons produced only The Critic and Twelfth Night and Glasgow produced only Romeo and Juliet and scenes from As You Like It. The impetus to examine the British repertoire came from Payne and he set up a tradition at Manchester of a classic at Christmas. At Glasgow "festive fare" was produced by a suitably amusing play of local life like J.J. Bell's Wee MacGregor, which was so successful,

⁵⁵ James Bridie, One Way of Living, (London, Constable, 1939), p. 156.

that Harold Brighthouse mistakenly thought the theatre closed for good at the end of its run while the directors saw their accounts for once in profit. ⁵⁶

Manchester also explored very fully the modern Continental repertoire, putting on plays by Hauptmann, Sudermann and the Belgian Verhaeren as well as plays by Ibsen, Rostand and Maeterlink. Miss Horniman, however, shrank back from the Russian repertoire:

Of course, there are some writers too advanced for the provinces. Last summer on a fine afternoon the 'Arries and 'Arriets of Nuremberg witnessed and appeared to enjoy Gorki's 'Nachtsyl'. Now, Gorki is, in my opinion, too advanced for Manchester. ⁵⁷

The Lower Depths, was however, not too advanced for Glasgow, where it was produced in a translation by Laurence Irving, originally commissioned for the Stage Society. The Lower Depths starred the Russian actress Lydia Yavorska whose husband Prince Bariatinsky contributed a play called The Great Young Man to the Citizens' Theatre. His wife also performed as Hedda Gabbler and as Nora in A Doll's House. The Princess Bariatinsky, said the brochure for the 1912 season, had hurried back from her Russian estates to act again at Glasgow, where her acting was commended as being much more flamboyant than that usually attempted on the English stage:

⁵⁶ Harold Brighthouse, What I Have Had, (London, Harrap, 1954), p. 54.

⁵⁷ Manchester Evening News, April 21, 1910, (H.S.).

Mme Yavorska puts a vitality into the play that no English actress could - when Helmer calls Nora his little song-bird and squirrel - she rushes and sports about with a rare vivacity and grace, masterly in the display of conflicting emotions. ⁵⁸

Yavorska was continuing a link with the Russian theatre that Glasgow had begun when it first introduced the work of Chekhov to the British stage. According to Jan MacDonald, the production of The Seagull at Glasgow in November 1909 fared better than any of the Stage Society's attempts to produce the plays of Chekhov, as the ensemble work of the Glasgow company who had acted together through a number of productions was superior to that of the Stage Society's "scratch" company. ⁵⁹ The Glasgow Herald commented that the piece was, "a sombre comedy ... pure realism, and commended the "perfect all-round ensemble." However, on one night of its run the play opened to an audience of five schoolmistresses. ⁶⁰

Chekhov could hardly be said to have gripped the public's imagination in 1909 and it was another sixteen years before Arnold Bennett could record in his Journal that: "Tonight 'The

⁵⁸ Glasgow Evening News, October 3, 1911. A touching summary of Yavorska's time in Britain is given in Sir John Pollock's autobiography. She was an aristocratic sympathiser and was involved with the Bolsheviks before the Revolution. After the Revolution however, she turned against them and died, heartbroken in Brighton, in 1919. After her spell at Glasgow she appeared for a time in short plays on the variety stage. She and Prince Bariatinsky were divorced through the machinations of Rasputin. Sir John Pollock, Times Chariot, (London, John Murray, 1950), pp. 208-212.

⁵⁹ Theatre Notebook, Vol. ~~4~~, No. 1, pp. 28-30.

⁶⁰ Glasgow Herald, November 3, 1909, p. 9, col. 7. See p. 110.

Cherry Orchard' is transferred from the Lyric Hammersmith, to the Royalty. This I think marks a definite turn in public taste towards true plays." ⁶¹

Liverpool, however, broke no new ground either in the production of plays which had not been seen in Britain or in systematically encouraging new dramatists. Part of the reason was the power of veto on the choice of plays held by the board of directors, and suggestions for the repertoire led to heated discussions:

Battles royal took place in the Board Room every Thursday. The Directors did not select the plays; they merely vetoed them. Suggestions put forward at the behest of the Chairman were usually thought to be too advanced. Commercial plays to redress an adverse verdict at the box office were torn quietly apart by the University members. ⁶²

Basil Dean felt that although there were plausible reasons for Liverpool's neglect of new writers, more could have been done to encourage them:

The Playhouse has always been more successful in its discovery of new acting talent than in the new dramatists it has encouraged. In my day this was due to the weakness of our finances and to the fact that there were too many people to pass judgement on the manuscripts. This is a very serious defect for a theatre with such a high reputation, and I do not think it should have been allowed to continue through all the years. ⁶³

⁶¹ Bennett, Journals, Vol. 3, p. 91. The Era had said of Glasgow Seagull, "it is most unlikely that the play could under any circumstances become popular. An atmosphere of unrelieved gloom hangs over the story," November 6, 1909.

⁶² "The Birth of an Idea," Basil Dean, Golden Jubilee Souvenir, n.p..

⁶³ Liverpool Daily Post, November 11, 1932. Ibid, December 17, 1913, MD 45, LPL.

As well as failing to encourage new writers, after it was established, Liverpool also showed no particular inclination to develop a local drama. This seems to have been partly as a result of a desire not to appear parochial and partly because of a slightly smug attitude to local drama, articulated by the drama critic of the Liverpool Daily Post, Sydney Jeffrey:

We have not fostered, as Manchester did foster, a local 'school' of dramatists. I feel sure we don't want one. The local is the parochial; and many plays by locals have left dismally small impression.⁶⁴

Ultimately, it was the prevailing policy of the theatre which dictated the kind of new play chosen for performance and, consequently, the kind of play an aspiring playwright would have to write were he to have any chance of having his play performed. Alfred Wareing's penchant was for, "comedies with a stiffening of ideas," and that is what most of the new plays turned out to be. Wareing's own season in the Spring of 1913 consisted mainly of plays of this type, including the first production outside London of Shaw's censored play Mrs Warren's Profession.⁶⁵ Harold Brighouse underlined the part that the prevailing prejudice in favour of realism played in the creation of the local drama in Manchester:

⁶⁴ Sydney Jeffrey, "Some Impressions of a Critic," Golden Jubilee Souvenir, n.p.

⁶⁵ In his book, The Modern Scottish Theatre, (Glasgow, Moledinar, 1977), David Hutchison mistakenly says that the performances of Mrs Warren's Profession in Glasgow were the first of a censored play outside London. Ghosts had been performed in Manchester at least once before this, F.J., Letter, Manchester Guardian, n.d., Hol6., MPL.

Who in their senses would go to Manchester expecting to evoke a local drama? And if she (Miss Horniamn) had gone there with a prejudice in favour of poetic plays, it is more than likely that no local drama would have been evoked... 66

Miss Horniman however had a more than merely artistic attachment to realism, and in 1912 her Director, Lewis Casson, informed the Manchester Courier that, "the best business of the year had been done by two of our most realistic plays, 'The Silver Box and 'Hindle Wakes'." 67

The attitude to local plays at Glasgow was quite different to that of Liverpool. With the odd rallying call, "suburbia alone is universal", C.R.J., in the Glasgow Herald in June 1907, encouraged the writing of plays in preparation for the establishment of a Scottish National Theatre and firmly advocated the local as a source of drama. "The Scots," he said, were given, "plays about Mayfair, melodramas about the London slums, foreign comedies and the London Company shorn of its stars." Although he did not want to see "tartan plays", he did want to see, "local burlesques, local dialogues, and small plays representative of Scottish life." He suggested suitable themes:

66 Harold Brighthouse, Preface to Three Lancashire Plays, (London, French, 1920), p. 14.

67 Manchester Courier, December 13, 1912.

A whole world of humour and tragedy lies waiting for expression in the feuds and jealousies between different towns or better still between the different parts of the same town..... for example the South Side and the West End of Glasgow... the life of the student and the tradesman... the Corporation... above all the family life of the Scot... ⁶⁸

He suggested that the burlesques should, with curtain raisers on Glasgow topics, form part of the too London-oriented variety bills, but added the advice to aspiring writers of such pieces, "the Scottish Sabbath does not travel." However, this last judgement proved false. Not only did it travel, but it formed the basis of the most successful Scottish play of the decade, Graham Moffat's Bunty Pulls the Strings. This was a comedy about sabbatarianism and its underlying hypocrisy. Bunty, the daughter of a dour elder of the kirk, Tammis Biggar, happily untangles an improbable number of domestic complications in this truly "Kailyard" drama. After a row with the author, Wareing lost the chance of presenting this piece and, in consequence, lost the chance of making a great deal of money for his company. ⁶⁹ Basil Dean had a similarly galling experience when he rejected Hindle Wakes as being unsuitable for the Liverpool Company. ⁷⁰ Perhaps the fact that both plays were successfully premièred in London helped them to find favour in the provinces.

⁶⁸ Glasgow Herald, June 29, 1907.

⁶⁹ See p. 232.

⁷⁰ Dean, Seven Ages, pp. 101-102. Professor Reilly says Dean refused to play because he wanted the Liverpool Repertory Theatre to be, "like the St. James's under Alexander," Reilly, p. 154.

The possibility of a Scottish drama was much discussed after the appearance of the Herald article and in the autumn at a meeting of the National Burns Club, Jeffrey Hunter lamented the fact that, except for Macbeth, there had been no great plays written about Scotland.⁷¹ In April 1908, in an attempt to remedy this want, Graham Moffat started his Scottish National Players Company to produce the Scottish plays of Graham Moffat. Mr Moffat was also the Chairman of the Glasgow Playgoers' Society and, in the spring of 1908, Frederick Whelen, of the London Stage Society addressed the first meeting of the Glasgow Society on the subject of writing plays. His most important advice was to, "sketch from life":

The first thing in the new drama of the country, was to get plays about English and Scottish life written by those who knew the life of the English and Scottish people. A glance at the plays produced in Glasgow would show that there were very few about Glasgow or on Scottish subjects. There was an enormous field in Glasgow for plays about the city.⁷²

But if the repertory theatre was to produce plays which somehow reflected local life, then they were automatically restricted to a certain type of naturalistic drama. It took a lifetime's study for Synge to produce his plays about the life of the peasants in South-west Ireland, using poetry and dialect speech patterns rather than photographic realism. His

⁷¹ Glasgow Herald, December 21, 1907, p. 10, col. 2.

⁷² Ibid., November 14, 1908, p. 3, col. 4.

was, however, an almost impossible example to follow but he was felt by the Glasgow Herald at least to be the proper model for Scottish playwrights, just as the Abbey should be the proper model for a Scottish National Theatre. An article published in that newspaper after Synge's death and entitled, "A tribute to Synge and a word to Neil Munro," suggested that because of the cultural similarities between Scotland and Ireland, the Scots should follow the lead of Dublin and create a National Theatre. But, it added, patriotically and erroneously:

Although the Scottish Theatre would be equal in spirit to the Irish National Theatre (it would be) superior to it in breadth of artistic horizon. The intellectual ability of our Celto-Saxon city will justify the splendid enterprise of the Scottish Playgoers' Company... ⁷³

The article also suggested that Neil Munro could be the Scottish Synge.

Aspiring Scottish playwrights would then have two sources on which to draw, the "close to life" realism, favoured by Frederick Whelen, and the dialect poetry of Synge. Realism won, but the Abbey continued to exert an influence on Scottish Theatre well into the 1920's. In 1922, the Scottish National Theatre Society looked to Dublin rather than to Scottish antecedents for its inspiration:

⁷³ Ibid., February 27, 1909, reprint, (W.S.)

The Scottish National Theatre Society is anxious to foster all good drama, but its primary object is written for all who run to read in its name. It drew its inspiration from the Dublin Abbey Theatre, and that theatre's dramatists and players, not from the much-loved but dead and gone Glasgow Repertory Theatre. ⁷⁴

But in 1909 many people hoped that the Glasgow Repertory Theatre would lay the foundations for a Scottish National Theatre. Indeed, that was one reason why Miss Horniman chose Manchester rather than Glasgow, in which to start her enterprise. Much of her hatred for Dublin stemmed from her detestation of Irish nationalists who condemned her and her theatre for being un-Irish. "I made the theatre for art," she declared, "not to pander to the desire of the Gaelic League to encourage 'patriotism'," ⁷⁵ Just before the Glasgow Repertory Theatre opened, there was a leading article in the Glasgow Herald which welcomed the new theatre and praised both its aim to encourage Scottish Writers and the wide-ranging repertoire which the theatre had promised:

We may therefore, without any suspicion of chauvinism, express the hope that the public-spirited organisers of the Scottish Playgoers' Society, which is presently to begin operations in our city, will be able to fulfil their intention not only to re-establish the stock-company system on a wider and loftier basis, but "to encourage the initiation and development of a purely Scottish drama by providing a stage and

⁷⁴ "Ourselves and the Movement," R.M.D., The Scottish Player Vol 4., No. 32, March 1926, n.p.

⁷⁵ Flannery, p. 27.

acting company which will be peculiarly adapted for the production of plays national in character, written by Scottish men and women of letters"... If the enterprise results only in an adequate production of "The Duchess of Malfi" or even "Deacon Brodie", the Society will not have lived in vain. The mature mind, turning in disgust from a stage monopolised by tin-helmeted ladies' darlings, imperfectly trained but perfectly photographed young women, and sensational tenors in spotless naval uniforms, is almost incredulous of the prospect of seeing - actually seeing - plays by Maeterlinck, Sudermann, Hauptmann, and Calderon... ⁷⁶

In their first two years at Glasgow, the Company produced 28 new plays: 12 full-length plays and 16 one-act plays. ⁷⁷

The full-length plays included two translations; Chekov's The Seagull ⁷⁸ and H. Weirs Jennsen's The Witch, ⁷⁹ a study of the Norwegian witch craze. There were also some, "'jeux d'esprit' in the Scottish idiom", like Oh! Christina, ⁸⁰ a couthy tale of a wee lassie and Macpherson, ⁸¹ by Neil Munro, the promise of which had led to the guarantee of money for a second season. Munro's play: was in line with C.R.J.'s suggestion to write about the divisions between different areas of Glasgow, in this case Downhill and

⁷⁶ Glasgow Herald, February 27, 1909, reprint, (W.S.).

⁷⁷ By 1914, they had produced 19 new one-act plays and 17 full-length plays.

⁷⁸ First performed November 2, 1909.

⁷⁹ First performed October 10, 1910.

⁸⁰ Written by J.J. Bell; first performed, June 6, 1910.

⁸¹ First performed, November 20, 1910. Queue, No. 4, pp. 18-23.

Kelvinside. Attempts at a more serious type of comedy yielded the Pineroesque Barbara Grows Up,⁸² about a young wife's coming to terms with marriage, which was Scottish only in its setting and The Weaver's Shuttle,⁸³ which was a rather spineless version of Strife, with an aristocratic love interest and a cute tot, Wee Jean. There was a sentimentality about many of these plays, perhaps inspired by J.M. Barrie, which is now unfashionable.

The one-act play fared better. Donald Colquhoun wrote a grim play called Jean, about the kind of farming community later satirised by Stella Gibbons, but in this case providing the background to the tragedy of a son's struggle to break his father's hold over him and marry the farm servant, Jean. He marries her in secret and then discovers from his horrified father, before the old man has a stroke, that Jean is tainted because she has had an illegitimate child. Jean was written in a convincing, if rather hybrid, dialect and much use was made of idiomatic expressions to give the language a strong Scottish flavour.⁸⁴ Other new plays were less essentially Scottish and Harold Brighthouse's The Price of Coal, was changed with apparent ease from the dialect of Lancashire to that of Lanarkshire:

⁸² Written by G.J. Hamlen; first performed September 11, 1909.

⁸³ Written by Anthony Rowley; first performed November 21, 1910.

⁸⁴ Phrases like, "Sandy are ye gown' clean gyte," or "Tak' me ben the hoose an' I'll gang an lie doon a wee," are a synthesis of Scottish dialects. Donald Colquhoun, Jean, (Gowans and Grey, London 1914), pp.39 and 41.

A Glasgow journalist sat at my elbow, and, for the production at the Royalty, The Price of Coal, was translated from Lancashire to Lanarkshire. This was to prove useful. Cyril Maude, then managing the London Playhouse, tried a play of J.J. Bell at a matinee and preceded it by The Price of Coal. Happily for me the critics disliked Bell's play; I 'stole' the reviews; and shortly Maude had the Scots comedy Bunty Pulls the Strings on tour, with it the Lanarkshire version of The Price of Coal,⁸⁵ the junior partner in a two years' tour.

There were other one-act plays with a Scottish theme, like Whose Zoo?, by Robert Bankier, a play about the students of the various Glasgow institutions of learning.⁸⁶ It had little above a merely topical interest and perhaps reflected the concerns of those students who were on the panel which chose the plays for performance. This play had the benefit of being "local", a picture of, "Glasgow humours," and received due praise for this, but it was very soon realised that plays written from real life, which merely relied on their geographical location for their interest, were not good enough. In Macpherson, Neil Munro, perhaps because expectations for his play had been so high, was savaged by the drama critic of the Glasgow University Magazine for taking this easy way out:

The Repertory Theatre, Dr Munro, is intended to foster and improve the dramatic art of Glasgow, Scotland, and the world at large. You have treated it as a ha'penny newspaper that is read to-night and to-morrow kindleth the kitchen fire. You have done that, Neil Munro. You have turned your back on the arts, on life, on your own native people. You have done that, Neil Munro. You have basely pandered to the local feeling of your audience, trusting to the repetition of local names to raise the easy laugh. You

⁸⁵ Brighthouse, pp. 54-55.

⁸⁶ First produced, May 19, 1909.

have foisted upon us old catchwords that you yourself wore threadbare. The sole merit and humour of your dialogue is its use of local sub-language, and what humorous points you made you displayed and turned over before the people, and thrust in their faces on a fork the wretched morsel already tasted and tainted. 87

In a later issue of the magazine, Professor J.S. Phillimore, one of the Theatre's directors and Professor of Humanities at the University, came to Munro's defence in the course of an article in praise of the Repertory Theatre:

A Repertory saves us from some of the London trash, but a Citizens' Theatre makes possible the growth of local drama. "Macpherson" may have had all the faults which a critic in this magazine so unsparingly laid to its charge, but it has one great redeeming merit: it is a picture of local humours...

A little more plot and less conventional episode might not harm "Macpherson," but "Macpherson" as a play of local humours is characteristically a piece which a Citizens' Theatre ought to produce, and which, but for such a means as the Repertory Company, might never have been produced at all. 88

Professor Phillimore was right to stress the need for a theatre in which plays, which would not normally be seen and which deserve a production, can be performed. Only by seeing their plays performed, can dramatists develop, and the process is long.

⁸⁷ Glasgow University Magazine, Vol. 22, No. 5, November 24, 1909, p. 129.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. 22, No. 9, January 6, 1910, p. 266.

and requires constant encouragement. The career of Stanley Houghton at Manchester is a good example of the benefit gained by the careful nurturing of a dramatist until he writes a masterpiece, or at least near-masterpiece, like Hindle Wakes, G.J. Hamlen and Harold Chapin might have fulfilled the promise noticed by Alfred Wareing had they not been killed in the First World War. ⁸⁹

Plays of local colour about Glasgow, without some universality of theme, would not necessarily have an appeal outside the city, and this was another factor which made it difficult to establish a Scottish National Theatre in Glasgow, for the simple fact that it was not the capital of Scotland and sniping about the Citizens' shortcomings as a Scottish National Theatre began early in its career.

Just as its first season was finishing, Graham Moffat was writing to the Glasgow Herald complaining that no vernacular dramas were being produced, and that Scottish drama which was out of the ordinary or too literary was not performed. He went on to imply that people who wanted a Scottish National Theatre should not support the Repertory. ⁹⁰ Writing to support Mr Moffat, "Convinced," very possibly Mrs Moffat or some other close friend or relative, wrote praising Moffat and all his works, adding:

⁸⁹ There is a book of Chapin's letters to his wife written from the trenches which contains details of memorial performances of his plays, given to raise money to buy a Y.M.C.A. hut. Harold Chapin, Soldier and Dramatist, (London, Bodley Head, 1916), pp. 286-288.

⁹⁰ The theatre had, however, produced three new plays by Scottish authors.

Now of Mr Wareing's entirely admirable company one candid thing must be said. The company is called Scottish and it is not. It is not manned by Scotsmen, and it gives us plays dealing with life in Norway and England. If it could find no Scottish plays and yet wished to give something with even a Scottish flavour, why not have tried (say) "MacBeth"? And there were other possibilities. Even the "Man of the World", played so splendidly, was written by an Irishman, and as produced by Mr Wareing was guiltless of the Scottish doric except as regards Mr William MacIntosh, and even he had lost some of the accent during his long absence. Now the Irish players and Miss Horniman's Midlanders (both of which combinations are presently doing admirable work in London) were from the start manned by Irishmen and Midlanders respectively, and they can provide the atmosphere wished.

Mr Moffat has shown that modern Scottish life can be portrayed on the stage in an interesting manner, and it is abundantly evident that Mr Wareing's excellent company could not portray it. What then?

Have we no Scottish actors? Of course.
We have lots - if we look for them. ⁹¹

The sentiments here expressed were echoed in 1912 by "Root of the Matter," who suggested that what was wrong with the Repertory was that, "there is nothing distinctively Scottish about the theatre and its plays," and yet again painted the Abbey Theatre as an ideal. ⁹² At that time, June 1912, the Repertory, although it had commissioned only MacPherson, had acted as a catalyst and produced 27 new plays which were either by Scots or about Scotland.

⁹¹ "Convinced," Letter, Glasgow Herald, June 24, 1909.

⁹² "Root of the Matter," Letter, Glasgow Herald, June 6, 1912.

More damaging than letters written to the newspapers were the comments of, for example, George Tawde, who had been in the Glasgow Company. Tawde was interviewed by the Playgoer and Society, which told its readers:

For the last year and a half he has been with the Glasgow Repertory Theatre which at first did not want to engage him. "After considerable difficulty," he said. "I got an appointment as A.S.M. eventually acting several small parts. I think this particular repertory theatre appeared to desire no natives... 93

He was being interviewed as a member of the cast of Bunty Pulls the Strings, and his comments may have been prejudiced. There were many Scottish actors in the companies at the Royalty, and it would have been impossible to play the repertoire without them. Constance Ray had earlier come to the theatre's aid in the Daily Chronicle, praising it for the fact that, "it supplies the drama of real life and it encourages native dramatic talent." 94 In spite of this encouragement, however, the patriotic societies seemed none too keen to acknowledge any debt to the theatre, except in the case of Campbell of Kilmhor. 95 This grim play

93 Playgoer and Society Illustrated, August 1911, Tawde did add however, that he thought that repertory theatres were an ideal place for young actors to learn their craft, because of the high standard of productions.

94 Daily Chronicle, November 4, 1909.

95 Written by J.A. Ferguson; first produced by Lewis Casson on March 23, 1914.

which, "laid the first stone of the Scottish National Theatre," is set in the aftermath of the '45 rebellion and contrasts the simple integrity of the Highland characters with the devious Lowlander, Archibald Campbell.⁹⁶ Campbell tricks Morag Cameron into betraying the whereabouts of a rebel leader by promising that her son will not be hanged and when she has told him, he shoots the boy instead.

Campbell of Kilmhor had an immediate success when it was produced in the Repertory Theatre's last season and newspaper reviews were enthusiastic. The Scots Pictorial said:

This play, combining the elements of Celtic poetry and an interplay of the Highland and Lowland psychological point of view, was the most significant piece of work produced during the season.

and the Evening Times:

The atmosphere is carried as surely across the footlights as is the fragrance of the peat fire that burns in the centre of the hut... (The play) attracts by its realistic delineation of Highland life, the poetry of the diction and the excellence of the character of Kilmhor. A very taking villain Kilmhor, gentlemanly, unscrupulous, experienced in the darker sides of human nature.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ The Scottish Playgoer, February, 1925.

⁹⁷ J.A. Ferguson, Campbell of Kilmhor, (London, Gowans and Grey, 1915), p. 40. Later comment has not been so kind, and, so popular did the play become in schools that, Gareth Wardell, reviewing a new play for young people in Teaching Drama, Autumn 1978, remarked that, most teachers, "resort to the safe bet which tends to be the dreaded Gilbert and Sullivan end of term production, or, worse still, "Campbell of Kilmhor," p. 74.

The play is always mentioned in later writing about the theatre as the great exception to the statement that the Glasgow Repertory Theatre produced no new Scottish Drama of note. For example, in The Story of the Scottish National Players:

In 1909 the Scottish Repertory Company started in the Royalty Theatre, Glasgow. Among the objects of this company was one of particular interest to this history. It stated the following proposition: "To encourage the initiation and development of a purely Scottish Drama by providing a stage and an acting company which will be peculiarly adapted for the production of plays, national in character, written by Scottish men and women of letters." There were other stated objects which were, to an extent, successfully realised but in this quoted object little, if anything, was achieved. It is true there were plays by Neil Munro, J.J. Bell, Anthony Rosley, Hamlin [sic] and Risk, all on Scottish themes but none of these survived the Theatre which ceased its activities in 1914 on the outbreak of World War I. The only Scottish Plays of the Theatre to find the stage again in post-war years were "Campbell of Kilmhor" by Ferguson [sic] and "The Philosopher of Butterbiggins" by Harold Chapin, both very good one-act plays. ⁹⁸

The play by Chapin was not in fact produced by the Rep, though this play, and several others which had been staged at the Royalty, were later published by Gowans and Grey in a series called "Repertory Plays". Most of the early covers for the plays were designed by George Whitelaw, who also illustrated the covers for the programmes for the various repertory seasons.

⁹⁸ The Story of the Scottish National Players. (Glasgow, n.p., 1950), pp. 18-21.

Publication has given many of the plays produced by the Glasgow Theatre a kind of permanence, as these little, parchment-covered books have become collectors' items. After the First World War, plays performed by the Scottish National Players were included in the 'Repertory Plays' series, forging another link between the two organisations as, in 1921, shareholders in the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre transferred the £400 remaining in their accounts to the much more obviously nationalist Scottish National Players. ⁹⁹

Had Wareing been supported by a private patron, as Yeats had been in Dublin, and had he not been committed to establishing a Citizens' Theatre, he could, as the Abbey had done, have promoted his own version of what he thought a Scottish Drama should be, regardless of the comments of other factions. It was to be many years, indeed, not until after the Civil War, that the Abbey was regarded as in any way representative of Irish culture by the patriots in Dublin, possibly because those who ran it were Protestant, possibly because of the Playboy Riots or perhaps because it was started with an Englishwoman's money. The Glasgow theatre was founded on an Englishman's initiative and consequently met with some of the same prejudices, but the foundations for the systematic encouragement of Scottish drama were being laid between 1909 and 1914 and perhaps they were another casualty of the 1914-1918 War. It does appear, however, that the record of

⁹⁹ The report of the last shareholders' meeting of the Scottish Playgoers' Company, is in the Glasgow Herald, October 5, 1920. Only 20 of the remaining 170 shareholders attended. For the covers of the Repertory Plays, See Appendix B. p. 326.

the first Glasgow Citizens' is no less distinguished than the many other piece-meal attempts to establish a Scottish drama through the century. Organisations like the Unity Theatre and the Lyceum in Edinburgh and the second Citizens' Theatre have succeeded, like Wareing's theatre, in being the catalyst for some good new plays but yielded no permanent organisation which could be called a Scottish National Theatre. ¹⁰⁰

Even if other Scottish groups were unconvinced of the value of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre, English journalists were not slow to appreciate the importance of its example. E.F.S. wrote in the Westminster Gazette early in 1910:

Glasgow represents the efforts of the Citizens, of the people themselves, demanding better service of the drama than the touring system can give, and trying to awaken in the city, of which they are honourably proud, to love of drama appealing to something more than mere infatuation for the theatre or desire for thoughtless amusement.

Primarily it was designed, I understand, to encourage and develop drama that might be regarded as peculiarly Scottish, and here there is a parallel between it and the Irish National Theatre of Dublin; but up to now the comparatively narrow primary object has not been achieved.

It is now up to our English cities to show that they also are capable of some worthy enterprise in this great branch of art, and hardly possible to believe that all of them will remain irresponsive to the challenge. Many of those who, like myself, have strong prejudice to municipal enterprise in such matters would easily accept the proposition

¹⁰⁰ An example from each might be, Ena Lamont Stewart's, Men Should Weep; Roddy MacMillan's, The Bevellers; and Robert David MacDonald's, Chinchilla.

that if the citizens themselves, by their efforts to establish a living theatre in their midst, show an ardent desire to encourage drama, it would be legitimate for the municipalities to imitate the great cities of the Continent, and seek the power to lend assistance, an assistance which I believe would soon be needless, since it would not take very long to create a demand for true drama by means of the supply.

Again it is necessary to insist upon the fact that Manchester forms an honourable exception among our English cities. There, however, we have the work of the courageous individual manager.¹⁰¹

The individual manager referred to was Miss Horniman and, as E.F.S.'s comments imply, the new drama produced by Manchester was almost wholly her responsibility. Ben Iden Payne tells us that his preference at the time was for poetic plays, like The Fantasticks, and the establishment of a repertoire of the classics of the English stage.¹⁰² Miss Horniman was more inclined towards the realistic plays favoured by the German municipal theatres, though she had supported Yeats and his poetic drama, and the establishment of the Manchester School of Drama did, as Harold Brighouse said, reflect this prejudice.¹⁰³ He added, writing in 1921, that these plays were only a by-product of Miss Horniman's policies and this view seems to have been based on what Miss Horniman said herself:

¹⁰¹ Westminster Gazette, March 1910, (W.S.).

¹⁰² Payne, p. 109.

¹⁰³ Brighouse, Three Lancashire Plays, p. 14.

"There has been an idea that I go out of my way to encourage local talent, but this case is simply a coincidence. I do not mind where the dramatist belongs to, or who he is, so long as his work is good. 104

Miss Horniman may have had no particular incentive to found a school of 'local' dramatists, but Ben Iden Payne did have this possibility in mind when he came to Manchester. In an article advocating municipal theatres, written by Dr Haden Guest for the New Age and published in August 1907, just before the Midland Theatre season had started, the plea had been included that: "we must have our Manchester playwrights as we have our Irish playwrights, and this means our Manchester Managers." In reply to this article Ben Iden Payne wrote that he and his "Manchester manager", Miss Horniman, "hoped to create Manchester dramatists." The statements of the two seem to contradict one another, but Miss Horniman's concern had never been particularly to open a theatre in Manchester, having always wanted to own a London playhouse and being prevented only by insufficient funds. Frank Vernon later wrote that:

Manchester and Irish Drama came to the Coronet to be approved by London. But really arrogant provincial drama would have adopted a you-be-damned attitude. 105

104 Manchester Despatch, January 26, 1914, (H.S.).

105 Frank Vernon, The Twentieth Century Theatre, (London, Harrap, 1924), p. 82.

Vernon it would seem, was right to underline a lack of commitment to regional drama, and when the Gaiety opened, the quality of the work was obviously the key. Miss Horniman would stage any new play she considered to be "good" and this ties in with her desire to find "good" playwrights to rival those of Dublin. Glasgow and Liverpool were also, occasionally, guilty of a crisis of confidence in their provincialism. When Liverpool Repertory sent their revue Hullo Repertory! to the Coliseum in London in 1915, the local jokes and references were lost on the London audience and the piece was speedily removed from the variety bill on which it had, somewhat incongruously, been placed.¹⁰⁶ The Glasgow Theatre also used London as a touchstone for the success of their actors, perhaps wisely, in view of the lessons learned from Hindle Wakes of the benefit to provincial drama of being stamped with London's approval.¹⁰⁷

All the time she was in Manchester, Miss Horniman continued to read all the new scripts submitted to the theatre and these scripts, as well as providing some good plays, also provided her with many amusing anecdotes for her public-speaking. She described plays which needed "swarming bees" and, "children chasing butterflies", a play about Venice in which one character announced that he had just had "a row with the cab man", and a play on a historical subject:

¹⁰⁶ Ashley Dukes, writing on, "The Repertory Theatre," Poetry and Drama, Vol. 2, No. 4, December 1914, said that, "the repertory theatres...make a virtue of provincialism, which is no better than making a vice of London manners," pp. 416-417.

¹⁰⁷ H.M. Richardson, Letter, Manchester Guardian, December 11, 1913, (H.S.).

Some two or three years ago she had a play sent which she would never forget. It was very thick and was in writing. She looked at the list of characters - there were twenty-eight; two armies, a crowd of citizens, and a letter with it which explained that she might consider it was rather long, but a subject like the Monmouth rebellion required a large canvas -- (laughter) -- rather...

It was in nine acts and in verse. She wrote a nice letter back, which she thought would prevent any more such specimens coming. She explained that her company consisted of only twenty-one or twenty-two actors, and she did not think the municipality of Manchester would let her have the loan of Albert Square as an addition to her theatre, by which means alone she could put up the play. The writer did not send it back. (Laughter) 108

Miss Horniman also pointed out that bad plays came from all sections of society:

There was no class that had not sent her plays of different degrees of impossibility. She had had them from cousins of Royalty, she would not mention which country; she had had them from workpeople; and she had had rubbish from the Universities, from ships of war, from factories, from doctors, and from clergy. 109

In various letters, Miss Horniman later told of some of the principles which guided her choice of plays. Though she had inveighed against the "impertinence" of theatres which

108 Manchester Guardian, October 3, 1913, (H.S.).

109 Manchester Despatch, October 3, 1913, (H.S.).

claimed to "uplift" people, she does seem to have been guided by similar moral forces, as she felt, "there must be a real use in doing one's best to help people think for themselves." ¹¹⁰ She had also warned in public of the danger that the repertory theatres could be thought "superior" but she took the credit for the remark that when most people went to theatre they, "left their brains in the cloak-room." Her main grouse however, was against Manchester's chief showman Richard Flannagan for, "putting people against plays with literary merit." ¹¹¹

Flannagan ran the Queen's Theatre in Manchester, and his Christmas productions, though they might contain "intellectual" actresses like Janet Achurch, were designed on a scale which, "out-Treed, Tree". He provided real animals wherever possible and hat in hand, took a special curtain call each night after a particularly spectacular set-piece of scenery had been unveiled. ¹¹² His productions were so popular, that special trains brought the audience from all over the Manchester area.

Because of this sort of competition, Miss Horniman felt her plays had been victimised and not given a fair chance. Harold Brighthouse remembered two "victimised" plays at what Miss Horniman called "the poor old Gaiety":

¹¹⁰ Miss Horniman, Letter to Tom Bass, August 27, 1919, Manchester Public Library.

¹¹¹ Ibid. She also claimed, Letter to Tom Bass, January 11, 1923, that she invented the phrase about, "leaving your brains in the Cloak-room," when you went to the theatre. St. John Ervine had been claiming it as his.

¹¹² Payne, p. 102.

There was an Icelandic tragedy produced in the early days of her Company, which depressed the thermometer alarmingly; there was Verhaeren's "The Cloister", a great play performed to empty houses, adding insult to injury by being popularly called "dreary" and the chill resulting from those two productions, one a mistake of management, the other a mistake of the public, lasted for years. 113

Harold Brighthouse, always seen with Houghton as a leader of the "Manchester School", even though his most famous play, Hobson's Choice was first produced by Ben Iden Payne in the United States, also defined what he thought were the qualities of the plays described by Gerald Cumberland as "sour and Mancunian" and by St. John Ervine as, "akin to trudging up a cinder-path in the rain." 114 Brighthouse saw them in a different light:

The "Manchester School" was never conscious of itself, as the Irish School was ... In Manchester, so far were we from any explicit ambition to create a Lancashire Drama, that we denied the fact of its creation. What reputation it had was not home-made in Manchester and exported, but made in London and America. At Miss Horniman's theatre in Manchester, there were so many bigger things being done than the earlier, technically weak plays of the local authors. [15

113 Brighthouse, Three Lancashire Plays, p. 18.

114 Hobson's Choice was tried out in 1910 in Atlantic City with Whitford Kane in the Cast. Later in the year, the play opened in New York, directed by Ben Iden Payne. Cumberland, p. 210.

worth pointing out that the authors went (it was admirable, it was almost original in them) for their material to what was immediately under their noses; they took as models the Lancashire people of their daily life, and in their plays they did not always flatter their models. The case of the Lancashire Plays is clear; their authors aimed at presenting the human comedy of Lancashire, and if their dramatic purpose was to be achieved by the alternative uses of laughter or of tears, they preferred to achieve it by the ruthless light of laughter. 115

Brighouse denies that there was any self-conscious attempt to create a "school" and his description of Manchester plays as being full of laughter seems odd, given the reputation of the repertory theatres as producing "gloomy plays", an idea which Harley Granville Barker was also anxious to deny. Speaking at Liverpool he said:

The idea that the repertory theatre is the instrument of a solemn propaganda of tragic dramatists and actors is indeed one of the most insidious foes against which the movement has to contend. As a matter of fact, the greatest success of the Glasgow citizens' theatre was a light-hearted comedy of Glasgow life by a Glasgow man. Are we to be more lugubrious than those Glasgow bodies? Liverpool, in fact, must beat them at their own game, but we must have a citizens' theatre to do it. 116

115 Brighouse, Three Lancashire Plays, pp. 11-12.

116 Liverpool Courier, November 30, 1910. (H.S.)

Barker was one of a new breed of so-called "psychological" dramatists who relied, in William Archer's words on, "the exploration of character," rather than on, "character-drawing." ¹¹⁷ Character drawing was very necessary for one-act plays where dramatic situations had to become quickly obvious, but the "psychological" dramatist needed a larger canvas. However, though they were thought of as such, the plays chosen for production at the Repertory Theatres, were not necessarily representative of the "New Drama", as neither producers like Payne or Casson, nor successful authors like Charles McEvoy believed that there was such a thing. ¹¹⁸ McEvoy, in a lecture to the Manchester Playgoers' Club, "disclaimed the term 'new' in the modern drama, and contended there might be something of a renaissance, but there was nothing of a novelty." ¹¹⁹ Ben Iden Payne echoed those sentiments in a speech to the Liverpool Playgoers' Society which he told that:

He took exception to the description "new drama", as he applied to the works of promising modern playwrights. It was no more new than any other art which was healthy and vital and was an expression of real life, and it should be rather called "a renascence of sincere drama". ¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ William Archer, Playmaking, (London, Chapman and Hall, 1912), pp. 285-289. Payne remarks that the need for a director in the theatre, arose with the new "psychological" drama, Payne, p. 58.

¹¹⁸ Lewis Casson, Gaiety Christmas Annual, 1909, p. 139.

¹¹⁹ Manchester Courier, March, 18, 1909, (H.S.).

¹²⁰ Liverpool Post and Mercury, July 2, 1909, (H.S.).

They were both partly right and partly wrong. There was nothing particularly new about the original plays produced at Manchester except, in the case of Lancashire plays, in the subject matter. What was new, was the spirit which was sweeping away the theatre which concerned itself with producing worthy plays with, "unlovely and inappropriate backgrounds,"¹²¹ and instead what was called "the new art of the theatre," was being slowly forged by groups like the Ballets Russe, the Futurists in Italy and Russia, the Expressionists in Germany and the Moscow Arts Theatre. Design, acting-styles and the role of the director in the theatre, were undergoing a change which the repertory theatres were only in part reflecting. Huntly Carter wrote in 1912, "with the rise of the aesthetic theatre has come a corresponding decline of the purely literary theatre."¹²² Perhaps the sense of being slightly anachronistic was the price the theatres paid for not being experimental, or for trying to imitate the theatres of the Continent without the funds to make them truly independent of public taste.

O.R. Drey, in the Gaiety Theatre Annual of 1910 seems to provide a fitting summary of the strengths of the repertory theatres' policies on producing new plays, policies which yielded almost 150 new plays in the first ten years of the Gaiety's

¹²¹ Huntly Carter, New Spirit, p. 42.

¹²² Ibid., p. 30. See

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existence. Some were by writers like Harold Brighthouse, who would produce their best work for other theatres, some by writers like Harold Chapin who would be killed in the war, some by Alan Monkhouse and Miles Malleon who would develop much later and some by writers from whom the play-going public would never hear again. Oscar Drey wrote:

I have seen many poor plays at the Gaiety, and I hope I may see many more. But... I have not seen one that was not inspired by sincere creative impulse, by the desire to express, through ^{the} medium of the theatre, some definite stirring of the mind or of the soul. Many a time I have come away from the Gaiety with feelings of disappointment, and of annoyance, even, at seeing poor work, but I have always had to admit that the author had tried hard to do good work, and that he had shown sufficient originality of mind and aptitude for the dramatic form to encourage the hope that he might some day do something infinitely better. 123

123 "Manchester and the Gaiety Theatre," O.R. Drey, Gaiety Christmas Annual, 1910, p. 70.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PLAYERS AND PRODUCTIONS OF THE REPERTORY THEATRE MOVEMENT

Patrikeyev, a comedy actor who played juvenile leads of all kinds..

... tried to look simultaneously scornful and furious. In a husky voice he replied: "I think you're forgetting - I am an actor of the Independent Theatre and not a cinema extra like you... "

Black Snow (Mikhail Bulgakov)

From the start, the success of the early repertory theatres depended to a large extent on the type of acting company which was recruited and on their choice of stage managers, as directors were usually called. The selection of a suitable company was important, as the bulk of the proposed repertoire of the theatres comprised new and recently written plays. The kind of actor needed for these plays was one who would act well in an ensemble and who would work for the sake of the play. "The play is the thing," wrote Alfred Wareing when describing his ideal acting company, and he needed actors who understood this. ²

¹ Mikhail Bulgakov, Black Snow (London, Penguin, 1973), p. 41.

² Introductory Brochure, Spring 1909, n.p.

As each repertory theatre was committed to mounting many new productions, this threw a great deal of responsibility on to the actors. They had to learn an unusually large number of different parts and did not have long in which to work up their characters. Fortunately, there were a great many actors who were used to something like this pressure of work. These were the actors who toured in what were usually called "touring repertoire companies." These ranged from Frank Benson's Shakespearian Company, probably the most artistically satisfying of the touring companies, to profit-sharing fit-up companies, playing melodrama and the standard, romantic repertoire. Benson's company played in the best theatres, including the Memorial Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon, and the fit-up companies usually played in converted halls.

The actors who joined the early repertory theatres often came with experience of both types of touring company. They were valued for their versatility and "quick study", and brought the best qualities of the touring companies to theatres who were trying to revive the best features of the stock companies of the early nineteenth century.

Alfred Wareing, was especially dedicated to the stock company ideal, but he was aware also of the need to adapt the stock companies to the ideals of the theatrical avant-garde of Edwardian Britain. He explained, in the Introductory Brochure to the first season at the Royalty Theatre, some of the qualities required of a repertory company and why they were necessary:

The Company must not be large - the very essence of the old Stock Company was its compactness - it must be composed of congenial people, with the same enthusiasms and oneness-of-purpose enabling them to make the most of any part, large or small, without those jealous pangs so fashionable amongst the artists of the stage.

In the programme presented by the Scottish Playgoers' Company, the names of ultra-modern dramatists will be found: G. Bernard Shaw, John Galsworthy, and Arnold Bennett have thrown off allegiance to the star actor and refused a monopoly of limelight to the leading lady.

Their art is above petty claims, their aims are beyond the personal glorifications of the individual. Thus they merit the support of all thinking men and women; their purpose is firm, and the hope for the future of the drama lies at the goal they set out to attain: the play is the thing - Miss Blank or Mr Dash are only the means of expression to be used when there is something for them to say.³

This gives some idea of the principles which guided Wareing when selecting his company for Glasgow. He wanted a small acting company of people committed to the art of acting and, as the actors and actresses were to become the author's "means of expression," he intended that leading roles would change from production to production. Casting would therefore depend on what the play required. But, in view of the heavy workload which the repertory theatres undertook, this meant in practice that

³ Ibid, n.p.

although the, "responsibilities and utilities" of the old stock companies had gone, they were replaced by a company of similar types. Some paragraphs later, we find Wareing telling his public that, "Miss M'Aimée Murray will play 'grandes dames' and the like." ⁴ In other words, the basic difference between the old and new stock companies was going to lie in the ensemble work of the cast and the nature of the plays.

When they planned their new company of actors, Ben Iden Payne and Miss Horniman referred to it as a, "stock company," ⁵ and the first company which appeared at the Midland Theatre as the "Manchester Playgoers' Company" was drawn largely from amongst those with whom Ben Iden Payne had acted on tour. Prominent among them were Basil Dean, Ian MacLaren, Charles Bibby, Lewis Casson and Mrs A.B. Tapping. The company seems to have been aware of their links with the nineteenth century tradition of which they were a part and with their new role in the repertory theatres, as can be seen in a letter which Mona Limerick drafted, but didn't send, to George Bernard Shaw. Shaw had written to her husband, sharply criticizing the quality of his company's acting in Widowers' Houses. ⁶ She may have been especially stung by the reference to her husband as being "by far the worst," but her letter set out to draw Shaw's attention to the problems of recruiting a permanent provincial repertory company of versatile actors:

⁴ Ibid, n.p.

⁵ Manchester City News, August 31, 1907, Ho. 16/17. MPL.

⁶ Shaw Letters, Buffalo, pp. 120-122.

You would do well to remember that we are a stock company whose chief concern must be to interpret our plays as a whole, not exploit our individual specialities in a limited series of automaton-like parts. If you are so spoilt by your London productions with their artists picked, if needs be, from the four quarters of the globe, you should simply refuse to allow performance of your plays outside that over-rated Mecca. We cannot pick and choose our artists for individual parts. We have, in the first place, to think merely of their all-round ability; and secondly, in casting, to select the most suitable from our available number. ⁷

In 1911, when he was organising the first season at the new Liverpool Repertory Theatre, Basil Dean, who had been a member of the same company as Mona Limerick, drew on his experience when he described the problems confronting a repertory company:

Repertory acting makes great demands upon the players, they must possess not only a great versatility but a real devotion to their art if they are to grapple successfully with the many and varying characters they are called upon to portray. It is perhaps only by slow degrees and after long practice in one another's company, that even the ablest band of players will develop into a perfectly balanced repertory company. ⁸

⁷ Ibid, p. 123.

⁸ Liverpool, Souvenir Brochure for 1911, n.p., MD, 45, LPL.

Because of these special difficulties and the particularly demanding workload at the repertory theatres, only experienced actors could cope and Miss Horniman claimed that she never took a raw beginner.⁹ Instead, she and the other repertory pioneers recruited primarily from the provincial touring companies, though a few actors had played in London theatres, especially the Court.

Touring companies were basically of two kinds, those which toured copies of London successes and the touring repertoire companies. It was to the actors in the former that Mona Limerick referred in the phrase, 'automaton-like.' Repertory acting was a conscious reaction against that kind of copy-book performance which compounded its natural staleness by being repeated without change, sometimes for years. The repertory pioneers, by contrast, wanted to provide actors with a challenge and with variety.¹⁰

Harley Granville Barker described the touring system, which produced such results, as "evil and dispiriting", and, when choosing suitable actors for a repertory theatre, he said that he:

would rather hire a young actor from Beerbohm Tree's Academy who had trained for a year than someone with three years experience in one play touring the provinces.¹¹

⁹ Daily Mail, February 18, 1914, p. 3, co. 3.

¹⁰ Harley Granville Barker, Letter to William Archer, April 21st, 1903, British Library.

¹¹ Era, February 9, 1907, a report of a meeting of the Actors' Association.

A position in one of the new repertory theatres, permanently settled in one town, must have been eagerly sought by actors in the touring companies, for the conditions under which most of them laboured, however exalted their company, were far from comfortable.

In her autobiography, Smile Please, the novelist Jean Rhys, who toured the provinces with one of the Our Miss Gibbs companies around 1909, describes the hardship and poverty of life for actresses on tour:

I was a year and a half to two years in Our Miss Gibbs. In the winter we toured small towns in the north, and in the summer the seaside places. The chorus girls' wages were thirty-five shillings a week and extra for every matinee. When you signed the contract you gave them the option for the next tour so long as it was work you were capable of doing. It was a steady job.

We travelled with theatrical baskets which were collected by the theatrical baggage man every Thursday and went with the scenery. So we were left with small suitcases with washing things, toothbrush and very minimal make-up. Sunday was travelling day. The classic joke about travelling was two railway men talking. 'What have you got there, Bill?' - 'Fish and actors,' - 'Oh, shove them on a siding.'

Everybody knew the good theatrical lodgings, and everyone knew they were taken in advance. We had to do the best we could. Sometimes we struck lucky, sometimes not. You could save a bit if you lived with another girl, more if you lived with two. The food was always the same. We would get to the new lodgings after our Sunday train journey to a large joint of beef, usually very tough.

On Monday we had it warmed up. On Tuesday mince. On Wednesday shepherd's pie or stew. On Thursday something exotic like eggs and bacon or liver. On Friday it was go as you can. On Saturday we were much too busy packing. On Sunday we left for another town which was exactly like the last one, or so I thought. All this was in the winter in the North. 12

Despite their poverty, touring actors enjoyed a certain, social cachet in the towns they visited, but, as Robert Roberts describes, their glamour was often a terrible sham. Roberts grew up in pre-1914 Salford:

In our midst stood the usual 'Blood Tub', a low-grade theatre whose presence impinged on life social and cultural over a wide area. With actors, as with bookmakers, feeling remained ambivalent. Star performers, of course, were wholeheartedly admired save by the narrowly religious few, but ordinary theatricals who made up the weekly touring companies and who lodged, keeping themselves, in the larger houses close to the theatre, both impressed and shocked us. We watched the small-part actors with cheroots swaggering through the stage door in lush costs, astrakhan collared, and were amazed to discover through the matriarchs (who knew everything) that many of them owned but a single shirt apiece or one pair of socks. Though when 'the ghost walked' - pay night - and they popped in at the shop to buy generously of boiled ham, mustard pickles and pineapple chunks, they seemed well-heeled enough. Undoubtedly some kept up a bold face on most meagre incomes; a pair of sisters we knew, competent artists, as late as 1913 kept going in some style on the combined pay of thirty-five shillings a week, out of which they had to find 8/6d for a place to sleep.

¹² Jean Rhys, Smile Please, (London, Penguin, 1979) p. 106.

We saw actresses powdered and mincing, befurred and large-bosomed, cheeks bright with rouge ("Red John" the matrons called it), and we knew they had shared a pair of kippers for lunch. And all were immortal! Of that the respectable had no doubt. Yet they brought glamour, new ideas, titillating catch-words, beauty, fantasy and a sense of style to our wretched reality, and we loved them for it. 13

Most actors of this generation who wrote their memoirs described similar conditions and so the idea of a company settled in one town, able to become part of the community, must have seemed like a golden dream to most of the carriage-loads of actors being shunted round the country. 14

Wareing who had been advance manager for both Beerbohm Tree and Oscar Asche as well as the Abbey Players, knew at first-hand what conditions were like for touring actors of the early twentieth century, and it was his experience of the rigours of touring which set him against the "portmanteau actor," and led him to invoke the "palmy days" of the stock companies.

Though Roberts and indeed most of Salford might have perceived actors as a homogeneous species apart, actors themselves were very aware of the social and artistic difference between various companies. In his autobiography,

¹³ Robert Roberts, The Classic Slum, (London, Penguin, 1973) pp. 147-148.

¹⁴ For examples see, Nora Nicholson, Chameleon's Dish, (London, Elek, 1973) p. 49; Leon M. Lion, The Surprise of my Life, (London, Hutchinson, n.d.) pp. 43-44; Philip C. Lewis, Trouping, (New York, Harper and Row, 1973), pp 229-230; and H.F. Maltby, Ring Up the Curtain, (London, Hutchinson, 1950), pp. 46-54.

Are We All Met?, the actor Whitford Kane recalled the differences between various types of touring actors and the similarities in organisation between the top touring companies and the repertory theatres. He describes as "repertory" companies, those companies which are usually called "repertoire" companies, in other words, those with a limited number of plays, which were available for performance, at short notice:

It was the custom thirty years ago for a young man or woman who was really anxious to succeed on the stage to try to obtain an engagement with a repertory company. There were a great many such companies touring through England, Ireland and Scotland in the late 'nineties, and the two enviable ones for any beginner to be associated with were the Shakespearean companies of Mr. F.R. Benson and Mr Osmond Tearle.

The great difference between repertory companies then and now is that a repertory organisation of those days maintained no permanent home but was essentially transient. Its permanence, if any, rested solely upon thirty-two baskets or so of wardrobe and properties which, when judiciously used, would dress about fifty plays. Often the company's sole capital lay in those thirty-two baskets. ¹⁵

Kane was only one of the many actors in early repertory companies who came from this touring background. Another actor who had experience of the best and less good touring companies was Clarence Derwent. He, like Kane, had acted with Mrs. Bandmann-Palmer, "a rapacious old harridan," and with Frank Benson, "an inspiration." From companies such as

¹⁵ Kane, pp. 21-22

Mrs Bandmann-Palmer's, young actors seem to have learned how to be "troupers." Derwent remembered his baptism by fire on joining the company. He had been taken on as an apprentice for a fee and was paid, "near-starvation wages," for his first year. However, he had to work hard even to earn this pittance:

On the first day I had my greatest surprise. When paying my £20 I had been told I would walk on for a couple of months, then be entrusted with a line or two, etc., etc. In place of this snail-like crawl I was now informed that the opening play would be Schiller's *Mary, Queen of Scots* in which I would play the officer of the guard with no less than sixteen lines, that on Tuesday I would appear as Sir Benjamin Backbite in *The School of Scandal* and with minor roles in the intervening nights would round out the week by trebling as Bernardo, Rosencrantz and the priest, in *Hamlet* on Saturday night... ¹⁶

The standard of production in the company was not particularly high and though he was playing many parts he was acting in rather unsatisfactory conditions:

On Saturday nights the bill was invariably *East Lynne* or *Jane Shore*. To the latter play the audiences were corralled by large illustrated posters inviting them to come and see Mrs. Bandmann-Palmer give her world-famous performance of the heroine in the great snow-storm scene. This spectacle was

¹⁶ Clarence Derwent, *The Derwent Story*, (New York, Schuman, 1953), pp. 13, 33 and 20.

achieved at the performance by a little pint-sized property man, Mr. Wells, perched up in the flies with a basket of badly torn pieces of paper which he rained on the stage through a sieve while Mrs. Bandmann-palmer in a not too clean nightgown was prodded around the stage by two heartless jailers, Whitford (Kane) and myself, armed with halberds which more nearly resembled elongated toasting forks. ¹⁷

Conditions in the Benson Company were completely different and came close to the repertory ideal, except that no element of training, implicit in Benson's organisation, was part of the planning of the early repertory companies:

No finer training was ever given an actor and it is a sad commentary on the times that nothing comparable to this is obtained today - not even in England. These were not stock performances but carefully rehearsed productions with elaborate scenery and a magnificent wardrobe. They were rendered by a company that worked together all the year round inspired by the guiding hand of the man who devoted his life to spreading the knowledge and love of Shakespeare's plays throughout the British Isles. ¹⁸

It is perhaps not surprising therefore that those recruiting for the new repertory theatres looked to Benson's company as a source of actors. But the early repertory companies themselves were also far different from the usual run of provincial companies.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 21.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 33.

"To have been with Glasgow Rep. was, and still is, to have a distinctive cachet," wrote Victor McLure in 1939 on the thirtieth anniversary of the start of Wareing's theatre.¹⁹

In 1910, Ronald Jeans, on a visit to the Royalty Theatre noticed that there was a sense of purpose and enthusiasm about the Citizens' company which set it apart from other ventures:

the most impressive fact about the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre... is the unique spirit of eagerness and life which characterises them. This spirit seems to dominate the theatre from the indefatigable Mr Wareing to the stage carpenter and limelight man. Surely there must be something in a movement which instills such genuine enthusiasm into everyone who comes in contact with it...²⁰

Whitford Kane felt the same about the Gaiety company where the enthusiasm seemed to spring from a satisfaction with artistic standards and especially from the high quality of the acting:

Here everyone seemed to be alive down to the stage doorkeeper. There were many jealousies, of course, but they were healthy and stimulating ones. Everyone in the Manchester Theatre participated, and there was a fine intermingling of actors and authors, quite different from the reserve and aloofness one felt in London. There was an excellent system too, of distributing the work, for Payne divided the company into two units.

¹⁹ Victor MacLure, Letter to Glasgow Herald, April 15, 1939.

²⁰ Liverpool Daily Post, December 19, 1910.

One company played while the other rehearsed and vice versa. Irene Rooke, a fine actress, was the leading lady of one group while Miss Goodall headed the other. To me the Manchester Theatre was an ideal repertory organisation, as it combined both the creative and the interpretive. ²¹

The company's special qualities were not always admired by those on the outside. Many of the actors lived in the same area of Manchester and soon stories began to circulate about this new and "different" company, as Basil Dean recalled:

The Horniman players were so unlike their usual lodgers that the landladies of Ackers Street began to spread rumours; we were very peculiar people indeed, 'atheists and I don't know what else, living on nuts and things.' It was even rumoured that we indulged in what was then called 'free love', whereas in point of fact we were just a group of rather high-brow over-earnest young actors and actresses, living on humble salaries and with our noses just slightly tilted upwards since we were, after all, somewhat different from the ordinary run of touring actor, or at least we thought we were. It was due to the persistence of these old wives' tales quite as much as to the left-wing tendencies of our authors that we lived in a state of apartheid for the first year, more so even than the actors who came up from London to play in Shakespeare and pantomime at Christmas. ²²

²¹ Kane, pp. 80-81.

²² Dean, Seven Ages, p. 51

The company actors and actresses at Liverpool also lived in one small area of the city and spent much of their leisure time together. ²³

Other special features of the actors of the repertory theatre movement manifested themselves in several ways. The first, mentioned by Basil Dean, was the supposed left-wing nature of the company. Dean, however, suggests that there was not unanimous support for socialism in the Gaiety Company and remembers how socialist views were openly mocked by the older members of the company. Many actors at the Repertory Theatre, for example, M.R. Morand, Lewis Casson and Clarence Derwent were at various times active in the Reform group of the Actors' Association which campaigned for the establishment of proper actors' Trade Union, a cause which was also supported by Miss Horniman. ²⁴ One of their number Cecil Raleigh, explained what socialism would mean for an actor:

When a socialist speaks of the State he means the population of the country. Everybody, he holds, should have a vote, The Government then would represent the population absolutely, and it would do all things necessary for the greatest good of the largest number. Its primary object would be so to organise work that everybody did some work, and everybody had decent food, clothes, and shelter.

²³ Reilly, pp. 194-195.

²⁴ Basil Dean says that the company at Manchester were, "anxious to reform the act of acting and, incidentally, the world at the same time", Seven Ages, p. 50.

That is the Socialist Ideal.

... in small communities - small towns - the actor would be called upon to do his share of ordinary work like any other citizen. His leisure he could devote to gratuitous acting if he pleased. In large centres, however, where a theatre was considered a necessary part of the educational machinery, a number of actors would be required to devote their whole time to acting, just as professors would be required to give their whole time to teaching. Socialistic remuneration would in all cases be the same. A sufficiency - no more. The actor would act entirely for his art - entirely for the joy of acting. ²⁵

Raleigh's article was widely read and there is no doubt that his simple utopian socialism appealed to many in the acting profession. ²⁶

The actors of the repertory companies were also singled out from their contemporaries by their initiative in forming and running their own companies. By 1917, Miss Darragh, the Iden Paynes, Esme Percy, Basil Dean, Lewis Casson, Madge MacKintosh, Harold Chapin, Whitford Kane and Kenelm Foss, had all started companies, some of which toured and some of which were based at provincial theatres. ²⁷ Even allowing

²⁵ S.Y.B. 1908, p. 33.

²⁶ The Actor's Right to Act, Joseph Macleod, (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1981), p. 101.

²⁷ Miss Darragh's touring company was backed by her wealthy admirer, Charles Kenyon. The Iden Paynes toured a repertoire including Shaw and Houghton, Esme Percy toured a similar repertoire, but later concentrated on Shaw and was greatly admired by the author. Percy was the first person to tour the uncut version of Man and Superman. Harold Chapin formed a company to give short seasons of his one-act plays. Whitford Kane ran the Ulster Players and Kenelm Foss set up a repertoire season in Bath in 1917.

that it was easier to set up one's own company at a time when there was a much wider network of theatres, and less competition for a much larger audience in the live theatre, this still showed considerable initiative on the part of the actors who formed these companies. Most of their companies played a similar repertoire, which usually included the plays in which the actor or actress had excelled. Miss Darragh, for example, performed in Sudermann's Magda and Esme Percy played Marchbanks in Candida. In doing so, they worked in the tradition of an actress like Mrs. Bandmann-Palmer, whose posters announced her, "world-famous performance" in the great snow-storm scene from Jane Shore.²⁸

Conditions for the actors of the repertory companies, especially those at Manchester, were much better than those experienced by most provincial actors. Just as Alfred Wareing had set the establishment of a permanent company as his main priority, so Miss Horniman did all she could to prove herself the superior of male managers in her treatment of the actors. She instituted the coffee-break in rehearsal, the coffee being sent in at her own expense. And when the Gaiety was re-built she provided well-ventilated dressing-rooms and a comfortable green-room for her company. She also issued contracts which ran for forty weeks, paid salaries which were above the average and was generous in releasing actors for other engagements. The salaries of the actors varied widely: the youngest, least experienced earned about 35/- a week compared with £4 for a more

²⁸ See note 17.

experienced actor and £7 for Casson as Director.²⁹ These wages compared very well with those of other skilled workers in Edwardian England where the average wage was £80 a year. "Real wages", says Paul Thompson in his book The Edwardians, "were stagnant during the Edwardian period," and the Company's wages bill would not have varied much from the £120 per week for a company of 23 estimated by H.K. Moderwell in 1915 from statistics given by Miss Horniman, probably in 1914 before the expenses of war distorted the economy.³⁰ In 1912, Wareing said that Glasgow was also paying about £120 per week to an acting company of about 25, representing an average wage of around £4.16.0 per week.³¹ Miss Horniman's Company, however, seems to have paid better salaries to its leading actors, as Payne was able to "poach" Irene Rooke and Milton Rosmer from Glasgow, much to Wareing's disappointment:

The main difficulty was that Miss Horniman's Company had money while Glasgow had none and that my Company was a better one than Iden Payne had got together, as proof of which he took Irene Rooke and Milton Rosmer away from me.³²

Cecil Chisholm agreed that losing these fine actors had a damaging effect on the Glasgow company:

²⁹ B.B.C., 1953, Memories of Louise Holbrook and Milton Rosmer. Daily Mail, September 6, 1958, (H.F.), interview with Lewis Casson and Sybil Thorndike.

³⁰ Thompson, p. 282, H.K. Moderwell, The Theatre of Today, (London, Bodley Head, 1915), pp. 308-309. McLeod, p. 109, however says that between 1900 and 1914, real wages had gone down by 12% and food prices had risen by 14%.

³¹ Stage, March 5, 1912.

³² S.Y.B., 1928, pp. 11-12.

In its heyday the Scottish Repertory gathered together an unusually gifted company. Many of its members, including Mr Milton Rosmer and Miss Irene Rooke migrated to the Gaiety Theatre. It was after this dispersal of forces that the Scottish Repertory fared worse. ³³

Before this incident in the autumn of 1910, Wareing had been enthusiastically advocating a policy of co-operation between the two theatres. However, neither Miss Horniman, who did not want to turn the Gaiety into a "lodging-house theatre", one without a permanent company, nor Payne, seems to have been very keen on the plan and nothing came of it. ³⁴

Wareing regretted the failure of his plan which he felt would have shared costs and enabled new productions to be seen more widely. He also hinted that there had been a clash of personalities between himself and Payne:

In the early days in Glasgow in 1909 I tried to arrange a changeover with Mr. B. Iden Payne... It would have been a great help to those who have followed us if Mr Payne and I had met sensibly prepared to give and take instead of acting like a pair of silly stubborns.... I am sure now, because both of us love the theatre, we could have come to an agreement if good-will had ruled our judgements. ³⁵

In spite of this bad feeling, there was a flow of actors

³³ TP's Weekly, December 23, 1913, (H.S.)

³⁴ See p.

³⁵ S.Y.B., 1918

between the first three repertory theatres. For instance, well-known personalities like Lewis Casson performed and directed at both Manchester and Glasgow, William Armstrong worked at both Glasgow and Liverpool, and Miss Darragh acted at Manchester and Liverpool. Many of the lesser lights such as Muriel Pope, Miles Malleon, Louise Holbrook and Percy Marmont spent various seasons with different repertory companies.³⁶ There were others who spent long periods with the same company. George Tawde worked for four seasons with the Glasgow Repertory Company before going to the Haymarket with the Graham Moffat's company in Bunty Pulls the Strings. Hilda Bruce-Potter was at the Gaiety from 1908-1914 and Eileen Thorndike joined the Liverpool Company in 1912, staying with them until 1916.

However, the dedication of the actors to the ideals of the repertory theatres seems to have been weak, and after the end of the First World War, few actors of the early repertory companies remained in the provinces. In 1924 Frank Vernon, in The Twentieth Century Theatre, asked "where are the actors of the Repertory Theatre Movement?" and answered his own question by replying, "They are in London."³⁷ There were also many who had

³⁶ Muriel Pope was in Glasgow for the seasons of 1910 and the Spring Season of 1911, and in Manchester from 1914 to 1916. Miles Malleon was in Liverpool from late 1911 to 1912 and then in Glasgow for the Spring Season in 1914. Louise Holbrook was in Manchester from 1908 to 1911 and then Liverpool in 1912. Percy Marmont was in Glasgow from the autumn 1911 to Spring 1912 and then in Liverpool where, by special request, he joined the Commonwealth seasons from 1914 to 1916.

³⁷ Vernon, p. 77.

gone to the United States. Alfred Wareing corroborated this when he told readers of the Glasgow Evening Citizen what had happened to some of the actors from the Glasgow companies:

Those who ken what's what in the World of the Theatre declare that never within living memory has there been a more excellent assembly of artists than those who made "The Glasgow Repertory" famous from 1909 to 1914, and wherever they foregather Glasgow playgoers take delight in recalling the many fine performances they gave. And it is not because distance of time has lent enchantment to enhance those memories - that is proved from the fact that so many of the actors and actresses who made the "Rep" famous for fine acting are now prominent in London and elsewhere.

William Armstrong, now the director of Liverpool Playhouse, grasped his first opportunities in Glasgow, where his performance of the Stranger in Maeterlinck's "Interior" is a cherished memory. Edmund Breon and Jean Cadell, amongst the most distinguished of our artists have been prominent in West-End casts ever since they left Glasgow.

Foremost among the artists who ripened at the Repertory are Mary Jerrold, everybody's favourite and one of the finest all-round actresses of our time, and Hubert Harben, her husband; since their Glasgow days these two are seldom out of London casts. Then there is Percy Marmont, now a famous cinema star; Mark Hannan, Irene Clarke, and Lawrence Hanray, who found his way via the "Rep" on to the London stage after a long absence in Australia. 38

38 "Where are the Fledglings?", Glasgow Evening News, January 18, 1928, (W.S.).

It is not surprising that most of Wareing's actors should have returned to London, as most of them had been based there before they went to the Citizens' Theatre. ³⁹ James Bridie said that Wareing had a flair for picking plays and actors and the companies he chose included actors who had worked a great deal at the Court Theatre, others who had either acted with the best touring companies like Benson's and Crompton's, and some who had acted and toured with the best West-End managements, like that of Mr and Mrs Kendal. ⁴⁰

The direct links between London and Glasgow were much stronger than those between London and any of the other repertory theatres. Even in 1911, Wareing could boast of the high reputation enjoyed by former actors of his company now in London or abroad:

The achievements of old members of the Glasgow Repertory Company, their many important London engagements under the principal London managements, by whom they are sought and highly esteemed together with the fact that we are frequently asked to lend members of our Company for important parts in London and New York, is equivalent to whole volumes of testimony to the excellence of our Companies. ⁴¹

³⁹ In the 1912 edition of Who's Who in the Theatre, most of the actors and actresses of the repertory theatres, even Stanley Drewitt, the archetypal Lancastrian, have their home address in London.

⁴⁰ Introductory Brochure, Spring 1909, n.p., from the actors' biographies.

⁴¹ Introductory Brochure, Spring 1911, n.p.

Wareing favoured actors from London companies both because of their experience and also because he understood the snobbery of many provincial playgoers, who would be more likely to patronise a company of actors who had been approved by the capital than a new provincial troupe. He also felt it necessary to bolster confidence in his actors by quoting London's good reports of them, even though it seems they had to demonstrate their talent by leaving the company. Even so there was a rumour in Glasgow that the company were amateurs. ⁴²

But even when he chose actors who were veterans of the Barker-Vedrenne seasons he chose character actors like Kenelm Foss who had, "played several important parts of the bizarre and extravagant type with great success at the Court Theatre." Ashley Dukes later claimed, of the actors identified with Barker and the Court, that, "although most of them subsequently made their name, it was usually in character work." ⁴³ And similarly, in trying to identify the unique contribution made by the Horniman Company to the art of acting, Herbert Lomas wrote:

...I am firmly of the opinion that character is the body of acting...

⁴² Victor MacLure, Letter to Glasgow Herald, April 16, 1939.

⁴³ Dukes, p. 31. Sir Edward Russell, editor of the Liverpool Post told Liverpool Playgoers that, "The Vedrenne-Barker order of actors seem to have been born anew into each part they play," The Theatre and the things said about it, (Liverpool, Henry Young, 1911).

Miss Horniman's company is doing a great work. I have no hesitancy in saying that it has been the salvation of the English stage. I feel that I can say this without being accused of being a provincial, for, though I am a Lancashire man by birth and a member of the Manchester company, I was a "metropolitan actor" before I went to Miss Horniman, and I feel that I know a great deal about the different methods and aims of the general English stage a few years back, and of the Manchester company now. 44

The emphasis on character acting is not to be misunderstood as showing that the repertory theatres went in for the kind of type-casting which was a feature of the stock companies. Type-casting relies for its effect only on the outward appearance of the actor and perhaps on a few mannerisms. Character acting requires that, using the skills of acting, the actor create many different characters, each individual and alive and owing little to physical idiosyncracies. One of the unfortunate aspects of working at the early repertory theatres, and one which inhibited the development of the actor's art, was the simple fact that the actors had huge quantities of lines to learn. This led Lewis Casson to make a plea for a more extensive use of the prompter to enable the actors to concentrate on characterisation instead of on memorising lines:

I admit that at present, to the English actor, the continuous whisper of the continental prompter is not only of no value, but is actually a nuisance. But that is merely because he is unaccustomed to it; and I am convinced that if any progress is to be made he must get accustomed to it, and make full use of

it. This is a matter which goes deeper than appears at first sight. Everyone now agrees that in the Repertory Theatre lies the one hope of raising the drama to its proper position in the life of the people. The Repertory Theatre necessitates rapidity of production, and the greatest economy of actors' and producers' time. Are we to continue to waste on an unnecessarily high standard of memorising, time that should be devoted to the utmost to perfecting the acting and producing? If so, our new repertory companies are likely to sink back into the conditions which wrecked the old stock companies, where indeed the actors knew their words well (though the prompter's art was understood far better than now), but where everybody, quite satisfied with the effort of memorising, contented himself with the use of a small bag of stage tricks, and always played the same man under a 45 different name in successive play.

The success with which repertory actors adapted to their new techniques, and their achievement in creating many different characters in many new plays can be seen from the reviews the company received. Occasionally a critic would remark that, for example, someone had given his one string performance which had become monotonous, but these instances seem to have been very rare. 46 Ashley Dukes had noticed the danger of which Casson spoke, in the repertory theatres of Germany:

45 Gaiety Christmas Annual 1910, p. 140.

46 For example, TP's Weekly, December 14, 1912, (H.S.).

...type-playing showed itself as the real weakness of the repertory system. Some of the heavy fathers, elderly spinsters and young lovers soon appeared rather in the manner of a stage procession, whose individual members had gone off and were coming on again with old familiar faces. ⁴⁷

But in the early years of the Gaiety at least, there were actors capable of creating characters, rather than types and at Liverpool also, an actor like Arthur Chesney could create, in the six weeks of the experimental season, a whole range of characters:

As exponents of versatility and general usefulness, one immediately thinks of Mr Arthur Chesney and Mr Laurence Hanray. It seems as if these two figured in every play, and both could be relied upon for sound performances in any part. It is bewildering to think that Augustus (in search of a father), the bloated Mr Scantlebury in "Strife", the ruby-countenanced old gentleman in "The Dear Departed", the farcical poet in "Cupid and the Styx," Pargetter in "Nan", the parson in "The Cassillis Engagement", Sir Harry Sims in "The Twelve Pound Look", and the father in "Mother to Be", all concealed Mr Arthur Chesney. It may surprise Mr Chesney, but his Augustus remains the most perfect little sketch of his wonderful picture gallery. ⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Dukes, pp. 21-22.

⁴⁸ Unidentified Cutting, see note ⁷⁵, Chap. 2.

Other repertory actors made a substantial contribution to the British tradition of character acting and many went on to make their careers in British and American films. Several members of the Glasgow Repertory Company, for example, merit individual entries in Leslie Halliwell's The Filmgoers' Companion, and his descriptions reveal that they, like the Court actors, owed their reputations to "character work":

- Edmund Breon: British stage actor often seen in films as an amiable bumbler.
- Jean Cadell: Scottish actress sometimes cast as acidulous spinster or dowager.
- Mary Jerrold: British character actress ...in films played mainly sweet old ladies.
- Eliot Makeham: British character actor of stage and screen... For years played bespectacled little bank clerks who sometimes surprised by standing up for themselves.⁴⁹

As the companies contained only trained actors, the actors' development of character acting had begun before they joined the repertory companies. But, due to the heavy schedule of plays

⁴⁹ Leslie Halliwell, The Filmgoer's Companion, (London, Paladin, 1973).

performed at the theatres and the consequent need for types, as well as rounded actors, to enable a large number of plays to be cast from the same company, the process was encouraged and consolidated. The workload at the repertory theatres did, therefore, have some advantages in the development of technique, but it took a great physical toll on the actors. Eliot Makeham lost a stone and a half in two years with the Glasgow repertory theatre and Bridie remembers seeing, "repertory actors as punch-drunk as professional boxers," as a consequence of the "grinding toil," of producing a new play afresh every week.⁵⁰

Another positive result of the repertory actor's workload, was the "ensemble acting" which resulted from the acting company working together on many productions over a concentrated period. This, however, did not stop the creation of a cult of personalities at the Gaiety. Edith Goodall, to the displeasure of other members of the Company, placed a life sized photograph of herself in the Gaiety foyer and Irene Rooke and Milton Rosmer developed a personal following which deserted the Gaiety when they left the company.⁵¹ All this happened, in spite of the fact that Miss Horniman disapproved even of curtain calls, and only reluctantly agreed to one at the end of the show.⁵² The founders of the Liverpool Repertory Theatre also tried to stop curtain calls but eventually favourites came to be cheered when they

⁵⁰ James Bridie, The British Drama, (Glasgow, Craig Wilson, 1945), pp. 28-29.

⁵¹ Basil Dean thought that he had not had his contract renewed by the Gaiety because of the "cult" status he had achieved in the role of Jack Barthwick in Galsworthy's, The Silver Box. Seven Ages, p. 70..

⁵² Maltby, p. 126.

appeared on stage.⁵³ In both cities, actors favoured by sections of the audience were often given presents at Christmas and at the end of the season.⁵⁴

At the Gaiety, team work, or ensemble acting, manifested itself in the ease and naturalness of the company's acting which so impressed E.A. Baughan on the Gaiety's first visit to London:

The lesson which Miss Horniman's company is teaching London is not new, but it is one which we seem to have great difficulty in learning. It is simply that fine results may be obtained by a good ensemble.⁵⁵

Later that year, the Stage reviewer said of their production of Galsworthy's Strife:

Every character is drawn in its natural groove with a simplicity which is at once convincing from the opening of the board meeting to the finale when the⁵⁶ leaders of the strike are defeated.

⁵³ "Foreign Notes", The Mask, Vol. 5, No. 3, January 1913, p. 276. Education, August 1913, (H.S.).

⁵⁴ This was also a tradition at the Old Vic, Richard Findlater, Lilian Baylis, (London, Allen Lane, 1975), p. 136.

⁵⁵ Daily News, June 8, 1909. (H.S.). The ensemble work at the Gaiety continued to be praised; J.T. Grein, Sunday Times Feb 13, 1916, "the ensemble is perfect, so complete that one and all deserve the same tribute of praise."

⁵⁶ Stage, November 10, 1909, (H.S.).

Ben Iden Payne evidently succeeded in creating an acting ensemble capable of playing naturally and spontaneously, which could bear comparison with Continental troupes, as C.E. Montague showed when he made a favourable comparison between Payne's production of An Enemy of the People, and "the German Comedy Company's memorable playing of The Wild Duck." ⁵⁷ This seems to bear out William Archer's statement that with good material and under competent direction, English actors need not fear comparison with the highly trained character actors of Germany. ⁵⁸ The development of ensemble playing at the Gaiety was helped by the policy of performing a large number of modern realistic plays like those of Bennett, Galsworthy and the so-called, "Manchester School." ⁵⁹ These plays demanded realistic behaviour on the stage and this realism extended to details of set-dressing like having, real roast beef for Act Two of An Enemy of the People, and Payne's specification of chrysanthemums, rather than just any flowers for a scene in Houghton's Independent Means. ⁶⁰ The fact that a company spirit was encouraged, and that the Gaiety management was generous to its employees, coupled with the stability of the company in the early years, must also have helped to build up the Gaiety's ensemble playing. ⁶¹

⁵⁷ C.E.M., Manchester Guardian, October 12, 1909, (H.S.).

⁵⁸ Quoted in Jan MacDonald, "Acting Styles", p. 1.

⁵⁹ See Appendix.

⁶⁰ Independent Means prompt book. British Theatre Association Library. The word "flowers" has been crossed out and "chrysanthemums," substituted, Act I, Scene I, description of morning-room in Brook Bank. Dean, Seven Ages, p. 68.

⁶¹ B.B.C., 1953, Muriel Pope, "She (Miss Horniman) was most generous in letting the company off to accept London

Ensemble acting had also been a feature of the Barker-Vedrenne management of the Court Theatre and it is therefore strange to read Basil Dean's claim that between 1907 and 1910, the Gaiety Theatre in Manchester was the only city in Britain where, "the art of ensemble was deliberately cultivated," and that, "the ensemble effects produced revolutionised the style of acting that had existed hitherto."⁶² This claim does seem extravagant, but, except for Lewis Casson, none of the early Manchester Company had worked with Barker. Payne was certainly reputed to have developed a new "repertory" style of acting, and Miss Horniman gave him all the credit for the artistic success of her venture, but there is little evidence that he revolutionised acting.⁶³ Perhaps Shaw's insistence on bravura acting detracted from the ensemble of Court productions but, as Professor Jan MacDonald argues most persuasively in her paper on acting styles at the Court, the art of ensemble was certainly being deliberately cultivated by Barker and Shaw before the Gaiety began.⁶⁴

It would not be very surprising if the acting styles of the Court and the repertory theatres overlapped, as their repertoires were very similar. But conditions at the provincial theatres were very different to those at the famous London Playhouse.

⁶² Dean, Seven Ages, p. 69.

⁶³ Agate, Short View, p. 75 says of the period between 1907 and 1912, "all the plays (received) adequate staging and good careful if not always brilliant interpretation by the actors."

⁶⁴ Jan MacDonald, "Acting Styles," pp. 11-13.

The Voysey Inheritance, for example, was rehearsed for six weeks at the Court, and for only ten days at the Glasgow Repertory Theatre. The Glasgow cast included Hubert Harben who had acted in the play, in its first revival at the Court, in February 1906.⁶⁵ He had originally played the minor part of Hugh Voysey, but at Glasgow he took the central role of Edward Voysey and the Glasgow Herald's review of his performance mentioned some of the problems arising when the leisurely rehearsal period at the Court was not available:

Considering the inevitable difficulties connected with repertory work, the limitations of choice in casting and of rehearsing (and) time for polishing... the affair was really brilliantly carried through. Mr Harben, for instance, has not the physique for Edward Voysey's part. He is cut out more distinctly for a different kind of comedy and in the attempt to subdue his natural springiness, he is apt to exaggerate Edward's droopingness. He has a babyish habit of letting one corner of his lower lip fall to express sorrow with an effect which is irresistably comic... Yet his performance was full of intelligence and feeling.⁶⁶

The production was directed by Norman Page who had played in the small character role of Booth in the play's revival at the Court, when the part of Edward Voysey had been played by Granville Barker himself.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Desmond MacCarthy, The Court Theatre, (London, A.H. Bullen, 1907), p. 149.

⁶⁶ Glasgow Herald, September 17, p. 7, col. 7.

⁶⁷ MacCarthy, p. 149.

At the Court, Barker had refined the role of the "director" or "producer", in a play's production. The concept of a stage director, as an artist in his own right, was a recent innovation and had been explained by Harley Granville Barker and William Archer:

...the functions of the producer include what is commonly known as stage-management, the regulation of entrances, exits, positions, business &c - the Stage Manager, properly so called, is wholly distinct from the producer of a play ... a producer's business is to help an actor in the study of his parts, especially to help him in the relation of his part to the whole... at later rehearsals to constitute himself as far as possible an ideal audience, registering each effect or each failure and a critic analysing the causes. 68

Payne understood this new movement in theatre practice, hence his admiration for the work of Shaw and his realisation that the new type of stage director must always search for the deeper meaning of the play.⁶⁹ But Bernard Shaw for example thought him, at first, a bad director. Shaw's displeasure may have been due to him making unfavourable comparisons with London productions, but, as Mona Limerick's earlier remarks made clear, Payne was working under much less favourable conditions when his season at the Midland Theatre began. Shaw saw a performance of Widowers' Houses, and sent a letter of criticism to the whole cast, including Lewis Casson. Casson later remembered that the company used to laugh at the inexperienced Payne's technical mistakes. Shaw wrote:

⁶⁸ Archer and Barker, p. 68. 1910, "Repertory Theatres", p. 494.

⁶⁹ Payne p. 58.

I saw your show (Widowers' Houses) last night. It was a most conscientious and most infamous performance. I do not think much can be done with it, because the casting is wrong, but in your case a few very simple changes would make something presentable of Lickcheese, who is at present bad beyond description. Charles Bibby is an appalling miscast. I cannot imagine what induced you to cast him for such a part - whether you utterly misunderstood Bibby or utterly misunderstood Cokane. Why on earth don't you get him to play Sartorius? Nothing maddens me so much as to see a good actor in the wrong part with the right part staring him in the face the whole time.

Lewis Casson is as God made him, which happens to suit the part fairly well. But he is never really at his best except in blank verse or deliberate rhetoric, because no mortal will ever prevent him from jerking his lines hastily under the table.

I write in great haste and have no time for compliments. After all, the thing might be worse. But then it might also be a lot better.

You yourself are by far the worst, because the others do all that can be done short of changing their natures, whereas you are a shockingly bad Lickcheese with nothing whatever to prevent you from being quite a good one. So buy a new wig, wash your face, talk frank Lancashire, watch, pray, fast; and then perhaps I will come again⁷⁰ and give you all some more encouragement.

That Shaw's reaction was overcritical and distorted by a London viewpoint, is shown by the memory of F. Sladen Smith who realised, that for Manchester, Payne was doing something new and radically different:

⁷⁰ Shaw Letters, Buffalo, pp. 120-122.

"Widowers' Houses" - astonishing!
 It was alive, it was astoundingly alive.
 There was no breakneck rush to the foot-
 lights; the players actually acted for
 the sake of acting and for the sake of
 the play and the result was an
 astonishing unity. And the joy of
 seeing a play that was a play and not
 a mere peg to hang mannerisms on! 71

Payne was only twenty-six when he started to work in Manchester, but he already had many years experience with a variety of provincial companies including Benson's No. 2 Company and, before he came to Manchester, he had spent a few months producing "non-peasant" plays at the Abbey. 72 Arnold Bennett, who met Payne during his early days at the Gaiety, describes him as:

like a little original wild member of
 the Fabian Society. Cape instead of
 coat, held on by bands crossing the
 chest. Mair said he had seen him in
 sandals in his office. Highly intelligent... 73

As artistic director of Miss Horniman's company, Payne was faced with a task unique in British theatre history, for this was to be Britain's first repertory theatre and Payne had promised the citizens of Manchester, "carefully rehearsed productions ... of good new plays ... old masterpieces and ... translations of the

71 Drama, October 1919, pp. 42-43.

72 Hogan and Kilroy, pp. 165-166.

73 Bennett, Journal, Vol. 1, p. 342.

best works of foreign authors", using, "a Manchester stock company of picked front rank actors."⁷⁴ This presented him with the problem of how to develop his repertoire at the same time as building up an audience. To keep the audience interested, he would have to vary the bill frequently, but if he gave shoddy or hurried productions, the audience would desert the theatre. Payne's answer was to develop a flexible directorial method which could fit all plays and give them a finish while leaving details, like characterisation, to the actors. He concentrated on analysing his texts in order to evoke for his actors the "atmosphere" of each play, giving them the limits within which they could develop their parts. The result was a fusion of freedom and control which gave the impression of perfect ensemble acting. But the success of such a method depended on a strong and intelligent director who could rely on the experienced and capable acting company.

When Payne began directing in 1904, with Ian MacLaren's touring Shakespeare Repertoire Company, he found that this task involved, "no more than arranging the movements of the actors on the stage" and that this was usually the prerogative of the leading actor.⁷⁵ In 1907, Payne still thought of himself as primarily an actor and often acted with the company, approaching his task as

⁷⁴ See note, 5.

⁷⁵ Payne, p. 58.

director, which now involved considerably more than positioning the actors, as though he were just one of the company, a course fraught with danger especially as his wife was one of the company's leading actresses.

Payne, though he knew something of the work of Barker and Shaw at the Court, from his reading, had no first-hand experience of productions of the "new drama". Thus, when he came to direct Miss Horniman's company he had to attempt a fusion of the acting and directing techniques he had learned during his apprentice years with companies like Benson's and Mrs Tapping's and his reading of modern drama. He had however been fortunate, in that, even when touring with Mlle Gratienne's company, which was on the point of folding, Mlle Gratienne had, as a director, insisted that, "everything in the acting should relate to the play as a whole,"⁷⁶ and in this, "was the forerunner of the modern stage director." Outside the West End of London, such concern with the overall design of a production was almost unique and, according to both Casson and Payne, in most companies it was sufficient for an actor to learn his lines and acquire a stock of stage tricks which could be adapted to any part.⁷⁷ Louis Calvert wrote, that in such companies:

one learns how to depend on himself, for the producer who directs a new piece each week has no time to give his actors much individual attention. The actor is left to himself to a certain extent and this itself spurs him on. He gets a good stiff training in learning his lines quickly...⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 25.

⁷⁷ Gaiety Christmas Annual 1909, p. 139.

⁷⁸ Louis Calvert, The Problems of the Actor, (London, Simpkin, n.d., ?1915), pp. 31-32. In a letter to Tom Bass, August 27, 1919.

Payne had worked with one of the Benson companies for two seasons in 1903 and 1904. Although their productions were centred round star actors, Benson himself paid an immense amount of careful attention to the acting in smaller roles. Arthur Machen recalls that, in the Benson Company, "acting was a curious and beautiful art, with its inward part and its outward part... (with) everything open to discussion." He also recalls a company story, which illustrates the dedication of the actors and their desire to improve their performances on their own initiative, that one actor, with only twelve lines to speak, went to the National Gallery to study suitable portraits in order to get his make-up correct. ⁷⁹

All these elements, the recognition of the inward and outward parts of acting, the importance of relating each role to the play as a whole, the company spirit and the encouragement of the actors' initiative, became part of Payne's method.

In 1906, when Payne went to the Abbey Theatre, W.G. Fay remarked that Payne had instinctively developed a directorial technique which was very like his own. Fay was trying to initiate a realistic, ensemble style of acting but, as he and his brother Frank Fay were working with amateur actors they spent much of their time teaching basic skills like elocution. However, the company gained a reputation for ensemble playing and its

⁷⁹ Arthur Machen, "The Benson Company. A Memory." Theatre Arts Monthly, Vol xv, No. 9, September 1931.

productions of poetic drama achieved a "sincerity and simplicity" that Payne also strove for.⁸⁰ Fay had achieved this by:

the most rigid economy of gesture and movement to make the speaking quite abstract and at the same time to keep a music in it by having all the voices harmonised.⁸¹

For Fay, the company was totally subservient to the play.

As he told Marie Walker:

Be the mouthpiece of Nora Burke rather than Nora Burke. You will be corrected only if you are inaudible, or if your movements are wrong... If you were a more experienced actress you might read into this part something which perhaps was never intended.⁸²

Professional actors would have found Fay's insistence that an actor should be the, "mouthpiece" of a character rather stifling. It was part of the business of the actors in the Horniman company to expand the character and "work it up"⁸³ However, this in no way detracted from Miss Horniman's claim that the writer was king in her theatre, and did not result in a

⁸⁰ Another legacy from Benson, Payne, p. 8.

⁸¹ Gerald Fay, p. 133.

⁸² Marie Walker, The Splendid Years, (Dublin, Duffy, 1955), p. 43.

⁸³ See pp. 121-122.

distortion of the dramatists intentions.

When Clarence Derwent came to join the company, he was met at the station by Payne who told him, "we believe in natural acting here - always natural acting." ⁸⁴ It was perhaps necessary for Payne to stress this to a newcomer, as the Gaiety actors had almost all been trained in the "romantic school" of acting. ⁸⁵ Basil Dean says that, "the company was made up largely of idealists, anxious to reform the art of acting," but he adds that, they "did not possess the abilities to achieve a fraction of such aims." ⁸⁶ However most of them seem to have adapted their techniques quite easily to the new drama and to realistic acting because, as Lewis Casson wrote, nothing essentially new was required of the actors:

better lighting and better visual conditions have enabled our actors to substitute silent playing for the aside and soliloquy and to suppress a few other conventions and so keep closer to life. ⁸⁷

One of the conventions which had to be suppressed was the one which forbade an actor from turning his back to the audience. ⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Derwent, p. 61

⁸⁵ Drama, New Series, Spring 1953, No. 28, p. 21.

⁸⁶ Dean, Seven Ages, p. 50.

⁸⁷ Gaiety Christmas Annual 1909, p. 139.

⁸⁸ Dean, Seven Ages, p. This was also a problem which Antoine had faced, MacCarthy, p. 2.

Basil Dean tells of another which became apparent in a rehearsal for Cupid and the Styx early in 1909:

In one of the acts Lewis and Sybil had a scene together while I and another character had to stand about with nothing to say, so we retired to the back of the stage gesticulating wildly in make-believe conversation. 'What on earth are you doing' came Payne's clear high pitched voice, I turned round rather offended "Just keeping up the scene." But what are you saying, "Nothing really," I replied. "Well if its not in the play, don't play it," said Payne. ⁸⁹

Dean's "keeping up the scene," was a feature of English acting which had been singled out for special criticism by W. B. Yeats. In the course of a lecture in 1902 on the reform of the theatre, Yeats noted:

According to English ideas of what was known as business an actor when not speaking must always be moving his hands or feet or jiggling about in a corner and so attention is always drawn away from the central character. ⁹⁰

In other words most actors had a stock of conventions to which they turned, irrespective of their suitability. It was clear that a director was needed to provide an overview for the production and to ensure that everything happening on stage served a purpose.

⁸⁹ A.B.C. Television "Fifty Years of Repertory," broadcast from the Library Theatre, Manchester, September 14, 1958, Script, p. 11.

⁹⁰ Quoted in Lennox Robinson, Ireland's Abbey Theatre, (London) p. 32.

Payne clearly worked in this way, and in his autobiography, he explains how a director became necessary with the plays of Ibsen and Shaw, and the consequent need to analyse a text and relate all actions to the whole:

Their influence on the theatre was not direct of course, for their plays were rarely performed. But they had a profound influence upon play-wrights who began to write plays with much more psychological import. Motives for action were less obvious than they had been; they were frequently veiled and so required explanation and guidance for the actors. Then too there were more plays in which atmosphere was of the utmost importance. A guiding hand became indispensable to its achievement. ⁹¹

Payne's success as a director in creating the right "atmosphere" is frequently mentioned in appreciations of his work. For example, writing of Payne as a director some fifty years after the opening of the Gaiety, Lewis Casson remembered that he had a touch of genius in his instinctive grasp of the general atmosphere of a play and could "to a quite extraordinary extent get the inner atmosphere of the play." ⁹² When Casson or Dean or Sybil Thorndike talks about "atmosphere" it is never quite clear what they mean, but the distinction which they drew between general and inner atmosphere, seems to correspond to

⁹¹ Payne p. 58.

⁹² Drama, Spring 1953, p. 25, A.B.C. script. p. 9.

Machen's description of the marrying of the "inward and outward parts of acting," in the Benson Company. Basil Dean talks of "atmosphere" as though it were synonymous with, "the emotional unity of the play," while Payne's evocation of "atmosphere" seems to mean the ability to make the actors believe in what they were doing and in turn to make the audience believe in what they were seeing and hearing.⁹³ Making the actors believe in what they were doing Casson calls the "why" of acting. Payne, Casson said, knew a great deal about the "why" of acting and, "concentrated on making people really think what they were saying, and so on."⁹⁴ The naturalness of the acting and the realisation of sincerity and simplicity of production, whether in Galsworthy or Beaumont and Fletcher, helped to convince the audience that what they were witnessing was in some way real. It was the ease and naturalness of the acting which astonished the critic E.A. Baughan during the Company's first London season.

When the creation of "atmosphere" was totally successful, as in John Galsworthy's Justice in 1911, the audience responded with an enthusiasm which the leading actors, Irene Rooke and Milton Rosmer, were never to see repeated throughout their fifty years on stage.⁹⁵ Payne, however, could not always externalise his internalised, text-based conception of a play so successfully. In 1909, the critical consensus on Edward Garnett's The Feud was exemplified by the critic of the Manchester Guardian who

⁹³ A.B.C. script. p. 9.

⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 9.

⁹⁵ B.B.C., 1953, Reminiscences of Irene Rooke and Milton

wrote that "the first and second acts hardly crossed the footlights."⁹⁶ Payne himself admitted that in Much Ado About Nothing, "what troubled me most was my feeling that I had somehow failed to bring out the joyous spontaneity of Shakespeare's workmanship."⁹⁷ This seems to lend credence to Casson's claim that, although Payne could so easily interpret the meaning of a play, "actually how to project that he was not nearly so expert at," and Casson blamed Payne's failure in this respect on his indifference to acting techniques,⁹⁸ the "how" of acting. Sybil Thorndike perceived a similarity between Payne's directorial methods and Stanislavsky's, when she said that Payne's directorial methods were very close to the system of "method" acting based on Stanislavsky's theories. Payne, for example, insisted that his actors, like method actors, should really believe in what they were doing, that they should "be" rather than just "do", and as Cedric Hardwick noticed when he joined the Birmingham Repertory Company after the end of the First World War this style of acting became widespread very quickly.

Gradually I began to realise that the fashion in acting had undergone a change... acting was entering a new phase... "Let's pretend" had given place to "let's be". The realism of the cinema which far away in Hollywood had been entirely untouched by the European imbroglio, had made vast

⁹⁶ Manchester Guardian, April 11, 1909, (H.S.).

⁹⁷ Payne, p. 105.

⁹⁸ Drama, Spring 1953, p. 21.

strides and had trained audiences to demand less theatre and more life. A more subtle technique had been created and although the basic principles of making oneself heard and seen remained the same, these ends now had to be⁹⁹ reached by less obvious methods...

It is highly unlikely that, in 1907, Payne knew anything of Stanislavsky's work, as it only slowly became known in Britain and even Harley Granville Barker did not learn about the work at first hand till 1924, when he visited Moscow and realised that Stanislavsky had achieved all that he had been striving for.¹⁰⁰ But the similarity between the end results of Payne's direction and method productions, can be seen from this review by Philip Hope-Wallace of the first method production seen in Britain. Discussing a production of Michael Gazzo's, A Handful of Rain, in August 1958, he observed that:

though the lack of projection makes for a great strain on the attention, the homogeneous quality of the acting and... the mumbling and fumbling with wordless emotional states adds up to an impressive whole.¹⁰¹

The lack of projection in some of Payne's productions has already been discussed and Hope-Wallace's mention of the homogeneous

⁹⁹ Sir Cedric Hardwick, Let's Pretend, (London, Grayson, 1932), p. 121. Nora Nicholson, p. 39, says Casson taught her to "be", rather than to "act."

¹⁰⁰ Harley Granville Barker, Letter to William Archer, October 1, 1923.

¹⁰¹ Guardian, August 13, 1958.

quality of the acting could easily describe the Gaiety's famous ensemble acting. The Gaiety actors also had the ability to convey "wordless emotional states." In The Vale of Content, Miss Darragh is praised for her portrayal, of "inarticulate suffering," and Frank Vernon remembers Irene Rooke's power to express mute suffering. ¹⁰²

Payne as always considered his real place in the theatre was as a member of the acting company, and this was reflected in the scope he gave to his actors. Basil Dean remembers that Payne had a flair for letting actors, "have their heads," and, as he didn't concern himself much about technique, this gave the actors great scope for using their own initiative in building their characters. ¹⁰³

The process by which the actors achieved their characterisations can be observed in the Gaiety prompt books which are kept, along with the actors' parts, in the British Theatre Institute library, ¹⁰⁴ It is perhaps surprising to note that, following tradition, the actors were given only their own part and not the whole play, thus making it difficult for them to relate their

¹⁰² Manchester Chronicle, September 22, 1908, (H.S.), and Vernon, p. 101.

¹⁰³ Dean, Seven Ages, p. 69.

¹⁰⁴ In the collection of the British Theatre Association Library, there are a number of prompt copies of actors' parts from the Gaiety. They come mainly from the 1914-1917 period and are of plays never revived. Where markings occur, they are almost always in one hand, i.e. either a stage manager or an actor's, and often have the name of the Gaiety actor who played the part on the cover. I have only referred to them when the writing on the cover is the same as that on the actor's part, so that name and handwriting match.

part to the whole, until Payne as director unravelled the plot for them and gave the actors an overview of the whole play.¹⁰⁵

The prompt books are curious in that they seem to contain little detail. As Payne was intending to build up a repertory of plays one would have expected his prompt books to be fairly full, in order to allow for the revival of plays.¹⁰⁶ Instead, it is often in the actors' parts that one finds most detail, including textual changes, which do not appear in the prompt books and which seem to have been made by the actors themselves on their own initiative, rather than to have been dictated by Payne. A good example of this, is Milton Rosmer's building up of his part as Fred Ovens in Houghton's play The Master of the House, which the Manchester Guardian said he played with, "the gusto associated with the Fay's playing of Irish tramps." In order to get the accent required for the part, Rosmer changes "you" to "yer" throughout his part and he heightens the authenticity of the dialect by adding words like "mighty." Thus, "That's good of you Edie," becomes "That's mighty good of yer Edie." In order to ensure that certain words received their correct sarcastic emphasis he would underline them. For example he did this in the line "You talk so like my father I'll have to call you Mother."¹⁰⁷ Towards the end of the play, when Fred is left

¹⁰⁵ In his autobiography, A Better Class of Person (London, Faber, 1981), John Osborne remembers using these scripts called, "Sides," in rep, in the 1950's, pp.181-182.

¹⁰⁶ If one looks at, for example, the prompt-book of the much revived, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead at the Young Vic, there is a wealth of detail on matters of stage management and direction, on which a new director or actor could draw.

¹⁰⁷ Stanley Houghton, Collected Works, Vol. 1, (London, Constable, 1914), pp. 59-60.

alone with the dead body of the father he has cursed, Rosmer added several details which emphasises Fred's uneasiness. His most effective touch was to have him whistle sporadically and begin to knot his kerchief and hitch his trousers as though he was calmly preparing to leave, while all the time, becoming more and more frightened. ¹⁰⁸

The play ends with a melodramatic climax in which Fred, searching the room for money, sees his father's shroud gleaming in the moonlight, but, in contrast to the rest of his carefully prepared part and in spite of the guidelines in the text, Rosmer makes no notes for this scene except for his exit.

A lack of written guidelines for scenes of high emotion is a feature of the Gaiety prompt books and actors' parts. Whether or not this was common theatre practice is difficult to tell as there are no prompt books of any similar venture with which to compare them. ¹⁰⁹ The best interpretation, in view of the other information we have, is that it is an aspect of the latitude which Payne allowed to his actors.

We can see this again very clearly in Kampf's Before the Dawn, the penultimate scene in which is a confrontation between an heroic revolutionary going to his death and the woman who

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, pp. 71-72.

¹⁰⁹ The B.T.A. Library does have one prompt book for Act 2 of Elizabeth Robins', Votes for Women!, produced at the Court Theatre. This is the famous crowd scene, MacCarthy, p. 35, and in contrast to the Gaiety prompt books, each part for each member of the crowd, each interjection and heckle, is carefully written out.

loves him. ¹¹⁰ Up to this point the prompt book has been fairly detailed in moves and placings. Suddenly these stop, in preparation for a virtuoso performance by Payne's wife Mona Limerick. Apart from one significant embrace, she and Ian MacLaren, who played the Revolutionary hero, seem to be left to their own devices. Neither of them marked his or her part, and detailed notes only continue when MacLaren goes off. It would seem that both actors played the scene instinctively at each performance and the freshness that this brought to the scene explains why the Manchester City News said that: "Between them, the two carry the play to acceptance that disarms criticism." ¹¹¹

In scenes like these, Mona Limerick, "kept the house breathless." ¹¹² However, Dean recalls that:

We in the company noted with dismay the damage Mona was doing to her voice by not producing it properly and the failure of her husband to discipline her at rehearsals. ¹¹³

¹¹⁰ First produced, February 7, 1910.

¹¹¹ Manchester City News, February 8, 1910.

¹¹² Manchester Courier, February 8, 1910.

¹¹³ The Porcupine, May 6, 1911, took a different view of Mona Limericks acting. Of her Ann Whitfield in, Man and Superman, the "Domico", wrote, "a more singular specimen of the eccentric in dramatic art could scarcely be conceived. Miss Limerick's vocal deliveries were a series of strange cadences, void of intelligent expression and meaning and her deportment was equally fantastic."

Evidence for this can be found in her notes for the part of Helga in Edward Garnett's The Feud. At the end of this play Mona Limerick had two long, passionate scenes. Up till then, she had marked her part carefully, paying particular attention to inflection, as in:

You know nothing of men, Hordis. Not to be shaken by anything that's what one wants in a man. 114

However, in her first long scene, which she played with Clarence Derwent, neither actor notes anything except entrances and exits. Both actors almost certainly absorbed a good deal at rehearsals but, whereas they had been conscientious about noting cues and moves in earlier scenes, they evidently preferred to be left free in this passionate confrontation. In the final scene of the play, partnered by Lewis Casson, Mona Limerick was evidently given free reign. Again, neither actor noted down any moves, though, as Casson was bound in a corner, his inaction is scarcely surprising. From the prompt book it seems that Mona Limerick was in a state of perpetual motion. She "falls", crawls along the floor." "her hand moves unconsciously to her dagger", she breaks away from him," and so on. 115 There is none of the control she was exercising in the play, but this had some beneficial short-term results. Most critics felt that the earlier part of the play had been underplayed and that it was only in the last two scenes that the play really came to life.

¹¹⁴ Edward Garnett, The Feud, (London, A.H. Bullen, 1909), p. 26.

¹¹⁵ Act 3, Scene 2, pp. 61-67.

The prompt books show that Payne had carefully prepared a production which would bring to life a picture of twelfth century Iceland. Everything was as realistic as possible, real meal, real ashes, real brown bread, but the play was so weak, that only in scenes in which the presence of, "men whose passions reigned uninhibited by scruples, unrestrained by ought save stronger force," ¹¹⁶ did it cross the footlights. In other words, it was saved by good old fashioned, full-blooded, romantic acting on the part of Mona Limerick. It is regrettable that, because of a performance like this, in which she was "perfect, proud, vengeful, passionate, moody, and, "she focused all eyes and entranced all attention," her indiscipline ruined her voice. ¹¹⁷ Mona Limerick's promise as an actress was never fulfilled and it is doubly unfortunate that Payne's wife should demonstrate so clearly what happens when individual technique is ignored in favour of effect and, "initiative" is not controlled by the director. Mona Limerick was however, working solidly within the intuitive, romantic school of acting, though without the technique its greatest practitioners had acquired.

Lewis Casson who had also been schooled as a "romantic" actor, knew the need for strong directorial control of a play, in which the actors tried to fulfil the ideal of romantic acting described by Shaw in the phrase, "On the very highest plane, one doesn't act, one is." ¹¹⁸ D.L. Murray offers another definition:

¹¹⁶ Manchester Courier, February 8, 1910, (H.S.).

¹¹⁷ Manchester Evening News, February 8, 1910 (H.S.).

¹¹⁸ Drama, Spring 1953, p. 21. Bernard Dukore, Bernard Shaw, Director, (London, Allen and Unwin, 1971), p. 80.

Romanticism is an "escape from life" only in the sense that it draws on sources hidden from everyday experience. The romantic actor evokes the forces of the mysterious subconscious; he is their master, but also their subject. Romantic acting is possession. 119

Two of the greatest "romantic" actresses, Ellen Terry and Sarah Bernhardt understood what was meant by, "possession," and talk about the actor being, "an instrument for...feeling," 120 and of, "becoming the character [one] has to impersonate." 121 Clearly, if this was the ideal to which romantic actors aspired, then Mona Limerick's style of performance is easily understood. But whereas Lewis Casson helped Sybil Thorndike to develop a method of acting which fused the "feeling," and "being," of the romantic style and a sound technique, Payne's lack of experience as an actor prevented Mona Limerick from benefitting from the same fusion of acting styles. 122

At the Gaiety, Payne's ideal character actor was Charles Bibby,¹²³ but his company contained many equally distinguished character actors

¹¹⁹ D.L. Murray, Foreword to The Last Romantic, Maurice Willson Disher, (London, Hutchinson, n.d. (1951?)), p. 11.

¹²⁰ Ellen Terry, quoted in Edwin Duerr, The Length and Depth of Acting, (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Wilson, 1902), p. 392.

¹²¹ Sarah Bernhardt quoted in, Actors and Acting, ed, Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy, (New York, Crown, 1970), p. 209.

¹²² In Elizabeth Sprigge, Sybil Thorndike Casson, (London, Gollancz, 1971), p. 115, Sybil Thorndike tells how even when he was in France during the First World War, Lewis Casson got in touch with Elsie Fogerty and asked her to help when she was having problems with her voice.

¹²³ Payne, p. 89. Bibby was killed in action in 1917.

of whom Ada King was one of the best known.¹²⁴ She specialised in down-trodden women, making her name as Mrs Jones in The Silver Box.¹²⁵ Her versatility can be seen from reviews, which praised her in two contrasting parts. In Houghton's, The Younger Generation she played the part of Jane, an old family retainer who is left a fortune, and she "bore off all the acting honours."¹²⁶ She was said to have, "no superior on the stage in parts like this."¹²⁷ In Shaw's play Press Cuttings she played the part of an Irish charwoman Mrs Farrell, "When she was speaking she was excellent," said the Daily Despatch, "when she was not speaking she was perfection."¹²⁸ Her only weakness was thought to be her Irish accent. "But," said Casson, "Payne relied on the actors immediate instinct and this worked very well so long as he could depend on actors like Bibby, Rooke, Rosmer, [Edith] Goodall and Sybil [Thorndike] already highly trained in technical acting."¹²⁹ Payne's reliance on actors' "instinct," caused problems for the highly trained members of his company when they had to act in an ensemble with other actors who had no technical training. Such an actor was Henry Austin.

¹²⁴ John Gielgud devotes a section to her in Distinguished Company, (London, Heinemann, 1972), pp. 53-55. Dean, Seven Ages, tells how she bought a flagon of Australian burgundy each Saturday to, "solace her lonely week-ends." He does add, however that she revelled in misery, p. 59.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 59.

¹²⁶ Manchester Courier, November 22, 1910 (H.S.).

¹²⁷ Manchester Evening News, November 22, 1910 (H.S.).

¹²⁸ Daily Despatch, September 28, 1909, (H.S.).

¹²⁹ Drama, Spring 1953, p. 21.

Austin's acting in the Vale of Content was described by James Agate as, "containing all the things one dreams of." ¹³⁰ However Casson points out that the actors playing with him knew that he had no technique whatsoever and was in fact only exploiting his own idiosyncrasies. He was known for his portrayals of "woolly good souls" on the stage and Basil Dean describes him as being a "woolly good soul," in real life. ¹³¹ "Accidentally brilliant" was Stanley Drewitt's kind description of Austin's acting. ¹³² The wonder is, however, that the Gaiety company was flexible enough to absorb such a wide variety of actors, for according to Casson, actors like Austin who relied wholly on instinct, were:

almost impossible to play with, and were helpless when confronted with anything that demanded knowledge of the craft of holding an audience or a long speech. ¹³³

Reflecting on his time at the Gaiety under Payne, Stanley Drewitt summed up the relationship between the encouragement of the actors' initiative and the cultivation of ensemble:

¹³⁰ James C. Agate, Buzz, Buzz! Essays of the Theatre, (London, Collins, n.d.), p. 143. Agate also says that an actress of the reputation of Janet Achurch had, "little or no technique," p. 148.

¹³¹ C.E.M., Manchester Guardian, April 27, 1909, (H.S.).

¹³² Pogson, p. 54.

¹³³ Drama, Spring 1913, p. 21.

Team work as current today (1952) is a much mistaken term. At the Gaiety it never hindered the individual brilliance of most of the artists during the early years. The individual creative capacity had full scope. 134

From the very start of the Manchester experiment, Payne seems to have found a way of achieving a high standard of production consistent throughout all the types of plays produced. This was made possible by his flexibility as a director. Payne was guided by an overriding vision of what he was striving for; he was:

conscious of an almost mystical sense that there (should be) a relationship, a creative harmony throughout the performance among all the elements involved... 135

This harmony would come from the actors communicating, "the complete expression of the play's purpose," 136 to the audience and in turn, "enthusiasm would pass to and fro over the footlights like a summer breeze." 137

Lewis Casson paid tribute to Payne as being the man who set a style of repertory performances and for being a true initiator in the field of directing technique. 138 But, when Payne left and Casson took over, there was a great change in the way plays were produced. According to his grand-daughter Diana Devlin, Casson chose to follow the example of an older tradition.

134 Pogson, pp. 106-107.

135 Payne, pp. 82-83.

136 A.B.C., Script, p. 10.

137 Ibid., p. 6.

138 Ibid., p. 9.

In 1910 at the Duke of York's Repertory season^{Custom} again worked under the brilliant, intuitive, direction of Harley Granville Barker and, for the first time, experienced the measured precision of Dion Boucicault, and he found Boucicault's method, "immensely satisfying and influential on his own style of producing."¹³⁹ Boucicault's method was strict and unwavering and though his wife Irene Vanburgh claims to have benefitted from his direction, she does not specify what his methods were.¹⁴⁰ But in his biography of Marie Tempest, Hector Bolitho quotes the distinguished actress's description of Boucicault's technique, which was the very opposite of Payne's:

Boucicault insisted on definite movements never varying, definite inflections and perfect timing. An actor took out a cigarette as he was standing upon a definite flower pattern of the carpet. He took two steps and as his foot came to the carpet, he took two steps and, as his foot came to the carpet again he tapped his cigarette on his case. He spoke a line, took one more step, and struck a match. A few more words, a step, and the match was blown out. Then the phrase was finished. His mechanics were as fine as those of a watch, and the length of his performances seldom varied by a minute night after night... one's gloves were taken off "by numbers"...every look and gesture were drilled into me...¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Diana Devlin, A Speaking Part, (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1982), pp. 67-68. Many actors from the repertory theatres, especially Glasgow, took part in the Duke of York's season. Basil Dean however, found that his Manchester "star" status meant nothing in London and he was not engaged. p. 61. Lennox Robinson, in Curtain Up, (London, Michael Josephs, 1942), said that Barker had a stage cloth like a chess board for The Madras House, and he directed his actors in set patterns, which made the play, "a beautiful but a dead thing." Cathleen Nesbit however, who worked with Barker two years later, was delighted by his fusion of "freedom", and emphasis on a sound vocal technique; "in the beginning was the Word," he said. A Little Love and Good Company, (London, Faber, 1975), pp. 62 and 64.

¹⁴⁰ Irene Vanburgh, To Tell My Story, (London, Hutchinson, 1948), pp. 61-62 et passim.

¹⁴¹ Hector Bolitho, Marie Tempest, (London, Cobden-

In 1912 Lewis Casson took over from Payne, who left, Casson suggested, rather than accept lower artistic standards and produce plays he did not consider worthy of attention. With Payne's departure there was less eclecticism in the choice of repertoire and the tone of the plays became more realistic.¹⁴² Perhaps this shift came about because of Casson's admiration for Boucicault's school of heightened naturalism, though Casson exchanged Boucicault's drawing rooms for Lancashire living rooms.

However, Casson's productions at Manchester, with the exception of Julius Caesar, were often felt to be less exciting and less well acted than those of Payne, though they were preferred to those of Douglas Gordon, who succeeded Casson when he left for Glasgow. Gordon, who had vast touring experience and had acted in over one hundred principal parts in twenty years seems, however, to have produced no remarkable feats of staging, though this could be due to external factors like the War as well as to an unimaginative repertoire and to his lack of interest in the art of the stage director.¹⁴³

¹⁴² In his review of Pogson's book on Miss Horniman, Drama, Spring 1953, p. 20, Casson resents the suggestion that he wanted to produce only realistic plays. He says that Miss Horniman chose the plays and implies that the emphasis on realism was hers.

¹⁴³ Although the Ladies Pictorial wrote that Gordon's production of Molière's The Blue Stockings, would have put London producers to shame, June 30, 1915, Pogson, p. 168, says that Gordon mostly relied on promptbooks obtained from London managements. The most usual epithet to describe one of Gordon's productions is, "polished," The Stage, October 1, 1914, and October 14, 1915.

Unlike Manchester, where Miss Horniman appointed a stage director and let him choose the company, at the Glasgow Repertory Theatre, Wareing chose both the actors and the stage directors. Of the directors who worked at the Glasgow Repertory Theatre, few, Lewis Casson being the main exception, remained professional directors. Most of them, like Harold Chapin or Kenelem Foss were actors in the company, though some, like Madge MacKintosh and Norman Page while they also acted with the company, were specially engaged as directors. ¹⁴⁴

Alfred Wareing however had complete power over what happened on stage and he could and did, interfere in the director's province. When the Scottish playwright Graham Moffat was engaged to play a small part in Colin in Fairyland, at the Glasgow Repertory Theatre, he improvised some funny lines for himself and his wife when his part was shortened. Wareing threatened instant dismissal if he did not stop, but Moffat was unrepentant:

In the "profession" I have often heard it said that every good laugh in a play is value for fifty pounds. Mr Wareing, ought, therefore, to have been grateful to me for supplying three, but when we came off the stage we found him an angry man. "If you repeat these lines you will all be instantly dismissed!" he said...

Mr Wareing intercepted me as I came off the stage after we

¹⁴⁴ For the first season, Wareing appointed Mr S. Creagh Henry who had worked extensively in the West End, as, "Stage Director." A Stage Director, Wareing said, protects the play from a chaos of, "readings" and must have, "wide sympathies, catholic tasks and be...accustomed to cope with any emergency." Brochure, Spring 1909, n.p.

had repeated the offence. "You are dismissed!" he said. Come to the office and get your money." 145

The situation seems to have been very different at the Gaiety. In 1958, Muriel Pope told listeners to a radio programme about the Gaiety, that Miss Horniman would never have interfered with what happened on the stage. This rather contradicts Sybil Thorndike's views which were quoted earlier. Muriel Pope remembered that:

It was no use going to her with complaints about parts or if you'd had words with the producer. She would never listen. The producer was king in her theatre. 146

This was certainly not the case at Glasgow, where, although there was no consistent directorial style, Wareing was imaginative enough to engage Barker to direct, and actors who had worked at the Court, such as Madge MacKintosh and Norman Page were hired as directors. Wareing certainly understood the need for a good stage producer, his most daring choice being George Calderon, who very successfully directed his own translation of Chekov's The Seagull. 147

Madge MacKintosh and Norman Page went on to become teachers at R.A.D.A. However, Robert Morley does not remember Page in the late 1920's as a successful director or teacher, rather as a

145 Moffat, pp. 74-75.

146 B.B.C., 1953, interview with Muriel Pope.

147 Described by George Calderon in the introduction to Two Plays by Tchekov, (London, Grant Richards, 1912), pp. 9-10.

good actor and likeable man:

Norman Page, who was more or less second-in-command to Kenneth Barnes, was currently playing in Marigold at the Kingsway Theatre. The piece had already been performed for nearly a year, which was something of a phenomenon in those days, and Mr Page had the reputation of having been the best pantomime cat within living memory, and had only recently shed his skin forever after being pushed by a young admirer off his perch on the dress circle rail and falling heavily into the stalls beneath - without, luckily, causing much damage, except to himself and a number of tea trays. He was the kindest of men, and seldom took acting seriously, his interest constantly caught and often sustained at least for a term by a more than usually pretty student. 148

Other directors at Glasgow, like Frank Vernon, who directed the first production of Arnold Bennett's The Great Adventure at Glasgow, went on to work in the West End, and there, Vernon was responsible for several new productions of Bennett's plays. 149

The Glasgow directors all worked in very difficult conditions and, as Victor MacLure recalls, for very little reward:

In 1911 there were plenty of people in Glasgow convinced, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary, that the Repertory Theatre was an amateur affair... It seems as if the whole world had its eye on the Glasgow Rep - except Glaswegians. Wareing and his producers continued to make bricks without straw - I was proud of the miracles I helped to work with the clumsy

148 Robert Morley in, My Drama School, ed. Margaret McCall, (London, Robson, 1978), p. 38.

149 "To Frank Vernon", Bennett ed. Hepburn Letters, Vol. III, pp. 158-160.

and aged equipment of the Royalty... when I remember what these succeeding companies of fine players put up with in the way of dressing-rooms and what painful economies and expedients Harold Chapin, Ken Foss, Madge MacKintosh and those other producers were at to get their plays on stage. I wonder that they don't get up and curse Glasgow as harbouring only such as before which it is a heartbreak to cast pearls. How good the material - the human material - that was there is proved by the later recognition in less parochial environments of the abilities of Glasgow Rep players and producers. 150

After working in London for a while, MacLure abandoned the stage to become a successful author, while Chapin was killed in the Great War and Kenelm Foss left the theatre to open London's first sandwich bar. 151

The most important director to emerge from the early years of the Repertory Theatre Movement, was Basil Dean. To Max Reinhardt he owed his awareness of the power and potential of the role of director; as distinct from that of the actor-manager concerned with the mise-en-scène of the plays in which he appeared. 152 Though Dean's reputation seems to have suffered a severe eclipse in his lifetime, due perhaps to his difficult personality rather than his professional qualities, there are many landmarks in production in the West End theatre from Hassan to Johnson over Jordan, which were his responsibility. 153 One of

150 Victor MacLure, Letter, Glasgow Herald, April 10, 1939.

151 F. Marian McNeil, The Scots Kitchen, (Glasgow, Blackie, 1963), p. 76. Miss McNeil says that it was while he was a producer at the Glasgow Repertory Theatre that Foss discovered the "perpendicular repast," which made his fortune.

152 Carter, Reinhardt, p. 312.

153 His other great achievements include making Gracie Fields a film star and helping to build up the British Film Industry, Dean, Minds Eye, (London, Hutchinson, 1973), pp. 133-149.

his talents was for gathering round him a team of skilled professionals like George Harris, his designer for many years from Liverpool onwards.

Dean had created a scandal and sensation at the Liverpool Repertory Theatre by causing the figure of Death in Hannele, to enter through the stalls to the accompaniment of booming organ music.¹⁵⁴ This event had greatly impressed him, and introduced him to the power of music in the theatre. Later in his career, he commissioned Delius to write the music for Hassan and Benjamin Britten to provide a score for Johnson over Jordan.¹⁵⁵ Dean was also a pioneer in the use of stage lighting, always experimenting and introducing new techniques and equipment to the British stage.¹⁵⁶

Though the repertory theatres were not pioneers in scenic art, Dean was very aware of its importance. At the start of his career he was greatly helped by George Harris who began his association with Dean by making one of Miss Horniman's realistic sets even more realistic:

¹⁵⁴ Dean, Seven Ages, p. 99.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, pp. 186-187 and Dean, Minds Eye, p. 265.

¹⁵⁶ Dean, Seven Ages, pp. 184-185, tells how in Hassan, light was filtered through broken lenses to create prismatic effects for a scene in which dawn breaks over the city.

My meeting with George Harris (Dean wrote) occurred during the experimental season - a chance encounter that in retrospect seems to have been preordained, a part of personal destiny. The garden scenery for the second act of The Cassilis Engagement by St. John Hankin had been loaned to us by Miss Horniman, but when we set it up for the dress rehearsal it proved to be barely presentable, and there were no flower-beds. Whoever heard of an English garden without flower-beds!... George Harris... watched me trying to arrange the flower-beds he had brought with him. Then, as my language became unprintable, he added his own salty comments. Soon we began chatting, mocking the silly scenic conventions of the day: the ridiculous foliage borders looking like 'washing on the line', and the flapping landscapes at the back. Should there not be more light and air on the stage? Agreed. So we tore down the backcloths and threw away the borders, mentally speaking of course. And why did scenery always look so flat and dull under the electric light? New painting techniques must be thought out, said George. I cannot remember how that dress rehearsal was ever begun or ended. All I care to remember is that for the rest of the season, and for weeks afterwards, we theorised and argued together and worked out plans for the new playhouse. ¹⁵⁷

The dancer Margaret Morris was also horrified by the sets at the Gaiety. She was convinced of the need for simplified staging and greater use of curtains, by the, "totally inadequate," scenery for The Little Dream on which she worked at the Gaiety. The, "painted mountains lit up with spots," were, she felt, "too utterly banal." ¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Dean, Seven Ages, pp. 29-80.

¹⁵⁸ Margaret Morris, My Galsworthy Story, (London, Peter Owen, 1967), p. 36.

George Harris agreed with her general conclusion that the conventional stage realism of the Edwardian stage needed to be replaced by something else:

Realistic treatment of scenery in the theatre is rarely successful, and any sort of decorative convention is preferable. The heritage left by those dramatists of the 19th century who discovered tremendous dramatic possibilities in real locks and bolts on doors still hampers their descendants, who write detailed descriptions of the setting out of scenes required for their plays. The artist and producer must, however, ignore descriptions that fetter their imagination. Their concern is an interpretation of the intention of the play and not merely to gather together the list of architectural and landscape features; the collection of chairs, tables and bric-a-brac enumerated by the author, which from a literary point of view, perhaps give the requisite atmosphere, but which translated in terms of the stage, produce the incredible settings we have become so used to. A kind of convention is necessary, and any sort of stylisation is permissible, always provided it is suitable to the spirit of the play. 159

Although the Royalty and the Gaiety had their own paint-frames and could have experimented in stage settings, most of the plays staged at the Repertory theatres were of the realistic kind that Harris deplores. Exceptions like the Rackham-inspired designs for Colin in Fairyland at Glasgow, or simple architectural sets for Julius Caesar at Manchester, were rare, both because of the expense involved in

159 George Harris, "The Function of the Scenic Designer," George Harris, (London, Nisbet, 1930), pp. 21-22.

painting and making new scenery for each show and because, at Manchester, Miss Horniman wanted realism in stage design, as the Gaiety props lists show.¹⁶⁰ When the theatre toured, they did not need to take much in the way of stage furniture with them as they could use the furniture in the props store of the theatres they visited. Anything realistic would do.¹⁶¹ At Glasgow, Wareing relied heavily on the Howard and Wyndhams prop and costume store at the Royalty, but he had the services of a scene-painter called Tom Dunn. Dunn was a well-known Glasgow scene-painter and, using the paint frame with which the Royalty was equipped, he painted several notable scenes including, the view of the Arran hills from Troon for act 2 of Macpherson, which won, "special applause," and, "a London square at night," for Harold Chapin's one-act play, Augustus in Search of a Father.¹⁶² Dunn also painted the cloths for You Never Can Tell, and in act two, he "opened a cut stage so that the hotel appeared to be on the edge of the cliffs and the Clandon family made their entrance as if they had come up from the beach."¹⁶³ It was therefore possible to be inventive within the bounds of realism, but a reliance on realism in set design meant that deviations from accuracy were pounced upon by beady-eyed critics. In The Drums of Oude, for instance, the Herald reviewer noted:

¹⁶⁰ see p. 225.

¹⁶¹ Props list, for the information of theatres which were to receive the Gaiety production of Hindle Wakes, British Theatre Association Library.

¹⁶² Glasgow Herald, November 22, p. 9, col. 7; Glasgow Evening News, November 22, 1909; Ibid, March 22, 1910.

¹⁶³ Alfred Wareing, Glasgow Herald, April 5, 1939.

the scenery though picturesque is unlike the plains of Oude and the servants hands are far blacker than they need be... ladies who are living through the Indian Mutiny should not be allowed to play Simple A.Veu on the piano. This is a detail but such things count in the great art of illusion... 164

Realism did not extend to the lighting however, and neither Glasgow nor Manchester followed the lead of the Liverpool Repertory Theatre in experimenting with new methods of diffusing light, relying instead on white and amber "floods and spots." 165 Frank Vernon, however, used the Royalty's gas lighting to good effect in Arnold Bennett's Cupid and Commonsense. He lit the first act completely by gas, and the actor playing Boothroyd was able to, "cut short a poignant scene with his elder daughter by turning off the gas with a laconic 'Bed!'" 166

In costume too the repertory theatres were inventive, within the bounds of realism. At the Royalty, a production of the neo-Arthurian Lanval, was dressed in costumes of "a medieval cut and colour," designed by Miss Dorothy Carleton Smythe, who also worked on The Feud for the Gaiety. 167 A production of Lady Windermere's Fan was dressed by "Glasgow modistes" and teachers at the School of Art helped with the costumes for certain plays. 168

164 Glasgow Herald, October 8, 1909, p. 9, col. 4.

165 Lighting plots, in the Gaiety prompt books, British Theatre Institute Library.

166 Alfred Wareing "Memories of Arnold Bennett as Playwright", Queue, No. 7, pp. 20-21.

167 Glasgow Evening News, November 4, 1909.

168 Ibid, February 8, 1910.

But, as the majority of the plays were modern realistic dramas, there was little scope for an inventive costume designer at the repertory theatres.

With the possible exception of the production of Julius Caesar which led to Casson's resignation from the Gaiety, the ideas of Edward Gordon Craig on set design had yet to make themselves felt outside London. But Barry Jackson at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, as much for reasons of economy as aesthetics, favoured simple, architectural sets surrounded by curtains and with easily moved set pieces and rostra blocks.¹⁶⁹ These formed an effective background for many of the classical and verse plays performed at his theatre during the first few seasons. The sets were complemented by a Fortuny lighting system which diffused light through bands of coloured silk on to a pale plaster dome installed with Basil Dean's guidance.¹⁷⁰

Though the early repertory theatres were not destined to revolutionise the art of the theatre in their short creative life, they did produce a vast range of plays never before seen in the provinces and most of them completely new. These plays were given a standard of production and acting far higher than all but the best touring companies could ever hope to achieve. However, as later developments showed, when the repertory system was not allied to an encouragement of new young writers and a

¹⁶⁹ Appendix b.

¹⁷⁰ J.C. Trewin, The Birmingham Repertory Theatre 1913-1963, (London, Barrie and Rockliff, 1963), p. 17.

constant turnover of interesting plays, the problems inherent in being short-run theatres instead of real repertory theatres were exposed. An article in the Glasgow Herald a month before the Glasgow Repertory Theatre opened had predicted. that producing plays for a run of only a week would become unsatisfactory for actors and audiences and blamed the pernicious effects of the touring system for making "weekly rep" necessary:

A public accustomed to the weekly visits of touring companies demands from a repertory theatre a fresh play each week... [and it] is not enamoured of revivals. The consequent strain on the producer and the company is detrimental both to the interests of the public and of the actors. Side by side with their ordinary weekly play the actors have the ceaseless grind of preparation and rehearsal. The week draws to a close, they are passing from the letter to the spirit of their parts and have learned by actually playing the possibilities of these. Then like a curtain dropped in the middle of a scene came Saturday and a long farewell to the play on which so much time had been lavished. 171

The strain of producing one or even two new plays each week had been accepted by the actors and directors as long as the quality of the plays had been high and reviews favourable. They would not however, "lavish" endless time for no reward, and, as the theatres became the targets for increasing criticism

171 Glasgow Herald, February 27, 1909, reprint in, (W.S.).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FALL AND RISE OF THE REPERTORY THEATRE MOVEMENT

The year 1913 was not a particularly happy one for the advancement of Repertory in the Provinces ...

(The Stage Year Book 1914)¹

1913 seems to be the turning-point in the early history of the repertory theatre movement. Until then there had been a certain homogeneity about the plays, players and policies of the theatre at Glasgow, Liverpool and Manchester. But, in 1913, the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, the first repertory theatre which owed nothing either to Miss Horniman or to Alfred Wareing, was opened. This was followed by a number of repertory seasons, in different provincial towns, which were often masterminded by actors and directors who had worked at the early reps. Unfortunately, just when the movement seemed to be expanding, the pioneering theatres were suffering an eclipse. During 1913, there was only one, short, season at Glasgow, and this was organized by Wareing himself and not by the Scottish Playgoers' Company. In Manchester, while the parent company toured extensively, attendance at the Gaiety declined sharply. While at Liverpool, a discouraging autumn season led to

¹ S.Y.B. 1914, pp. 40-41

suggestions that the repertory theatre should be closed down.

These problems were compounded by a vigorous debate in the newspapers of both Manchester and Liverpool to which the Stage Year Book for 1914 drew attention when discussing the problems which repertory theatres faced:

that much interest is locally evinced in everything appertaining to the Movement in each of these towns, however, is obvious in the correspondence which was carried on in the Liverpool and Manchester papers by playgoers and critics of the policy of the management and of ways and means.²

This seems a rather mild description of the crisis which engulfed each of the repertory theatres. A collection of headlines reads:

- What's Wrong with the Gaiety?
- The Peril of the Repertory Theatres.
- Repertory Theatre Problems.
- Repertory Theatres - The Present Difficulties.
- Repertory Theatres - One Solid Slab of Woe.
- The Failure of Our Repertory Theatre.
- The Crisis in the Repertory Theatres.
- What's Wrong with the Gaiety? - Nothing whatsoever.³

² S.Y.B. 1914 p.41.

³ The Manchester Courier, September 9, 1912, (H.S.); TP's Weekly, December 26, 1913, (H.S.); Manchester City News, November 14, 1913, (H.S.); The Birmingham Post, January 12, 1914, (H.S.); The Manchester Courier, December 20, 1913 (H.S.); Manchester Playgoer, Vol. 2, No. 1, September 1912: The Stage, March 12 and March 19, 1914, (H.S.); The Manchester Courier, September 12, 1912 (H.S.).

The Gaiety was the first theatre to suffer from a Press onslaught, because the theatre was the first to be established and consequently the first to fall from its state of grace. The first sign of crisis in the repertory theatres came in the Autumn 1912 issue of the Manchester Playgoer. This beautifully produced magazine contained an article written by the editor, Oscar Drey, entitled 'The Failure of our Repertory Theatre'. Drey's article began with the ominous words: "The time has come, we think, for a little plain speaking about the Gaiety Theatre." He continued:

The main achievement of the Gaiety Theatre has been to realise a dead level of mediocrity ... what we looked for most in this theatre was a purpose, a policy ... we expected the theatre would progress taking its public with it, and that we should have a better theatre at the end of four years than we had at the beginning. Alas none of these expectations have been fulfilled ... perhaps the burden of our complaint is that Miss Horniman's theatre is not in advance of its time. But that, artistically, is the deadliest judgement that can be delivered against it. It is smug, it is mediocre, it is dull. All these things are worse, far worse, than stupidity.⁴

Mr. Drey wanted: "a new theatre freed from the trammels of the old, a pioneer theatre, a theatre of experiment, a theatre of generous youth and impulse," but this was not the sort of theatre Annie Horniman had in mind. She wanted a theatre like the German Court Theatres and they were by no means youthful or experimental. The plays they produced were unadventurous and

⁴ Manchester Playgoer, Vol. 2, No. 1, September 1912, pp. 18-19.

certainly unpioneering. Miss Horniman wanted to run a commercially successful theatre, and, as the Abbey had taught her, experiment does not bring profit. She had wanted to discover new playwrights to rival Yeats and Synge but she had also wanted "realism" and, by 1912, as the Russian Ballet and Futurists had shown, that no longer meant experiment. ⁵

The Gaiety had not set out to be, "in advance of its time," and Miss Horniman complained with some justification that:

What we suffer from most is the habit people have of labelling us, without taking trouble to find out whether they are labelling us correctly or not. ⁶

That lament was aimed at people who, Miss Horniman felt, misused the word "repertory." In her original statement of aims, there had been no mention of there being anything experimental about the enterprise and "repertory" had been used solely to describe the play-library method of presenting productions which the German municipal and court theatres operated and which Miss Horniman wished to emulate. Gradually, as the Manchester Gaiety flourished and similar theatres started, the word "repertory" was seized on as a convenient short-hand description for any theatre which promised to be slightly out of the ordinary, or presented plays which did not conform to recognisable "London" types, that is to say, musical comedy or drawing-room drama. In 1913 the word 'repertory' still had connotations of something avant-garde, if slightly, "dull," "rather improper," or, "improving", as Miss Horniman said. ⁷

⁵ See *Chronology*.

⁶ Manchester City News, September 6, 1912, (H.S.).

⁷ Miss Horniman, Letter, Yorkshire Observer, January 1, 1914, (H.S.).

But the first flush of idealism was wearing thin and the Repertory Theatres were having to come to terms both with a slump in support and a questioning of the very ideals upon which they had been founded. Drey's article in the Manchester Playgoer was widely reported and discussed and the Manchester Courier after both commenting on the article and printing several letters commenting on it, followed this up with an interview with Miss Horniman.

Cecil Chisholm, writing in the Courier agreed with some of the complaints .*Oscar* ! Drey had made about the Gaiety and agreed that Manchester seemed to be missing out on some of the best new plays; but for the rest he discounted Mr. Drey's article as destructive rhetoric and thought that the Gaiety would do no harm to alienate the, "choice spirits," as he described the people who wanted an experimental theatre. "The Gaiety," said Chisholm, was not, "a faddists' laboratory," and:

were its advisers so foolish as to make it a laboratory for testing the weird and strange works the 'playgoers' would like, it would become a mausoleum of dead hopes and frustrated activities within a week. ⁸

Further letters were written in support of Miss Horniman and the Gaiety. "S", while drawing attention to the fine acting tradition at the Gaiety which was defended as, "by no means mediocre," added:

⁸ Manchester Courier, September 9, 1912. (H.S.). Chisholm later wrote a book called Repertory, dedicated to, "A.E.F. Horniman, the Pioneer," Cecil Chisholm, Repertory, (London, Davies, 1934).

Miss Horniman provided a Repertory Theatre which the Playgoers' Club should have regarded (many members do so regard it) as peculiarly its own, not to damn it with faint praise or unbounded destructive criticism, but to help and stimulate by organised demand for fine plays. ⁹

This was a further hint that the Gaiety was failing to build up its vital, regular audience. Another of the paper's correspondents also defended the Gaiety against the attacks of Oscar Drey, citing both the acting and the quality of some of the plays to rebut the charge of mediocrity. While she regretted that certain modern playwrights, such as Strindberg and Brieux, had not been performed and the Russian repertoire ignored, she found much to praise in the company's efforts to introduce new plays and playwrights to the public. She also pointed out that the influence of the Gaiety Company on the London theatre and the theatres of North America, justified its frequent absences from Manchester and she concluded, "is it not rather that we have seen so little of the Gaiety Company this year, that we have allowed our impatience to overcome our judgement?" ¹⁰

When interviewed by the Manchester Courier, Miss Horniman defended herself stoutly against her critics. Protesting that she, "didn't want a freak theatre for the joy of the cranks," she claimed that people were jealous and that she was paying the penalty of success. She also defended herself against another criticism; that she was a rich woman who used the Gaiety as some kind of hobby. She denied this and pointed out that the theatre

⁹ "S", Letter, Manchester Courier, September 11, 1912, (H.S.)

¹⁰ Mabel Capper, Letter, Ibid.

needed to pay, as her financial resources were by no means limitless. She was unrepentant about the choice of plays. She would continue, she said, to give Lancashire light comedy and although she could not afford the rights to certain London successes, such as Fanny's First Play, she promised a Greek play and Barker's and Housman's Prunella for the "superior" people in Manchester.

Miss Horniman was then, at least in her public utterances, perfectly satisfied with the performance of the Gaiety. But, by the end of 1913, a far more damaging press campaign against the Gaiety had started. Some of the criticisms made in the course of the campaign, especially those relating to the audiences, have already been noted, but the letters and comments about the supposed shortcomings of the Gaiety were, this time, far more pointed and wounding than they had been twelve months before. This time they were not the complaints of a coterie but were a more general airing of grievances. One of the most penetrating articles came from Cecil Chisholm who had defended the Gaiety against Oscar Drey. Writing in TP's Weekly in December 1913, Chisholm blamed success for the failure of the repertory theatres. As he put it, "where the Repertory Theatres have sown, the Managers have reaped," and he instanced playwrights like Houghton and Chapin who, with various players, had gone to work for London Managements after they had made their name with the repertory theatres. ¹²

¹¹ Ibid., September 12, 1912, (H.S.).

¹² TP's Weekly, December 26, 1913, (H.S.).

He was perfectly correct in his analysis of the effect success had on the theatres, and 1913 did see the end of a cycle of pioneering actors, actresses and playwrights, who had begun with Manchester, Glasgow and Liverpool but were now tiring of the repertory theatres and looking for better paid work with more overtly commercial managements. They were also gravitating back to London, where plays which might be considered as "repertory fare," such as Milestones or The Great Adventure, were being produced, very successfully, in the West End.¹³ Chisholm felt this draining of the acting company was especially harmful to the theatre's reputation.

But while the play's the thing, it is not the only thing. At least half of the new plays produced in the early days of the Manchester Gaiety were sheer unadulterated rubbish. Yet they were splendidly acted and for that reason they found an audience.¹⁴

Other observers thought that Miss Horniman had made a mistake in siting her theatre in Manchester in the first place, as a suitable audience did not exist in that city. James Agate and Alan Monkhouse for example, blamed the insipid audiences and the lack of a, "smart set" in the stalls for the theatre's ill's.¹⁵ Others were more brutal and claimed that it was, "time

¹³ Holbrook Jackson in T.P.'s Weekly, November 7, 1913 wrote that, "the experimental Repertory theatre, have been so promising that many producers have been encouraged by their example to introduce a better type of play to the regular stage.

¹⁴ TP's Weekly, December 26, 1913, (H.S.).

¹⁵ James Agate, Letter, Manchester Guardian, December 10, 1912, (H.S.).

we admitted that Manchester's reputation for appreciation of the drama is as mythical as Manchester's musical reputation." ¹⁶

In the Autumn of 1913 Miss Horniman decided to dispense with the Gaiety Theatre's orchestra. It was expensive to maintain and it was felt too few people listened to the music either before the show or at the intervals. This decision resulted in many letters to the local Press and Frederick J. Snape for one, found an interval without music too long:

Without the orchestra, the intervals have become very tedious. The sorrowfulness of the place steals upon us and when the gong is solemnly struck three times to announce the rising of the curtain we almost think we are at a funeral listening to the tolling of the bell.¹⁴

Miss Horniman seemed to be trapped in a vicious circle of decline. She informed critics that the reason London managements could poach actors and writers, was the size of the salaries they could pay. If she had more support from Manchester, she could afford to pay such salaries. It was also because of a lack of support in Manchester that the Gaiety had to have a Spring season in London each year and this naturally

¹⁶ Manchester Guardian, December 10, 1912 (H.S.).

¹⁷ Anonymous, Letter, Manchester Guardian, December 17, 1913, (H.S.). St. John Ervine also wrote "A night in a repertory theatre was almost as cheerful as a night in a morgue. People went to repertory theatres as some Dissenters formerly went to chapel, weebegonely and as if they come to atone for lamentable sins," quoted in Ernest Reynolds, The Twentieth-Century Drama (London Harrap, 1950), p. 46.

meant leaving the city for long periods. She told the Manchester Guardian that she would not tour North America again and dismissed James Agate's suggestion that she conciliate the "smart set". "I thought," she said "that all the inhabitants of Manchester, with a few exceptions, were respectable middle-class folk like myself, and the territorial nobles from beyond never came within six miles of Albert Square." She refused, however, to tell the readers whether or not her theatre was making a profit, suggesting that the same question be asked of "the butcher, the baker or the candlestick maker." 18

Miss Horniman must have been aware of the facts which Lewis Casson made public at a dinner given in his honour in January 1914, when his term as a director of the Gaiety came to an end. Replying to a toast he made a speech in which his main point was, that the Gaiety was not an organic part of Manchester, and for that reason it would almost certainly wither away:

Replying to the toast of his health...
 Mr. Casson said that he supposed it was necessary for him to state his reason for leaving Manchester. The first was that no one would stay in Manchester longer than he could help. But he had other reasons. It should be clearly understood that the Gaiety was not Manchester's own theatre. Manchester did not ask for it and did not work for it to any great extent or pay for it...

18 Manchester Guardian, December 17, 1913, (H.S.).

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The Gaiety Theatre was founded with no hope of appealing to the great majority of Manchester people. It was founded because Miss Horniman had a confidence that in Manchester there was a minority ... who would support such a theatre well enough to make it a commercial proposition ...

... But as the theatre did not pay its way some change of policy had to be made. The business had steadily declined last season and he felt there must be a change in policy and in executive as well.¹⁹

What Lewis Casson actually said was, perhaps, diluted in the reporting but is still remarkable for its frankness. In his biography of his sister Sybil, Russel Thorndike describes the occasion vividly:

Their farewell from Manchester was, to say the least, very entertaining and very typical of Lewis Casson. A huge party had been given in their honour. Charming and kind things had been said by the important speech-makers, and Sybil was just feeling that all was well when suddenly she looked at her husband's face and her heart stood still, and the terrible thought obsessed her that her baby would be born on the spot through shock. Lewis looked like a volcano about to burst, and in a few minutes, when called upon to reply to kind speeches of the theatre supporters of Manchester, he arose and did - burst, I mean. He let fly all his choked theatre aspirations, streaming out like a procession of victimised ghosts, their utter lack of support for any new experiment, their lack of faith in the Theatre, their smug pride in having such a regime as Miss Horniman's in their great city - "a pride which they had done little to deserve or claim ..."²⁰

¹⁹ Manchester Guardian, January 12, 1914, (H.S.).

²⁰ Russell Thorndike, Sybil Thorndike, (London, Butterworth, 1929), pp. 241-242.

It was obviously an extraordinarily bitter speech which he ended by predicting that the new director's policy, one which Casson said everyone had tried, of producing "intellectual comedies", would fail, as such plays either did not exist or were not available to the Gaiety. Casson, however, was only correct in his analysis as far as his years as director were concerned. Early in the Gaiety's career there seems to have been more genuine affection between the town and the theatre. As has been noted, in 1958 on the television programme commemorating 'Fifty Years of Repertory', the Lord Mayor of Manchester remembered the tears in the eyes of the audience in 1910 when Sybil Thorndike announced she was leaving the theatre. C.B. Purdom also talked, as did Basil Dean, of the waves of enthusiasm which flowed from the audience and which united actors and audience in fellow-feeling and Penelope Wheeler described the loyal following of mill-girls which some of the actresses accumulated.²¹ And so it is probably correct to blame success abroad and the loss of favourite actors for the decline in support at the home base. But there is also no denying the truth that from the start, Miss Horniman had chosen Manchester, and not Manchester, Miss Horniman.²²

The method of establishment of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre posed similar problems, although there, shareholdings by the citizens of Glasgow and a local Advisory Board, gave the theatre a semblance of being less imposed from without than the Gaiety.

²¹ See p. 103.

²² Guardian, September 6, 1958, (H.F.).

This, however, did not save the theatre from experiencing many problems similar to Manchester's. Nor did Liverpool's 900 local subscribers solve the problem of ensuring a large audience for the theatre.

One thing stands luminously clear, and that is that the Liverpool people do not appear to want the theatre. Even those who were most enthusiastic at its inception have marked that enthusiasm by consistently staying away.²³

As they had no patron like Miss Horniman willing to spend large sums of money on the theatre, the main problem faced by Alfred Wareing and the Scottish Playgoers' Company was a lack of finance. To this shortage of money was added the problem that in May 1912 Wareing's health broke down completely. He seems to have suffered some form of nervous exhaustion brought about by an unequal struggle between the demands of his audience and his box office returns. When he described the theatre's struggles thirty years later, Victor MacLure remarked that Wareing was throwing pearls before swine.²⁴

By 1912, Wareing must have become rather dispirited no matter how far he was able, "to enjoy the forlorn hope as much as the actual victory."²⁵ He had been struggling with his fellow directors to ensure an adventurous choice of plays and until 1912 he had usually won his battles. But before the annual

²³ S.Y.B., 1914, p. 41.

²⁴ Victor MacLure, Letter, Glasgow Herald, April 15, 1939.

²⁵ Isaac, p. vi.

general meeting in June 1912, Wareing's fellow directors decided to terminate the agreement under which he acted as company manager with a seat on the board. They decided in future to appoint a manager only for each season, and told the meeting of shareholders that if Wareing were available, they would consider him.²⁶

At the same meeting, it was announced that in the 1911 - 1912 season the Company had lost £322.5s.d., compared with £1539 the year before. The loss would have been much greater but for the success at the Royalty Theatre of J.J. Bell's, Wee MacGregor which had played there early in December 1911 and in January 1912. The run was interrupted by a visit from the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, because Howard and Wyndham, who owned the Royalty, were presenting the opera company and refused to find an alternative theatre for them. The Scottish Playgoer's Company, therefore, lost vital revenue which might have guaranteed an Autumn season in 1912. The Citizens' had also lost a lot of money because their lavish production of Romeo and Juliet, which cost £200 a week to run, coincided with a railway strike.²⁷

The Glasgow Theatre's main problem was that the company had no permanent theatre. This meant that forward planning for the company could only be very tentative and that there was no building

²⁶ Glasgow Herald, June 1, 1912.

²⁷ The Stage, March 5, 1912, (W.S.).

with which it could identify, and be identified and which they could use as a permanent base. Part of the difficulty lay in the fact that the theatre in which the company usually performed, the Royalty, was a touring house in the very centre of the city. In a speech made to the O.P. Club in March, 1912, Wareing explained that, having educated his audience to appreciate modern drama, the touring managers exploited this success:

During the last week of my theatrical season last year, we were playing What the Public Wants. At the Empire Music Hall which faces the entrance to our reserved parts, Irene Vanburgh and Edmund Gwenn were playing Barrie's The Twelve Pound Look. At the Pavilion directly opposite the pit and gallery entrance, Miss Lena Ashwell was appearing in a one-act piece..... Only the other evening, I went into the Pavilion to recognise row upon row of my patrons there ...²⁸

Without a settled home, a permanent loyal audience could not be built up, the theatre would be treated as just another touring house and the repertory company would find it difficult to establish an identity. It is perhaps significant that when the repertory players put on a season at the King's Theatre, the recognised theatre of Glasgow's fashionable West End, they had a very successful run of plays which had been performed to much smaller audiences at the Royalty some weeks before.²⁹

Perhaps the fact that the plays were comedies helped. The bulk of the plays presented at the Royalty were comedies, but that did not prevent the company from gaining a reputation

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Isaac, p. vi.

for producing "gloomy" plays. In fact, the plays which fared worst at the Royalty, were light comedies of a type which could be seen in Glasgow any week of the year performed by touring "London Companies", trained like automata to produce a replica of the London production.³⁰

These comedies were put on as a last resort, and Wareing hoped they would boost his finances. But they failed to do so as Wareing was, in truth, fighting an impossible battle. The Royalty, in its prime city-centre site, with 1400 seats and a large permanent staff, cost £80 a week to run, and that was too high a price to pay, when, according to Arnold Bennett, a good week's box office produced £188.³¹ The company's wages bill was £120 and the owners of the building took all the profits from the bars, catering and cloakrooms. Because of the Scottish Playgoers' Company's experience, Miss Horniman advised all Playgoers' Societies contemplating setting up their own enterprises to, "get their own theatre."³²

Wareing also worked against the difficulty of being an Englishman dedicated to regenerating, if not manufacturing, Scottish drama. By October 1913, he had produced some thirty new Scottish plays, some, like Wee MacGregor, very successful. But, in that month, the St. Andrew's Society held a meeting to lament the lack of any truly Scottish Drama.³³

³⁰ The Stage, March 5, 1912, (W.S.)

³¹ Bennett ed. Flower, Journals, Vol. 1, p. 317.

³² Yorkshire Observer, October 4, 1913, (H.S.).

³³ Glasgow Herald, October 30, 1913.

1913 was, for the Glasgow Repertory Theatre, a particularly poor year as there had been no repertory season in the autumn of 1912 and, apart from a short Christmas season at the Alhambra Music Hall in 1912-1913, there was no season until the Spring of 1914. However, when the Directors of the Scottish Playgoers' Company refused to renew his contract Wareing produced his own season at the Royalty, in the Spring of 1913, which was a repertory season in all but name. It used actors and plays associated with the Repertory Theatre, and made a modest profit as it drew an audience from the season at the Alhambra.³⁴

In spite of the success of this season, which showed that there was still an audience for these plays, especially the censored Mrs. Warren's Profession, no Autumn season was arranged, and, though on the last night Wareing said that he hoped he was not saying "Goodbye" to Glasgow, in fact he was.³⁵ Years later in an interview, he said that he considered Glasgow his spiritual home and regretted his ever having had to leave.³⁶

The directors of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre, however, found they had to compromise Wareing's artistic standards in order to run the theatre successfully. For the Spring 1914 season, they appointed Lewis Casson as director. After the row

³⁴ See p. 112 .

³⁵ The performances of Mrs. Warren's Profession drew large audiences all of whom paid 6d. extra to join the Scottish Playgoers' Club. The Evening News reported that, "the theatre was crowded in every part ... and the rush to join the Playgoers' League Club is not yet over ... the play was splendidly acted ... Mrs. Warren's Profession is a play that deserved the Censor's disapproval," April, 11, 1913.

³⁶ Glasgow Evening Citizen, May 4, 1926, (W.S.).

with Miss Horniman over his staging of Julius Caesar, Casson had resigned from Manchester and was free to work for other Repertory Theatres.³⁷ The directors also courted and were rewarded with, civic patronage. The support was only nominal but at least it enabled them to announce their season as being: "Under the Patronage of the Council of the City of Glasgow."³⁸ This gave it an air of respectability and must, as these were more innocent days, have helped to reassure those nervous of the theatre's respectability. On the first night of the season in February 1914, the Glasgow Herald reported that the stalls and circle were filled with, "a glittering array and the cheaper parts of the house were well filled too."³⁹ Previously, it was often the case that the cheaper parts of the house were much fuller than the more expensive seats. The plays were chosen to appeal to the new audience, no startling innovation, only the kind of "intellectual comedies", which two months before, Casson had said would fail as a policy for the Gaiety.⁴⁰

On the last night of the season, in May, Casson paid tribute to the directors and said that there was great satisfaction

³⁷ See Appendix B

³⁸ On the programme for March 23, 1914 the words, "Under the Patronage of the Right Honourable, the Lord Provost, the Magistrates, and Council of the City of Glasgow," appear. The debate at which this designation was agreed described as, "humorous", Glasgow Herald, January 23, 1914, p.13, col.5.

to be gained from working with a board of directors, an allusion perhaps to the struggles of Wareing, or of Basil Dean, whom he knew well. Casson also admitted that the plays which had been performed were not of: "the very first rank of literature," but hoped that this would be remedied in future seasons.⁴¹ Unfortunately, however, there were no more seasons. Glasgow's attempt to gain small civic patronage were paralleled in Liverpool. During the upsets of 1913 a very serious move was made to obtain a municipal grant towards the upkeep of the repertory theatre. This was not pursued, however, and by the middle of 1914, the Liverpool Repertory Theatre was solvent again.

The main events of 1913 for the Theatre were in June when Basil Dean, who was the first artistic "controller" of the theatre, did not have his contract renewed by the Board of Directors, and in December, when there was an annual general meeting of the Company, at which it was announced that the theatre had lost £1,800 in its first two years of operation. It was then suggested that it might be advisable to wind up the project.⁴²

Basil Dean's dismissal from Liverpool was effected with little fuss. His ideals such as establishing an international repertoire and his technical innovations like the new lighting system, were too far in advance of his board's commercial conservatism.⁴³ His youth and inexperience had also led to

⁴¹ Glasgow Herald, May 27, 1914, p. 10, col. 8.

⁴² Liverpool Daily Post, December 17, 1913. The exact sum lost was £1,858.6s.10d.

⁴³ See pp. 73-95

difficulties, as Professor Reilly remembered:

The Board if it was not very clear and united in what it wanted to do, did not mean to let Dean run away with its new theatre without a struggle. We were always trying to invent methods to check his expenditure and he, it seemed to us, methods to circumvent us. He had certainly collected a fine company ... and we were all, I am ashamed to say, far too tempted to go behind Dean's back and discuss matters with them. Indeed, we must have been a very difficult Board to deal with and, looking back, I sympathise more and more with Dean.⁴⁴

The Autumn 1913 season which followed Dean's dismissal as controller of the Liverpool Repertory Theatre, was financially disastrous and artistically a failure. The general opinion was summed up by one critic who wrote:

... the falling off in public support is almost entirely due to the trivial and uninteresting nature of the fare provided during the season just ended ... I maintain that the plays have not reached the standard of previous seasons.⁴⁵

But, on 16th December 1913, the shareholders of the theatre held their A.G.M. in a more optimistic mood than their financial and artistic results would seem to warrant. But much of the theatre's deficit was caused by Dean's ambitious production of Hauptmann's Hannele, and most of the rest through

⁴⁴ Reilly, p. 153.

⁴⁵ Liverpool Daily Post, December 21, 1913.

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non-recurring costs involved in opening their theatre. Professor Reilly, the chairman of the Shareholders Company felt confident, therefore, that their financial set-backs were temporary and that the deficit would soon disappear.⁴⁶

Criticism of the theatre's policy, mentioned at the meeting, centred almost wholly on the choice of plays and the prices of seats.⁴⁷ It was generally felt that "repertory type" plays had not been produced, and that reviving recently written comedies should not be the business of Liverpool Repertory Theatre. Professor Reilly explained the necessity for compromise but admitted that putting on the type of plays that touring companies brought to Liverpool often lost money, as Wareing had found in Glasgow. On the other hand, Ibsen and Shaw usually earned money for the Theatre, as did Galsworthy and their productions of Greek Drama. The meeting dismissed a further suggestion to change the name of the theatre to something less "melancholy."⁴⁸

Letters to the Liverpool newspapers, following on this meeting, tended to focus on the two most contentious issues, the possibility of a municipal subsidy and the shift away from what were called, "the high ideals of the Repertory Theatre Movement." The main complaint was that the plays which had been produced in the previous season were unsuited to those ideals.

⁴⁶ Liverpool Daily Post, December 17, 1913. Drama, February 1923, reports that Hannele lost £800 in two weeks, MD. 45, LPL

⁴⁷ T. Herbert Kendrick, Letter, Daily Post, December 22; R.W. Wallace, Letter, Ibid, December 19; Arthur Hodgson, Ibid, December 18, all 1913, all (H.S.).

⁴⁸ Ibid. December 17, 1913, (H.S.).

As well as Ibsen and Shaw the season had included A Pair of Spectacles by Sydney Grundy and Masks and Faces by Tom Taylor, two pot-boilers which, it was felt, the repertory theatre had no business producing. Mention was also made of the lack of any play by Shakespeare. 49

Most letters on the question of a Municipal subsidy were in favour of one being granted, although Sir Charles Petrie, a member of the board of the theatre had spoken against this proposal on the grounds that it might encourage unfair competition against other rate-paying theatres. 50 No correspondent seemed convinced by this and one used the argument, which Alfred Wareing had used in Glasgow, that the maintenance of an excellent theatre was analogous to the maintenance of an excellent picture gallery. Both cities possessed the latter.

The directors of the theatre seem to have taken the criticisms to heart, for not only did they produce Twelfth Night at Christmas-time and reduce ticket prices, they also, on Professor Reilly's suggestion, tried a season of "real repertory":

After Dean left us, Lawrence Hanray, most versatile of artists, excellent alike as an actor, playwright and composer became not only our producer but also the player of most of the chief parts. This is an obvious danger, but it was lessened in this case because I was able to persuade him to try the full repertory plan which Granville-Barker had always advocated.

49 Richard Mason, Letter, Ibid, December 19, 1913, (H.S.).

50 Liverpool Courier, December 17, 1913, (H.S.).

The company came together a few weeks earlier than usual and got three or four plays into rehearsal. To these it was always adding. The bill then consisted, like that of an opera company, of several plays a week. ⁵¹

An example of the results of this policy can be seen from the plays presented during the week of 23 February 1914:

- Mon. The Importance of being Earnest
- Tues. The Riot Act
- Wed. (Mat) & Thurs. The Tragedy of Man
- Wed. (Eve) Two by Two and Maker of Dreams
- Fri. & Sat. The Liars ⁵²

The new policy continued into the Commonwealth Season which saved the theatre in the first months of World War One.

Real repertory proved to be a tremendous success and even The Porcupine, a satirical newspaper which had been highly critical of the early productions at the repertory theatre, issued a special 4-page supplement entitled, "The Liverpool Repertory Theatre, What it has done for our city. Its Aims, Early Struggles and its Prosperous Present." The article was full of praise:

⁵¹ Reilly, pp. 156-157. Letter to Shareholders, January 10, 1914.

⁵² Play-list in Liverpool Public Library, M D. 45.

...at the present time the Repertory is an emphatic success, and there is no more popular playhouse. The old impression of 'Repertory' meaning dullness and depression has vanished into thin air, and the big audiences who flock to the theatre every evening are emphatic in their expressions of cordial approval whether the fare be sparkling, laughter-ridden comedies such as 'The Liars' or a passionate and moving drama such as 'Nan' . . . the Liverpool Repertory Theatre is triumphantly turning out to be a sound financial concern.⁵³

Thus Liverpool's play-producing policy, though in no way experimental, contained sufficient intellectually respectable plays such as Masefield's Nan, to please the high idealists among the theatre's shareholders, and enough comedies, such as Jones' The Liars, to please a more general playgoing public. In addition to this new policy, in what Dean called: "a moment of weakness," the theatre changed its name to, "The Liverpool Playhouse," as a result of blackmail by one very rich board member.⁵⁴

The influence of Liverpool's repertoire and organisation was profound, as they were extensively copied and served as the model for almost all the repertory theatres which sprang up after the war. In 1958, during the celebration of fifty years of repertory theatres, Lewis Casson emphasised that it was Liverpool's "soft" policy, formed in early 1914 and changing little in the succeeding years, which most subsequent theatres

⁵³ Porcupine, special supplement, March 21, 1914.

⁵⁴ Reilly, p. 154, "Alec Rea advanced us six hundred pounds if we would change the name of the theatre from "The Liverpool Repertory Theatre", to "The Playhouse."

had emulated, rather than Manchester's more challenging example.⁵⁵ However, when Liverpool's example was inexpertly followed, "repertory" unfortunately became synonymous with dull revivals of dull plays, and as early as 1922, Granville Barker was saying that the word had become a "curse."⁵⁶

The development of repertory theatres would probably have been very different had it not been for the intervention of the First World War as, in 1913 and 1914, there were a number of short repertory seasons, inspired by Glasgow and Manchester, in various provincial towns. 1913 also saw the establishment of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre which in the 1920's took the position which the first repertory theatres had once held, as the provincial cradle of theatrical innovation. This was followed, in 1915, by the Plymouth Repertory Theatre, the first of some two hundred 'weekly reps.' In 1947, Norman Marshall wrote in The Other Theatre: "During the last three years I have seen something of the work of over forty repertory companies of all sorts and sizes and I have been, quite literally, appalled by what I have seen."⁵⁷ Plymouth itself was much better than the average repertory theatre but the details of its organisation were copied by other theatres whose directors lacked the artistic flair of those who ran the Plymouth Theatre.

⁵⁵ The Stage, September 11, 1958, (H.F.).

⁵⁶ Harley Granville Barker, The Exemplary Theatre (London, Chatto and Windus, 1922), p. 255.

⁵⁷ Norman Marshall, The Other Theatre, (London, John Lehman, 1947), p. 190.

The short repertory seasons were usually started on the initiative of the local Playgoers' Society and were often preceded by a talk from Miss Horniman or Lewis Casson. Seasons were suggested for Edinbrugh, Oxford, Bushey and Bradford, but these did not take place.⁵⁸ But there were seasons in Sheffield, Croydon, Leeds and Bristol. Sheffield and Croydon were linked together, not only by their personnel, some of whom had acted with and directed at the Glasgow Repertory Theatre, but also by the attitude of the local councillors to the repertory seasons.⁵⁹ Repertory was seen as something morally improving by the Mayor of Sheffield, who spoke of the theatre as, "a moral force in community education," and the president of the local Playgoers' Society agreed with the mayor, saying that the season's aim was to, "elevate and educate the people and bring before the public a better class of real pure drama than had ever before been shown [in Sheffield]." ⁶¹ These sentiments were echoed by Alderman Trumble of Croydon who said:

Repertory plays were usually of a very educational character and therefore beneficial to the people of the town. Life was a good thing as life and the repertory plays would depict life in all its pleasure, pathos etc... ⁶²

⁵⁸ Edinburgh Advertiser, April 1911, (H.S.). Watford Post, October, 31, 1913, (H.S.): Yorkshire Observer, October 4, 1912, (H.S.): Purdom, Barker, p. 78.

⁵⁹ Orlando Barnett who led the Sheffield Company and Madge McIntosh, Croydon's leading lady, had both acted in Glasgow in 1909 and 1910.

⁶⁰ Sheffield Daily Telegraph, February 11, 1913.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Croydon Times, February 22, 1913.

Both theatres also enjoyed the patronage of famous actor-managers, Sheffield of Martin-Harvey, and Croydon of Sir George Alexander. Croydon, because it was close to London and because Madge McIntosh was its leading actress, was also able to draw on the active encouragement of Harley Granville Barker and Shaw. ⁶³

Orlando Barnett, who had acted at the Glasgow Repertory Theatre, was the producer and lead player of the Sheffield season. He took up the moral tone of the Mayor when he announced that he wanted his season to contribute to, "the movement towards better plays." ⁶⁴ Barnett also wanted to give the Sheffield playgoer the chance to see the variety of plays which London enjoyed. The Sheffield Telegraph thought it the business of the theatre, "to educate what taste for drama there is and at the same time create a taste for new dramatic developments." ⁶⁵ Barnett's season consisted of The Importance of Being Earnest, Chains, The Return of the Prodigal; An Anatol Episode; Interior; The Convict on the Hearth; Admiral Guinea and Cupid and the Styx, a repertoire impressive for its breadth, its internationalism and its ambition, as the season lasted only two weeks. The season's literary advisers were J.T. Grein and Ben Iden Payne and the whole enterprise was very successful, receiving enthusiastic reviews from the local newspapers, and good audiences. The Liverpool Playgoers' Magazine reported:

⁶³ Ibid., Harley Granville Barker purchased two tickets for each first night.

⁶⁴ Era, February 15, 1913.

⁶⁵ Sheffield Telegraph, February 11, 1913.

The season, from the artistic point of view has been a brilliant success, and this is entirely due to Mr Orlando Barnett and his company. They have been so well cast that every member has been given his or her chance, and without exception, each has risen fully to the occasion.... the season has also proved there is undoubtedly a very keen interest in modern drama of the better type, and are prepared to support performances. That number is certainly not large enough to warrant the idea of a repertory theatre in Sheffield for some time, but it forms a very encouraging beginning, and the officials feel very hopeful about the future. ⁶⁶

The artistic director of the Croydon season was Mr. Keeble Howard, a playwright quite definitely not of the "new" school. His season consisted of Chains; The Tyranny of Tears; The Situation at Newbury; The New Sin; Dropping the Pilot; and Candida, a mixture of the old and the new in drama, which was to become common in "weekly reps" in the coming years. The Croydon season was well attended and respectfully reviewed. Although there was no Playgoers' Society in Croydon to keep the torch of repertory alight, within twenty years Croydon, like Sheffield, had its own repertory theatre.

Whether or not in conscious reaction to the moralistic tone used during the repertory seasons in Sheffield and Croydon, those involved in the seasons at Bristol and Leeds made a special point of denying that there was anything "superior" in the repertory theatre movement. Speaking in Leeds, Miss Horniman said:

⁶⁶ Liverpool Playgoers' Magazine, Spring 1913, n.p. The Sheffield Playgoers' Society "Birthday Souvenir Book," summed up the season as, "Good fare, well presented, by an entirely professional company." It continued, "But for a complex of reasons, the box office returns did not nearly meet the expenses. The Society had, too hopefully, made itself entirely responsible for all outgoings and had to appeal to its guarantors for no less than £249 to meet the loss on the month's working," p. 5.

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and for mercy's sake don't let anyone imagine that there is anything 'superior' in the repertory movement. When people will ask you what is suitable for repertory, say 'Every Play that is good of its kind'...repertory had got to mean in the mind of the public something dull, advanced, occasionally improper and never worth the money. (Laughter) ⁶⁷

And in Bristol, the Bristol Times reported that Mr Fred Carpenter of the Theatre Royal, which was hosting the season:

... objects to the use of the word "Repertory" at all in the scheme. He does not like the word because he feels it would frighten a good many theatre-goers, who would form the opinion that repertory plays would appeal only to the more cultured theatre-goer, and therefore would be above the heads of the average man or woman. ⁶⁸

Mr Carpenter went on to advocate rather old-fashioned plays such as Jim the Penman and Diplomacy.

The season at Leeds was started on the initiative of the Leeds Playgoers' Society and was directed by Milton Rosmer who, with his wife and leading lady, Irene Rooke, had worked at both the Glasgow Repertory Theatre and at the Gaiety. The season had, from the start, the stamp of being rather fashionable and the project was launched with a civic reception for Milton Rosmer and Miss Horniman. The Yorkshire Post, in its reporting of the event, included a special section entitled "Dresses at the Reception" which noted: "Miss Horniman wore a gown of silk, brocaded with a design of

⁶⁷ Yorkshire Post, November 18, 1913, (H.S.).

⁶⁸ Bristol Times, June 6, 1914, (H.S.).

peacock feathers, and a black hat with white bows in front." ⁶⁹
 Civic respectability, as the repertory theatres of Glasgow and
 Liverpool had discovered, helped the box office, and the season
 at Leeds Theatre Royal for three weeks in November and
 December 1913, made a small profit.

At the civic reception, Milton Rosmer outlined the ideals
 behind the Leeds season:

Mr. Rosmer said . . . the theatre was in a
 pretty bad way and the Leeds Repertory Season
 was an attempt to improve it. Perhaps they
 were trying too much, but they certainly
 had a list of plays of which any management
 should be proud, and in spite of short-comings
 they hoped to show what a repertory theatre
 might achieve. He did not say . . . that the
 repertory theatre was the ideal system, but
 it was the salvation of the drama at the
 moment, as only by some such means could the
 vulgarity, narrowness, effeteness, and large
 profits, be done away with. ⁷⁰

Miss Horniman would probably not have sympathised with
 Rosmer's desire to do away with 'large profits' but some of the
 crusading spirit of the early repertory pioneers is contained in
 Rosmer's speech. The idealism was lost during the war and when
 Plymouth Repertory Theatre opened in December 1915, it was as a
 sound commercial venture with no thoughts of reformation. ⁷¹

⁶⁹ Yorkshire Observer, November 18, 1913, (H.S.).

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ See p. 160.

Rosmer's repertoire consisted of Makeshifts; The Devil's Disciple; Miles Dixon; Candida; Strife; Nan; The Upstroke (a dialect play); and What the Public Wants . This repertoire was described by Gilbert Cannan in The Yorkshire Observer:

We place before you plays whose action runs in kitchens and police courts and parlours. Where are the palaces of kings and the drawing rooms of Duchesses?.... Are we then so doleful and cheerless that we must go grubbing in darkness and picking out the despair of bitter lives? On the contrary, we are vigorous and hopeful, but ... are inclined to the argumentative, nothing worse. 72

In Leeds that same week Mrs. Bateman was appearing in a play called From Washerwoman to Duchess. 73

The star of the Leeds repertory season was Irene Rooke. Mention was made of her "beautiful voice," her, "perfection in ensemble," and her Candida was, "the most beautiful study imaginable." 74 The, "remarkably good acting," 75 helped the season to produce, as at Croydon, a small profit, as the Bradford Telegraph reported:

72 Gilbert Cannan, Yorkshire Observer, November 19, 1913, (H.S.). Cannan's play Miles Dixon, written for the Gaiety, was performed during the Leeds season. He was killed in action in the First World War.

73 Leeds Mercury, November 24, 1913, (H.S.)

74 Ibid, December 10, 1913; November 29, 1913.

75 Ibid, December 12, 1913, Nora Nicholson, says she was in admiration and awe of Irene Rooke, who was at the height of her powers during the season, p. 49.

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All true lovers of the drama will be delighted at the success of the recent repertory season at Leeds, delighted and also not a little surprised. I think almost everybody expected that the affair would be a failure, financially that is, though a success d'estime was assured before even it began to all those who were acquainted with the players and with the play concerned.

And it has not been a failure - even financially. ⁷⁶

The Bradford Telegraph also set out, in detail, the reasons for the success of the repertory season:

To begin with, the ground for the festival was very carefully prepared. All the previous exertions of the Playgoers' Societies both in Leeds and in Bradford led up to this event as to a kind of climax, not an ultimate climax, be it understood, but a definite peak, nevertheless, scaled in the upward march to the summit of all Playgoers - the Repertory Theatre.

The Press had also played its part... the Public did like the repertory plays and the Public did advertise them more effectively than anything else. This was proved by the way the audiences increased as the season advanced, a crescendo which suggested that each play might well have had a full week for a complete fruition. Three nights were hardly long enough for each play to advertise itself through the mouths of its audience - the very best kind of advertisement as any manager knows. ⁷⁷

Another actress who, like Irene Rooke, had been a leading figure at the Gaiety was Muriel Pratt, and she, with the help of the Bristol Playgoers' Society and Gertrude Wareing, Alfred

⁷⁶ The Bradford Telegraph, December 18, 1913. Also Frederick Jackson, Joint Hon. Secretary of Leeds Playgoers', Letter, TP's Weekly, December 17, 1913, "Strife was played five times during the Leed's repertory season ... the five performances produced £400... which was enough to meet expenses and leave a little over ..."

⁷⁷ Ibid, December 17, 1913.

Wareing's wife, established two repertory seasons at Bristol. 78
 Her enterprise, which started in April 1914 eventually folded in the autumn of 1915 both because of the war and because of the Bristol Theatre Royal's financial collapse. The season was suggested after a visit to Bristol by Miss Horniman's company who performed Hindle Wakes, Candida and The Silver Box. When Casson resigned as producer at the Gaiety in 1913 Muriel Pratt left too and set up her own company. Kathleen Barker, in her history of the Bristol Theatre describes the first season:

It is against a background of near-insolvency that Muriel Pratt's attempt to found a Bristol Repertory Theatre must be viewed. For her experimental three-weeks' season in May 1914 she had a positive attempt to link up with the Bristol Playgoers' Club and attract a better class audience, altering the starting time from 7.30 to the more fashionable 8 p.m., reseating the Pit and raising the price of seats there to 1s.6d., and including in her programme the winning entry for the Playgoers' one-act play competition (Reuben's Wife, by George Holloway).

It was indeed a magnificent three weeks, the repertory consisting of four curtain-raisers and five full-length plays, one of which was Violet Pearn's poetical drama, Wild Birds, produced for the first time. The authoress had written the heroine's part especially for Muriel Pratt out of admiration for her beautiful voice, and the play was rapturously received.

Harley Granville Barker had intended to be at the first night, but sent his apologies in a rousing letter read to the audience...

A company which also included Brember Wills, Douglas Vigors and Clive Carey (already showing his musical gifts) could hardly fail to make an impact, and a questionnaire circulated by Muriel Pratt during her season received such enthusiastic support that she obtained an option for the following Spring from Fred Carpenter. 79

78 Harry Bergholz, Die Neugestaltung des Modernes Englischen Theaters, (Berlin, Bergholz, 1933), p. 227. S.Y.B. 1928, p. 15.

79 Kathleen Barker, p. 187-188.

In spite of adopting many of the ideas of, for example, the Leeds season in the link-up with the Playgoers' Society and careful preparation, the second season ended when the Theatre Royal went bankrupt in 1915. However, shortly after the end of the war, the Bristol Little Theatre was set up to produce much the same kind of programme as Muriel Pratt had introduced.⁸⁰

Apart from the short seasons, the two most significant developments for the expansion of the repertory theatre movement, were the establishment of new theatres in Birmingham in 1913 and at Plymouth in 1915. The former was the theatre of a wealthy patron modelled closely on the continental type of 'Art-Theatre' the latter, like the Abbey, a converted mechanics hall, was purely commercial "weekly rep" mixing new "safe" plays with old "safe" plays.

Birmingham's, or more accurately Barry Jackson's, theatre differed from the theatres at Glasgow, Manchester and Liverpool, primarily in its concern for the "Art of the Theatre". Jackson, who had been trained at Birmingham School of Art as an architect, was as concerned with the presentation of plays as with their literary merits. The Yorkshire Observer neatly encapsulated his concerns in an article written after the theatre's first year:

No expense is spared by the management in the production and accessories of the plays, though there is not the slightest taint of vulgar lavishness. Authorities declare the lighting arrangements of the stage to be the best in England. All the costumes and stuff decorations are made by dressmakers on the premises in permanent employment. There is no orchestra: tastefully produced and annotated programmes are given gratis.⁸¹

⁸⁰ A History of Bristol's Little Theatre, (Bristol, Partridge and Love, 1925), p. 2.

⁸¹ Yorkshire Observer, December 18, 1913 (H.S.).

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The horror of vulgarity shown in that quotation was echoed in a speech by W.B. Yeats which he had given at a literary and theatrical gathering in Birmingham in 1910. Yeats had referred to vulgarity as: "the greatest evil of the present day in this country. This vulgarity was quite modern, having come upon them in the last 150 years or so, and against it they had to make a crusade." ⁸² Jackson's crusade against vulgarity was further elaborated in the Stage Yearbook for 1914.

Most of the repertory seasons in England, whether in London or provincial cities, have devoted themselves to popularising the realistic drama, "naturalism" in the theatre ... But in Birmingham the tendency has been towards the poetical drama which is less popular at present, although of more permanent importance, in the view of many critics, than the less inspiring types of realism ... The prominence given to Shakespeare has, too, been exceptional ... the manner of presenting these plays ... the permanent apron stage, lit from the back of the theatre and proscenium doors ... have permitted the whole of the plays to be given without intervals for changing scenery or any excision of short scenes. Though the staging has been simple, it has not lacked beauty, and if rooms of state are not always well realised by means of curtains, a hemispherical plaster wall and the Marino-Fortuny system of diffused lighting have given open air scenes great charm of colour and atmosphere. ⁸³

Although productions at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre mirrored the taste of the man who had paid for the building, the theatre was designed as a permanent home for a group of amateur actors called "The Pilgrim Players" which Jackson, inspired by the Abbey, had founded, and with whom he had worked on productions of poetic drama both

⁸² Birmingham Daily Post, April 25, 1910.

⁸³ The Theatre of Tomorrow, Kenneth MacGowan, (New York, Boni and Liveright, n.d.), pp. 54-56. S.Y.B. 1914, pp. 46-47

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classical and modern, which had been presented at the Edgbaston Assembly Rooms and toured round the West Midlands.⁸⁴ In December 1912 the Pilgrim Players announced that, after six years of preparatory work their theatre was now being built and although in the first acting company at Birmingham, the men were all professionals, five of the actresses had been "Pilgrims" and a number of the group helped as supers and in preparation of productions.⁸⁵ For this reason, historians of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre are at pains to deny that the theatre was, "a rich man's plaything."⁸⁶ But one cannot deny that it was only Jackson's money that kept the theatre going during its early years and that, like Miss Horniman, he suffered the difficulties of having chosen Birmingham rather than Birmingham choosing him.⁸⁷ This of course in no way detracts from his contribution to theatre history and, particularly during the 1920's, the Birmingham Repertory Theatre was one of Britain's most adventurous and pioneering theatres.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ In the Pilgrim Players magazine, The Scallop Shell, John Drinkwater the editor, says that the Players are a body without a definite constitution who believe that, "all decay in art begins, when experience is allowed to take the place of ideas." No. 1, February 1911.

⁸⁵ Bache Matthews, A History of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, (London, Chatto and Windus, 1924), pp. 44-45.

⁸⁶ Trewin, Birmingham, quotes E.A. Baughan, who said that the theatre was, "by no means the personal fad of a rich man," p. 19.

⁸⁷ Marshall, p. 164.

⁸⁸ The performances of the complete cycle of Back to Methusalah plays, were perhaps the Rep.'s most famous production of the 1920's, although Kaiser's expressionist play, Gas and Pirandello's, Six Characters in Search of an Author, were also pioneering. Wareing too produced a good deal of Pirandello at Huddersfield.

During the 1920's the Plymouth Repertory Theatre, though in no way pioneering, provided a sound diet of weekly rep fare. J.C. Trewin recalls that he saw about 400 plays there, and adds that George S. King, "would go from Our Flat to Heartbreak House from The School for Scandal to Beauty and the Barge," and notes that, "even Shaw had a respect for King, and the rep did a surprising number of his plays, even The Philanderer and Misalliance." 89

The theatre was started as a purely commercial venture by Messrs King and Parry who believed that, "The proposition would place itself on a business footing almost at once." Mr King explained what the proposition was:

The idea is just to set up a house where only first class stuff will be well staged and well acted. It is only possible to carry out such an idea with a repertory company. There are no 'stars' to being [sic] with. What we aim at is a good and evenly balanced and a cultured cast We have taken the Princes Hall ... have enlarged the stage and raised it so as to get a better line of sight from all parts of the house. We have put in new lighting the auditorium has been partly redecorated and partly re-seated with the new 'tip-up chairs' ... I have a thorough belief in the movement. I think this is the time for it ... you don't mean to tell me that there are not enough cultured people in Plymouth to support a small theatre. 90

His first programme however was very different from that of other theatres in the movement, containing as it did

89 Letter received from J.C. Trewin, May 5, 1978.

90 Reprint from Western Daily Mercury, December 22, 1915.

A Bunch of Violets; Sweet Lavender; The Second Mrs. Tanquary
A Pair of Spectacles and Caste. The Plymouth Theatre began
 resolutely middlebrow and lasted till 1934, the building
 eventually being bombed in 1941. Alec Waugh in a review of the
 theatre's first six years, delighted in its anti-intellectualism:

The repertory theatres have fallen into the
 hands of "cranks" and "intellectuals" who
 do not realise the object of a play is to
 provide three or four hundred people with
 three hours of entertainment. [At Plymouth]
 the company has charm and youth. It is
 versatile [and] and chosen only the best
 plays. It is not "highbrow"... 91

Apart from these advantages, the size of the theatre - it
 held 400 - helped it to survive; 'a very large auditorium is
 a mistake for repertory theatres,' said King. 92

The Plymouth Repertory Theatre, like the Liverpool
 Repertory Theatre after Basil Dean left, was content to revive
 tried and tested plays and only produce new plays which London
 had seen and sanctioned. Unlike the first Repertory Theatres,
 it was neither pioneering nor innovatory, and it seemed as if,
 after a brief burst of creative activity, the provincial theatre
 was going to revert to its former role of passive receptacle
 for whatever London wished to send it. Within its limits,
 Plymouth was an admirable theatre of its type, showing some
 adventurousness in its choice of plays. But, despite the fact
 that in 1929 the directors of the theatre still thought of it

91 Western Daily Mercury, October 13, 1921.

92 Ibid, December 22, 1915.

as part of a "repertory movement", it had become the twentieth century equivalent of a good provincial stock company of the early nineteenth century.⁹³

The outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, intensified the problems facing the repertory theatres at Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow. Although an autumn season was planned for the Citizens' Theatre, both Colonel Morrison, Chairman of the Scottish Playgoers' Company and the prospective director of that season, Lewis Casson, were involved in the war work, as was Major Jowitt, the chairman of the production committee. Without their own theatre and without a permanent staff, there was little hope of the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre continuing, especially as there had not been an unbroken tradition of repertory seasons in the city.

The Liverpool Repertory Theatre was luckier. Because their spring programme had been a success, the idea of an autumn season in 1914, was looked on favourably by the directors. Unlike Glasgow, there was a theatre and an organisation prepared for the season. When the Commonwealth Scheme was proposed and accepted as the way to save the Liverpool Theatre from closure, the directors and theatre staff were able to make the decision for themselves and had no outside body to take into account.⁹⁴ After the initial enthusiasm for the War had faded and the general call-up came, the public seemed to want lighter, more entertaining, plays, and the theatre's name and its artistic policy were changed to reflect this new situation.

⁹³ Bergholz, p. 221.

⁹⁴ See pp. 95-97.

Miss Horniman determined from the first to keep her theatre open and decided to, "ignore the war", refusing to be made: "'nervy', just because a lot of men are rushing at each other's throats." She resolved however to produce plays which would "keep the public in good heart." Miss Horniman denied, however, that this in any way detracted from the Gaiety's first principles:

There has been absolutely no change of policy. But, as a matter of commonsense during the war I am avoiding such plays as would be likely to depress people. I have certainly had some revivals of rather old-fashioned plays... but I have no thought of altering my policy in any way at all ... As to the idea of closing down the Gaiety, my compliments to people's imaginations! 95

Just how successful this war-time policy was is difficult to judge. Early in 1915 it seemed to be working and classic comedies were successfully revived. As Cecil Chisholm reported:

Every week a fresh play is produced in a way that might well make London managers blush to see. The other day I found a crowded house listening to Shakespeare's The Comedy of Errors followed by Molière's The Blue Stockings ... Just before that, She Stoops to Conquer had been breaking box-office records. 96

But later in the year, Manchester was being taken to task for neglecting the dramatic fare provided by the Gaiety!

95 Manchester Guardian, October 9, 1914, (H.S.): Pogson, p.

96 Ladies Pictorial, June 30, 1915, (H.S.)

... patronage has to some extent fallen away and an ungrateful and thoughtless public does not quite appreciate a unique play-house which has gained for itself an enviable reputation world-wide rather than parochial... 97

It is possible that the decline in audiences was the result of Miss Horniman's preference for new plays. In the two and a half years between the success of the classic comedies and the closing of the Gaiety as a repertory theatre, 26 new plays, 14 of them one-act plays, were performed. However, although Miss Horniman was obviously trying to keep her original policy, the new plays chosen for performance in this period are almost all rather weak, have never been revived, and were not even published. The plays ranged from the rather feeble comedy of Frank G. Layton's anti-Labour Party play, "The Ferriport Election", to Seamus O'Kelly's Driftwood, an over-contrived play about the excitement of stage life as against real life. The rest of Miss Horniman's "cheery plays" consisted largely of comedies by Pinero, Sutro and other successful West End playwrights.

While Miss Horniman was serving up dramatic fare "to keep the public in good heart" other actors, inspired by the ideals of the repertory theatre movement, were taking more demanding work by Shaw, Euripides and Houghton to the troops. Both Lena Ashwell and Penelope Wheeler organised groups of actors, both in and out of uniform, to perform in Y.M.C.A. huts behind battle lines on the Western Front. By 1917, a permanent repertory company had been formed in Northern France. The actors toured various camps and their example encouraged the

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soldiers to form their own drama groups. The military authorities allowed this activity as, "a social corrective... to the awful nervous strain." ⁹⁸ After rioting troops had burned Harfleur, a repertory company was sent to the town to perform Candida, as it was felt that good drama would stop the troops from "going over the edge." ⁹⁹

For some of the soldiers, this travelling repertory company was their first taste of the theatre and it provided many with their first experience of modern drama. After the war, the great upsurge of amateur theatrical activity outside the cities was felt to be partly due to this exposure of many men to the repertory theatre movement. ¹⁰⁰

But, in the summer of 1917, just when repertory was proving to be such a success on the Western Front, the Gaiety ceased to be run as a repertory theatre. On the face of it, it seemed a strange decision, as the Sunday Chronicle pointed out:

The rumour ... that Miss Horniman's repertory company was to be disbanded is confirmed. It has a melancholy interest when one recalls the high hopes and ideals of its originators and the tremendous amount of spade-work they contributed. However, I understand from Miss Horniman that she hopes and intends to revive it ... presumably after the war. Curious this

⁹⁸ Drama, Vol. 1, No. 2, July 1919, pp. 5-7.

⁹⁹ The Drama in Adult Education, (London, H.M.S.O. 1926), p. 38, Evidence of Lena Ashwell, paragraph ninety.

¹⁰⁰ Vernon, pp. 129-130

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development should occur just when certain managements are advocating stock or repertory companies as a means of coping with the current difficulties of travelling and dearth of good attractions. 101

There is no evidence to show why Miss Horniman chose to wind up the Gaiety company when she did. The press did not report any interview she gave to explain her reasons and her letters do not contain any hints. It is true that she was losing money and that her repertoire was becoming rather lacklustre. She was possibly just worn down by the difficulties of running a theatre in war-time and when Entertainment Tax was introduced in 1916, this must have added to her overdraft. 102

Miss Horniman, however, decided to keep the Gaiety as a "lodging house" theatre for touring shows and put her business manager in charge. Though she never again ran the theatre as a repertory venture, when the war ended, she continued to take a very active interest in the running of the theatre and the kind of shows which were toured there. Irene Vanburgh recalls her more than business interest in a season of plays she and her husband Dion Boucicault were to present at the Gaiety. The season included the première of A.A. Milne's, Mr Pim Passes By:

Miss Horniman... wanted Dot (Dion Boucicault) to present a series of plays as carefully as he would have done them in London, which was obviously impossible to do with touring companies passing through week by week. She felt that Manchester was worthy of as carefully rehearsed productions as London was. Miss Horniman herself was tall, thin, rather angular and middle-aged when I knew her... But she certainly had a great deal of

101 Sunday Chronicle, August, 5, 1917, (H.S.).

102 Miss Horniman, Letter to the author, Bergholz, pp. 169-170.

personality and determination, and anything looking less like a theatrical manager it would have been difficult to find. Nothing was decided without her; she held the reins very firmly and steadily, was very outspoken in her criticisms, but equally appreciative in her praise... She delighted in telling me that owing to the prices being raised for our season I had beaten the record in money at the box-office, but actually a greater number of people had paid to see the monkey who had appeared with Doris Keane in Romance a few weeks earlier. 103

When Miss Horniman eventually announced her intention to sell the Gaiety in 1921, a rather half-hearted attempt was made to save the theatre for repertory. This came to nothing, however, and the Gaiety was turned into a cinema. 104.

During the crisis year of 1913, Cecil Chisholm had written about the failure of the early repertory theatres to establish themselves in their respective cities and concluded:

"In all, something like £70,000 has been spent on educating the provincial playgoer. What is the net result? The provincial playgoer prefers the cinema." Eight years later, the most prestigious of the repertory theatres fell victim to this preference. 105

103 Vanburgh, pp. 124-125.

104 Pogson says that when Miss Horniman was asked if she would be attending the final performance at the Gaiety replied, "Of course... every corpse must attend its own funeral," p. 175.

105 TP's Weekly, December 19, 1913, (H.S.). In a later article on the subject, TP's Weekly, April 10, 1914, Chisholm says that at that time there were ninety cinemas in Manchester.

CONCLUSION

Though it took another thirty years for the network of provincial repertory theatres to become fully established, and even longer for the concept of municipal repertory theatre to find almost universal favour, by 1914, the repertory theatre movement had achieved a great deal of which it might justly be proud. The previous seven years had seen the initiative in theatrical developments pass for a time from London, to the provinces. A vigorous theatre independent of London had grown up, a large number of new plays had been performed, many excellent actors previously unknown had come to prominence, local schools of drama had been identified and a new theatrical organisation born. Unfortunately, some of the high ideals of the movement had worked to its disadvantage.

The very notion that the repertory theatres would somehow improve the theatre had carried with it notions of superiority which meant that the new theatres failed to capture that large audience otherwise attracted to either the variety stage or to the cinema. In addition to this, the distinct local identities which each theatre felt it necessary to cultivate militated against co-operation between the cities and led to the establishment of harmful rivalries. Frank Vernon, who had been involved in the early repertory theatres, underlined this point very forcefully: "The War was the Great Disintegrator, but the Repertories wilfully disintegrated their own impulse by their failure to co-operate with one another." ¹

Vernon rather overstates his case as there were other factors which led to the break up of the movement. The very fact that the theatres had grown up so quickly and aimed to achieve so much in such a

¹ Vernon, p.86.

short time and with insufficient financial resources, would in itself have been enough to force them into some kind of retrenchment even had there been no World War. But, the First World War completely overshadows the whole movement. Between 1914 and 1918, many of its actors, playwrights, and directors died in the trenches and, moreover, the War distorted the national economy and made the future uncertain. It is regrettable that the mechanics of the repertory theatre movement which, *could have* been allied to an imaginative repertoire, to encouraging new plays and to developing the skills of actors, were used to undermine what the movement had achieved.

In 1947, after making a tour of some forty repertory theatres, Norman Marshall declared himself appalled by what he had seen.² But, even in the early 1920s repertory theatres which did not have the inspiration of a Barry Jackson or a J.B. Fagin or a Terence Gray were usually lacklustre affairs, mechanically reproducing London successes. In the Exemplary Theatre, Harley Granville Barker wrote:

The word "repertory" has become almost a curse. In America the term "Little Theatre" has acquired so many significances as now to have none. In the (repertory) theatre no single play must be given for more than two or three performances running, or for more than three or four in a week, and at least three or four different plays must be performed in a week... A "stock" theatre, with a permanent company producing fresh plays week by week, or month by month, is not a repertory theatre.³

² Marshall, p.155.

³ Harley Granville Barker, "The Exemplary Theatre", (London, Sidgwick and Jackson, (1922) p. 253-256.

The Little Theatre Movement to which he refers expanded rapidly in the United States between 1910 and 1930. The repertory theatres and the little theatres shared a similar repertoire but, like the Adelaide Literary Theatre and the British Drama League, the little theatres were organisations of amateurs, as before them the Abbey and the Théâtre Libre had been. The repertory theatres however were from the start purely professional organisations and partly because of that they came to grief. The professional actors and directors gravitated towards London to further their careers and the cost of employing a large number of theatre professionals, the Gaiety alone employed over forty people backstage, meant that the repertory theatres were fulfilling the role of the German subsidised theatres without the subsidy.

After the War, there were attempts to revive the repertory spirit. In Glasgow, for example, there was much discussion in 1922 and 1923 about the possibility of building a municipal theatre which would take up the mantle of the Citizens' Theatre. One of the Corporation's employees even went to Germany on his own initiative to study municipal theatres there.

The scheme was backed by such diverse organisations as the education officers, the Independent Labour Party and members of the City Council eager to foster musical appreciation in Glasgow. But, in spite of encouragement from the Carnegie Trust, Lady Beecham, Lilian Bayliss and Graham Moffat, the plan was not adopted.

Another twenty years of lobbying by, amongst others, Alfred Wareing, were needed before national and local government gave repertory theatre any official subsidy. And then it was only given to boost civilian morale in the early stages of the Second World War.

But, in the years before the First War, the repertory theatre movement swept forward on a tide of good-will. When plans were being drawn up to establish a literary theatre in Hampstead Garden Suburb, the organisers wrote: -

The past few years have witnessed a marvellous dramatic renaissance throughout the kingdom, due in large measure to the Repertory Movement, which has revived the whole of the Theatre. Under its aegis, the stage of our day is being enriched by literary work that is vigorous and arresting and is rapidly assuming a national character. ⁴

⁴ A Theatre for Hampstead Garden Suburb, Its Aims and Methods, 1913

Appendix A

Checklist of Plays performed by the Theatres
at Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow; with
dates where they have not previously been
published.

* denotes a play previously unperformed.

Plays performed by Miss Horniman's Company, 1907-1917

The Midland Theatre September-November 1907 (Ben Iden Payne)

His Helpmate*	Charles MacEvoy
David Ballard*	Charles MacEvoy
The Fantasticks	Edmund Rostand
The Great Silence	Basil Hoold
Gentlemen of the Road*	Charles MacEvoy
Widowers' Houses	Shaw
Clothes and the Woman	George Paston
The Interior*	Maeterlinck
The Street*	Antonia Williams
Lucifer*	Charles MacEvoy

On tour and at the Gaiety Theatre January 1908 - August

1908 (Ben Iden Payne)

A Question of Property*	J. Sackville Martin
Candida	Shaw
Marriages are made in Heaven*	Basil Dean
The Return of the Prodigal	St. John Hankin
The Subjection of Kezia	Mrs. Havelock Ellis
Woman's Rights	J. Sackville Martin

Measure for Measure	Shakespeare
The Few and the Many*	H.M. Richardson
The <u>postern Gate*</u>	Ben Iden Payne

At the Gaiety Theatre September 1908 to June 1917

1908 (Ben Iden Payne)

When the Devil was Ill*	Charles MacEvoy
The Vale of Content*	Sudermann
Reaping the Whirlwind*	Alan Monkhouse
Makeshifts*	G. Robins Gertrude
Bringing it Home*	H.M. Richardson
Hippolytus	Euripides trans. Murray
The Dear Departed*	Stanley Houghton
The Charity that Began at Home	St. John Hankin
The Amateur Socialist	Kingsley Tarpey
The Knight of the Burning Pestle	Beaumont and Fletcher

1909 (Ben Iden Payne)

The Silver Box	Galsworthy
Cupid and the Styx*	J. Sackville Martin
Going on Parade*	H.M. Richardson
The Three Barrows*	Charles MacEvoy
The Feud*	Edward Garnett
The Doorway*	Harold Brighthouse
Trespassers will be prosecuted*	M.A. Arabian
Nan	Masefield

Independent Means*	Stanley Houghton
Unemployed*	Margaret Mack
Midsummer Fires	Sudermann
Press Cuttings*	Shaw
An Enemy of the People	Ibsen
The Dove Uncaged*	E. Hamilton Moore
Strife	Galsworthy
Every Man in His Humour	Ben Jonson
Much Ado About Nothing	Shakespeare

1910 (Ben Iden Payne)

Mother to Be*	Basil Dean
Before the Dawn*	Leopold Kampf
The Voysey Inheritance	Granville Barker
The Talleyman*	Edward A. Parry
The Purse of Gold*	J. Sackville Martin
Red 'Ria*	Gertrude and Jack Landa
The Critic	Sheridan
Subsidence*	Fred E. Wynne
The Searchlight*	Mrs. W.K. Clifford
Cupid and Commonsense	Arnold Bennett
The Choice*	Monkhouse
The Troth	Rutherford Mayne
Dealing in Futures*	Harold Brighthouse
Effie*	Basil Dean
The Man of Destiny	Shaw
Gentlemen of the Press*	H.M. Richardson
The Master of the House*	Stanley Houghton

The Cloister	Verhaeren
The Point of View*	Gertrude Robins
Justice	John Galsworthy
The Younger Generation*	Houghton
Miles Dixon*	Gilbert Cannan
The School for Scandal	Sheridan
Katawampus	Perry & Calvert

1911 (Ben Iden Payne)

What the Public Wants	Arnold Bennett
The Trojan Women	Euripides - trans. Murray
Spring in Bloomsbury*	Harold Brighthouse
How He Lied to Her Husband*	Shaw
The Little Dream	John Galsworthy
The Twelve Pound Look	J.M. Barrie
Chains*	Elizabeth Baker
Mary Edwards*	P.R. Bennett
Lords and Masters*	James Byrne
She Stoops to conquer	Goldsmith
Sir Anthony	C. Haddon Chambers
Lonesome Like*	Brighthouse
Mollentrave on Women	Alfred Sutro
The Vikings at Helgeland	Ibsen

(Stanley Drewitt and Lewis Casson)

The Little Stone House	George Calderon
Mary Broome*	Alan Monkhouse
Realities*	Gertrude Robins

The Cat and the Cherub	C.B. Fernald
The Blood Flower*	E. Hamilton Moore
Our Little Fancies*	Margaret Macnamara
Twelfth Night	Shakespeare

1912 (Lewis Casson)

Mary's Wedding*	Gilbert Cannan
Man and Superman	Shaw
The Perplexed Husband	Alfred Sutro
The Thieves' Comedy	Hauptmann
Hindle Wakes*	Stanley Houghton
Beauty and the Barge	W.W. Jacobs and Louis Parker
The Question	John J. Wickham
Pilkerton's Peerage	Anthony Hope
The Polygon	Harold Brighthouse
Race Suicide	Hamilton Fyfe
Elaine*	Harold Chapin
The Pigeon	John Galsworthy
The Shepherd	C.A. Forest
The Devil's Disciple	Shaw
Prunella	Housman & Barker
Revolt*	George Calderon
The Rivals	Sheridan
Wonderful Grandmama*	Harold Chapin

1913 (Lewis Casson)

The New Sin	Macdonald Hastings
Miss Tassy	Elizabeth Baker

Old Heidelberg	W. Meyer-Forster
Lydia's Sacrifice*	W.H. Pinchbeck
The Whispering Well	Frnak H. Rose
The Mob*	John Galsworthy
The Marriage of Columbine	Harold Chapin
Jane Clegg*	St. John Ervine
Mr. Perkins' Pension*	Stanley Killy
The Dream Child*	W. Oliphant Down
More Respectable*	W.F. Casey
A Family Affair*	A.C. Magian and Countess Max
Wind O' The Moors*	L. du Garde Peach
The Apostle	T.H. Loyson
The Price of Thomas Scott*	E. Baker
Account Rendered*	John H. Turner
Hiatus	Eden Phillpotts
Nothing Like Leather*	Alan Monkhouse
The Shadow*	Eden Phillpotts
Julius Caesar	Shakespeare
The Pie in the Oven*	J.J. Bell
The Way The Money Goes	Lady Bell
Columbine	Reginald Arkell

1914 (Douglas Gordon to June 1917)

Gardside's Career*	Harold Brighthouse
Loving as We Do*	Gertrude Robins
Consequences*	H.F. Rubinstein
The King Who Had Nothing to Learn*	Leon M. Lion
The Waldies	G.J. Hamlen

	Consarnin' Sairey 'Uggins*	Wilfrid Blair
	The Second Mrs. Tanqueray	Pinero
	Justice	Galsworthy
	Major Barbara	Shaw
	The Hanging of Hey-Go-Mad-Jack*	F.H. Rose
	Love Cheats*	Basil Dean
Jul 7	Twelfth Night	Shakespeare
Sep 21	Rutherford and Son	Githa Sowerby
Sep 28	The Parish Pump*	F.G. Layton
	Charlotte on Bigamy	Judge Parry
Oct 5	The New Shylock*	H.G. Scheffauer
	Choosing a Husband*	A.E. Cooper
Oct 19	The Will	J.M. Barrie
	The Devil's Star*	F.J. Newbold
Oct 26	A Man and Some Women*	Githa Sowerby
	Complaints*	Ernest Hutchinson
Nov 2	Over the Wall*	H.M. Rubinstein
Nov 9	The Plaything*	Gertrude Robins
Nov 16	The Doctor's Dilemma	Shaw
Dec 7	Lucky Peter*	Robert Higginbotham
Dec 23	The Poor Little Rich Girl	Eleanor Gates

1915

Jan 25	She Stoops to Conquer	Goldsmith
Feb 8	The Comedy of Errors	Shakespeare
	The Blue Stockings (Les Femmes Savantes)	Moliere

Feb 22	The One Thing Needful	E. Burney & H. Swears
Mar 1	Victoria and Albert As Others See Us	Phil E. Hubbard & G. Logan R. Higginbotham
Mar 8	Whimsies*	Wilfred Blair
Mar 15	The Walls of Jericho	Sutro
Mar 22	The Fugitive	Galsworthy
Apr 3	The Ladies' Seminary*	J. Harwood
Jul 31	Dark Horses*	Colin MacDougall Stewart
Aug 16	Tyranny of Tears The Private Life of P.C. Pettifer*	Haddon Chambers Wilfred Blair
Aug 23	One Summer's Day Converts*	H.V. Esmond Harold Brighthouse
Aug 30	The Amazons	Pinero
Sep 13	The Pictures*	W.R. Matthews
Sep 20	The Two Virtues	Alfred Sutro
Sep 20	The Crumbs That Fall*	Philip Hubbard
Oct 11	Driftwood*	Seumas O'Kelly
Oct 18	The Benefit of the Doubt	Pinero
Nov 1	The Weak Point*	N. Radcliffe Martin
Nov 8	The 'Joan Danvers'*	Frank Stayton
Nov 22	Re Pilgridge	L.B. Chatwin

1916

Feb 21	The Ant*	H. Herman Chilton
Mar 13	Letty	Pinero
Mar 27	Hymen & Co.* Edward*	W.R. Matthews Arthur Eckerley
Apr 10	Dying to Live	Mary S. Smith & Leslie Vyne

	The Fourth Man	Austin Philips & Edward Ceci
Aug 7	A Marriage of Convenience	Dumas
	Their Mutual Friend	E.M. Robson
Aug 14	Penelope	Maugham
Aug 21	The Mollusc	H.H. Davies
	The Hartleys*	A. Eckersley
Aug 28	The Duke of Killicrankie	Robert Marshall
	Grandfather*	Arthur Bartle
Sep 4	Where is He*	D.T. Davies
Sep 11	The Green Flag	Keble Howard
	Boodle*	Ronald Rubinstein
Sep 18	The Family Failing*	Elfrida & Clarence Derwent
	Love's Young Dream*	Radcliffe Martin
Oct 16	Bedrock	E. Phillpotts & M. Hastings
	Dizzy	Judge Parry
Oct 30	Congratulations*	A. Bartle
	Dandy Dick	Pinero
Nov 6	The Best Policy*	C.A. Castell
Nov 20	The Ferriport Election*	Frank G. Layton
Dec 4	A House of Cards*	E.C. Corser
Dec 11	The Rich Relation*	Harold Williams

1917

Feb 26	Peter's Mother	H. de la Pasture
Mar 12	Alice-Sit-By-The-Fire	J.M. Barrie
May 21	The Two Mrs. Farndons*	Sutro
Jun 11	The Mouse in the Larder*	Arthur T. Colman
Jun 18	Cousin Kate	H.H. Davies

Plays performed at the Citizens' Theatre Glasgow, 1909-19141909 (Alfred Wareing).

You Never Can Tell	G. Bernard Shaw
An Enemy of the People	Henrik Ibsen
Admiral Guinea	W.E. Henley and R.L. Stevenson
The White Dove*	Powell R.M.
Cupid and Commonsense	Arnold Bennett
The Convenient Lover*	C. Roxburgh
Strife	John Galsworthy
Sir Pertinax McSyphophant	Charles Macklin
Whose Zoo*	Robert Bankier
Barbara Grows Up*	G.J. Hamlen
The Voysey Inheritance	H. Granville Barker
Arms and the Man	G. Bernard Shaw
The Suffragette's Redemption*	J.J. Allen
Dealing in Futures*	Harold Brighouse
The Drums of Oude	A. Strong
The Fountain	George Calderon
The Seagull*	Anton Tchekhov
Lanval	T.E. Ellis
The Falcon	Lord Tennyson
The Palace of Truth	Sir W.S. Gilbert
The Price of Coal*	Harold Brighouse
Macpherson*	Neil Munro

1910 (Alfred Wareing)

Coming Home*	M. O'Neill
What the Public Wants	Arnold Bennett
Lady Windermere's Fan	Oscar Wilde
The Excelsior Dawsons	R.K. Risk
Justice	John Galsworthy
Candida	G. Bernard Shaw
Tilda's New Hat	G. Paston
Our First Dinner*	F. Lloyd
The Truth about De Courcy*	G.J. Hamlen and A. Wareing
The Last Man In*	W.B. Maxwell
The Man of Destiny	G. Bernard Shaw
How He Lied to Her Husband	G. Bernard Shaw
Augustus in Search of a Father	Harold Chapin
The Cassilis Engagement	St. John Hankin
The Tragedy of Nan	John Masefield
The Twelve Pound Look	J.M. Barrie
Prunella	Laurence Housman and H. Granville Barker
Scenes from As You Like It	Shakespeare
Dandy Dick	Sir A. Pinero
Jean*	D. Colquhoun
Cousin Kate	H.H. Davies
Oh! Christina!*	J.J. Bell and L. Therval
The American Widow	R. Fillipi
His Excellency the Governor	R. Marshall
How Cottle Fell from Grace	G. Hamlen

Mrs. Gorrings's Necklace	H.H. Davies
Caste	T. Robertson
Captain Brassbound's Conversion	G. Bernard Shaw
Man and Superman	G. Bernard Shaw
The Witch (English translation by J. Masefield)*	H. Weirs Jennsen
Chains	E. Baker
The Two Mr. Wetherbys	St. John Hankin
The Call	M. Stayton
The Weaver's Shuttle*	A. Rowley
Between Dances*	C. Nicholson
Colin in Fairyland* with music by A. Cazabon	G.J. Hamlen

1911 (Alfred Wareing)

The Cassilis Engagement	St. John Hankin
The Tragedy of Nan	John Masefield
Lonesome-like*	Harold Brighthouse
The Adventure of Lady Ursula	Anthony Hope
The Three Wayfarers	Thomas Hardy
Interior	M. Maeterlinck
Pantaloon	J.M. Barrie
The Marriage of Columbine	Harold Chapin
The Cutting of the Knot*	Cicely Hamilton
Muddle Annie*	Harold Chapin
Pilkerton's Peerage	Anthony Hope
Mac Allister's Dream	R.K. Risk
The Girl Who Couldn't Lie	Keble Howard
Carrots	A. Sutro
Macpherson	Neil Munro

Arms and the Man	G. Bernard Shaw
The Best Man*	J.J. Bell
The Cheerful Knave	Keble Howard
The Autocrat of the Coffee Stall	Harold Chapin
The Great Adventure	Arnold Bennett
A Doll's House	Henrik Ibsen
Providing for Marjorie	J.J. Bell
A Little Stone House	George Calderson
The Return of the Prodigal	St. John Hankin
The Greatest of These	Sydney Grundy
Trelawney of the Wells	Sir A. Pinero
The Probationer	Anthony Rowley
The Cat and the Cherub	C.B. Fernauld
The Dumb and the Blind	Harold Chapin
The Maker of Dreams	W.O. Down
Rococo	Granville Barker
Macaire	W.E. Henley and R.L. Stevenson
A Pantomime Rehearsal	C. Clay
You Never Can Tell	G. Bernard Shaw
What the Public Wants	Arnold Bennett
Wee MacGreegor*	J.J. Bell and H.R. Bell

1912 (Alfred Wareing)

A Doll's House	Henrik Ibsen
The Lower Depths	Maxim Gorky
The Great Young Man	Vladimir Bariatinsky

Rosamond	J. Pollock
Romeo and Juliet	W. Shakespeare
The Admirable Crichton	J.M. Barrie
The Pigeon*	John Galsworthy
The Fantasticks	E. Rostand
The Impostor	Leonard Merrick and M. Morton
The Tragedy of a Comic Song*	Leonard Merrick
Civil Wars*	Ashley Dukes
Kipps	H.G. Wells
A Man of Honour	Wm. S. Maughan
Cupid and Commonsense	Arnold Bennett

1912 Alhambra Theatre (Scottish Playgoers' Co.)

Dec 16th	In Honour Bound	Sydney Grundy
Dec 23rd	Carrots	A. Sutro
Dec 30th	Maker of Dreams	Oliphant Down

1913

Jan 6th	Womankind	Wilfred Wilson Gibson
---------	-----------	-----------------------

1913 Wareing's Season (Royalty Theatre)

A Gauntlet	B. Bjornson
The Waldies	G.J. Hamlen

The Surrender of Juan	S. Noble
The Bill*	Lady Randolph Churchill
The Importance of Being Earnest	Oscar Wilde
The Carrier Pigeon	E. Phillpotts
Mrs. Warren's Profession (private performances)	G. Bernard Shaw
The Average Man*	KeneIm Foss
Light O' Love	A. Schnitzler

1914 Spring Season (Lewis Casson)

Jan 21st	The Honeymoon	Arnold Bennett
	Sire de Maletroit's Door	Edward McRoberts (from the story by Robert Louis Stevenson)
Feb 2nd	The Little Damozell	Monkton Hoffe
	The Point of View	Eden Philpotts
Feb 9th	Walker London	J.M. Barrie
	Yellow Fever*	Constance Ray
Feb 16th	The Devil's Disciple	George Bernard Shaw
Feb 23rd	East is East*	Philip E. Hubbard
	Colombine	Reginald Arkell
Mar 2nd	Mollentrave on Women	Sutro
	Anatol	Schnitzler (trans. by Granville Barker)
Mar 9th	The Threshold*	Miles Malleson
	A Man of Ideas	Miles Malleson
Mar 17th	The Liars	H.A. Jones
Mar 23rd	How He Lied to Her Husband	George Bernard Shaw
	Man of Destiny	George Bernard Shaw

Mar 23rd	Campbell of Kilmhor*	J.A. Ferguson
Mar 30th	Marigold*	Charles Garvice
Apr 6th	Mr. Hopkinson	R.C. Carton
	Loving as We Do	Gertrude Robins
Apr 20th	Man and Superman	George Bernard Shaw

PLAYS PERFORMED BY THE LIVERPOOL REPERTORY THEATRE 1911-1915

1911 KELLY'S THEATRE (Miss Darragh, Basil Dean)

Feb 20	Strife	John Galsworthy
Feb 20	Augustus in Search of a Father	Harold Chapin
Mar 6	The Choice	Alan Monkhouse
	The Dear Departed	Stanley Houghton
	Cupid and the Styx	J. Sackville Martin
Mar 13	Vale of Content	Sudermann
	Mother to Be	Basil Dean
Mar 20	The Cassilis Engagement	St. John Hankin
Mar 27	Nan	John Masefield
	The Twelve Pound Look	J.M. Barrie

LIVERPOOL REPERTORY THEATRE (Basil Dean)

Nov 11	The Admirable Crichton	J.M. Barrie
Nov 27	Justice	John Galsworthy
Dec 23	The Cat and the Cherub	C.B. Fernald
Dec 23	The Critic	Richard Brinsley Sheridan

1912 (Basil Dean)

Jan 8	The Perplexed Husband	Alfred Sutro
Jan 16	The Oak Settle	Harold Brighouse
Jan 16	The Tyranny of Tears	Haddon Chambers

Jan 29	Pillars of Society	Henrik Ibsen
Feb 7	The Return of the Prodigal	St. John Hankin
Feb 14	Marriages are made in Heaven	Basil Dean
Feb 14	The Fountain	George Calderon
Feb 26	The Bracelet	Alfred Sutro
Mar 11	The Honeymoon	Arnold Bennett
Mar 11	The Shepherd*	C.A. Forrest
Mar 18	The Convict on the Hearth	Frederick Fenn
Mar 18	The Situation at Newbury*	Charles McEvoy
Mar 25	You Never Can Tell	Bernard Shaw
Apr 6	Rococo	Granville Barker
Apr 6	The New Sin*	Macdonald Hastings
Apr 15	A Roman Holiday*	Laurence Hanray
Apr 15	The Cassilis Engagement	St. John Hankin
Apr 22	Tilda's New Hat	George Paston
Apr 22	Dealing in Futures	Harold Brighthouse
Sep 9	The Importance of Being Earnest	Oscar Wilde
Sep 16	A Doll's House	Henrik Ibsen
Sep 16	Lonesome Like	Harold Brighthouse
Sep 23	The Mollusc	Hubert Henry Davies
Sep 30	Iris	Arthur Pinero
Oct 7	The Devil's Disciple	Bernard Shaw (Gaiety)
Oct 14	Instinct	Henry Kistemaeckers
Oct 14	Press Cuttings	Bernard Shaw
Oct 28	A Florentine Tragedy	Oscar Wilde
Oct 28	The Pigeon	John Galsworthy
Nov 4	The Education of Mr. Surrage*	Allan Monkhouse
Nov 4	The Shepherd	C.A. Forrest (Gaiety)
Nov 11	Lonely Lives	Gerhart Hauptmann

Nov 18	Hindle Wakes	Stanley Houghton (Gaiety)
Nov 18	Mary's Wedding	Alan Monkhouse (Gaiety)
Nov 25	The Voysey Inheritance	Granville Barker
Dec 2	What the Public Wants	Arnold Bennett
Dec 23	Fifinella	Barry Jackson and Basil Dean

1913

Feb 3	The Right to Die*	Kathleen Lion
Feb 3	Admiral Guinea	Stevenson and Henley
Feb 10	Strife	John Galsworthy
Feb 24	The Charity that Began at Home	St. John Hankin
Mar 3	The Adder*	Lascelles Abercrombie
Mar 3	Miles Dixon	Gilbert Cannan
Mar 24	Ser Taldo's Bride	Barry Jackson and John Drinkwater
Mar 24	Hannele	Gerhart Hauptmann
Apr 7	The Perplexed Husband	Alfred Sutro
Apr 14	The Conynghams*	George Paston
Apr 21	Candida	Bernard Shaw
Apr 28	The Shadow of the Glen	J.M. Synge
Apr 28	His Excellency the Govenor	Robert Marshall
May 5	The Man from Blankley's	F. Anstey
May 12	Caste	Tom Robertson

(Laurence Hanray)

Sep 3	Lady Patricia	Rudolph Besier
Sep 10	The Eldest Son	John Galsworthy

Sep 17	A Love Episode*	A.K. Phillips
Sept 17	Arms and the Man	Bernard Shaw
Sep 24	An Enemy of the People	Henrik Ibsen
Oct 1	Playgoers*	Arthur Pinero
Oct 1	A Pair of Spectacles	Sydney Grundy
Oct 8	Masks and Faces	Tom Taylor & Charles Reade
Oct 15	Barbara Grows Up	G.J. Hamlin
Oct 15	The Second Mrs. Banks*	F.H. Rose
Oct 22	The Mother*	Eden Phillpotts
Oct 27	Julius Caesar	Shakespeare (Gaiety)
Nov 3	Jim the Penman	Charles Young
Nov 12	A Roman Holiday	Laurence Hanray
Nov 12	The Cage*	Ronald Jeans
Nov 19	Hogmanay	F.W. Sidney
Nov 19	The Game	Harold Brighouse
Dec 26	Twelfth Night	Shakespeare
1914	In Repertory to May 9	
Jan 26	The Maker of Dreams	Oliphant Down
Jan 26	Two and Two*	Ronald Jeans
Jan 29	The Importance of Being Earnest	Oscar Wilde
Feb 3	The Riot Act*	James Sexton
Feb 17	Makeshifts	Elizabeth Robins
Feb 17	The Tragedy of Nan	John Masefield
Feb 27	The Liars	Henry Arthur Jones
Mar 6	Caste	Tom Robertson

Mar 19	Life Father Like Son*	Roy Devereux
Mar 28	Love and What Then	Macdonald Hastings
Apr 11	The Gay Lord Quex	Arthur Pinero
Apr 23	Profit - and the Loss*	H.F. Maltby
Apr 30	Doormats	Hubert Henry Davies
Apr 30	The Young Guv'nor*	F.H. Rose

Commonwealth Season Estelle Winwood, Madge MacIntosh
(plays in repertory) to May 1, 1915

Sep 19	The Tents of the Arabs	Lord Dunsany
Sep 19	The Kiss Cure*	Ronald Jeans
Sep 23	Mrs. Gorrings's Necklace	Hubert Henry Davies
Oct 1	Jane Clegg	St. John Ervine
Oct 1	The Music Cure	Bernard Shaw
Oct 7	A Florentine Tragedy	Oscar Wilde
Oct 7	The Passport	B.C. Stephenson and W. Yardley
Oct 16	A Woman of No Importance	Oscar Wilde
Oct 26	Candida	Bernard Shaw
Oct 26	Between the Soup and the Savoury	Gertrude Jennings
Oct 27	The Doctor's Dilemma	Bernard Shaw
Nov 13	The Blindness of Virtue	Cosmo Hamilton
Nov 23	Don	Rudolph Besier

1915

Jan 18	Trelawney of the Wells	Arthur Pinero
Jan 21	A Pantomime Rehearsal	Cecil Clay
Jan 21	Cupid and the Styx	J. Sackville Martin

Jan 21	The Will	J.M. Barrie
Feb 4	The Fugitive	John Galsworthy
Feb 10	Cousin Kate	Hubert Henry Davies
Feb 23	Lady Windermere's Fan	Oscar Wilde
Feb 26	A Love Episode	A.K. Philips
Feb 26	The Cassilis Engagement	St. John Hankin
Mar 11	Nobody Love's Me*	Robert Elson
Mar 24	A Flash of Lightning*	Norman McKeown
Apr 5	Hullo Repertory*	Ronald Jeans
Apr 16	The Wild Duck	Henrik Ibsen

Commonwealth (Madge McIntosh)

Sep 4	Billy's Little Love Affair	H.V. Esmond
Sep 8	Niobe - All Smiles	Harry & Edward Paulton
Sep 18	The Rest Cure	Gerturde Jennings
Sep 18	Helen with the High Hand	Richard Pryce
Sep 24	The Earth	James Fagan
Oct 6	No Reflection on the Wife*	Ronald Jeans
Oct 18	Call-y-Ralwad*	M.D. Evans
Oct 25	My Friend the Prince	Justin McCarthy
Oct 25	A Maker of Men	Alfred Sutro
Oct 30	Cousin Kate	Hubert Henry Davies
Nov 4	A Bit o' Love	John Galsworthy
Nov 17	The Mollusc	Hubert Henry Davies
Nov 20	The Second Mrs. Tanqueray	Arthur Pinero
Dec 1	Milestones	Arnold Bennett & Edward Knoblock
Dec 27	Brer Rabbit and Mr. Fox	Afternoon Show
Dec 27	Higgledy Piggledy*	Ronald Jeans

1916

Feb 21	Alice-Sit-By-The-Fire	J.M. Barrie
Feb 26	Driven	Temple Thurston
Mar 11	The Ambassador	John Oliver Hobbes
Mar 16	The Pigeon	John Galsworthy
Mar 25	Little Mrs. Cummins	Richard Pryce
Mar 30	Hush	Violet Pearn
Apr 7	Nobody's Daughter	George Paston
May 2	Twelfth Night	Shakespeare
May 12	The Idler	Haddon Chambers
May 20	The Silver Box	John Galsworthy
May 27	Preserving Mr. Panmure	Arthur Pinero
Jun 3	The Blindness of Virtue	Cosmo Hamilton
Jun 7	Merely Mary Ann	Israel Zangwill

(W. Bridges Adams and Muriel Pratt)

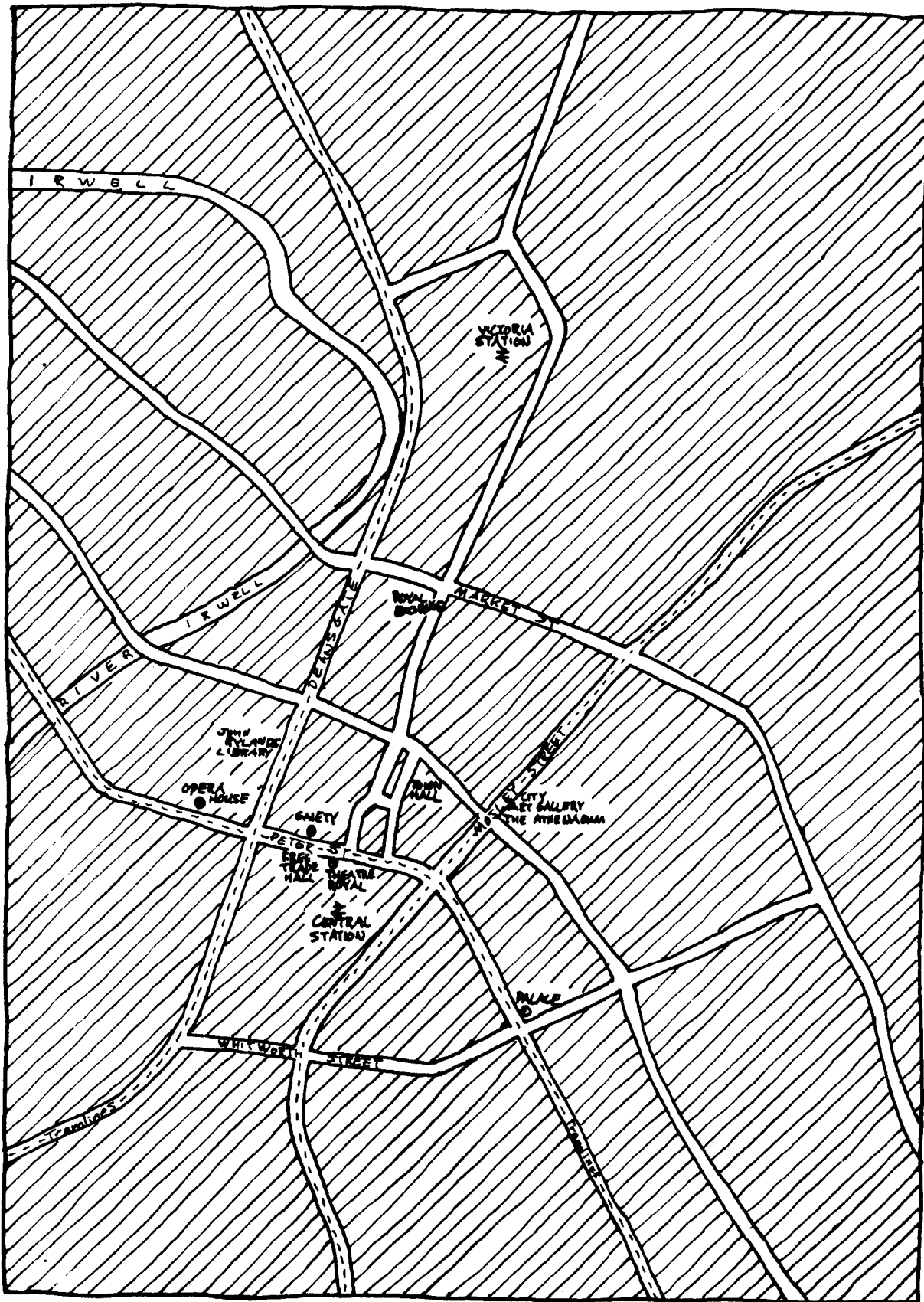
Sep 2	Iris Intervenes	John Hastings Turner
Sep 13	The Manoeuvres of Jane	Henry Arthur Jones
Sep 21	Quality Street	J.M. Barrie
Oct 3	The Truth	Clyde Fitch
Oct 14	She Stoops to Conquer	Oliver Goldsmith
Oct 25	Dolly Reforming Herself	Henry Arthur Jones
Nov 7	Prunella	Laurence Housman & Granville Barker
Nov 15	A Modern Aspasia	Hamilton Fyfe
Nov 23	Therese Raquin	Emile Zola
Dec 20	The Palace of Cards	Henrietta Leslie
Dec 20	Nothing New	John Hastings Turner

1917

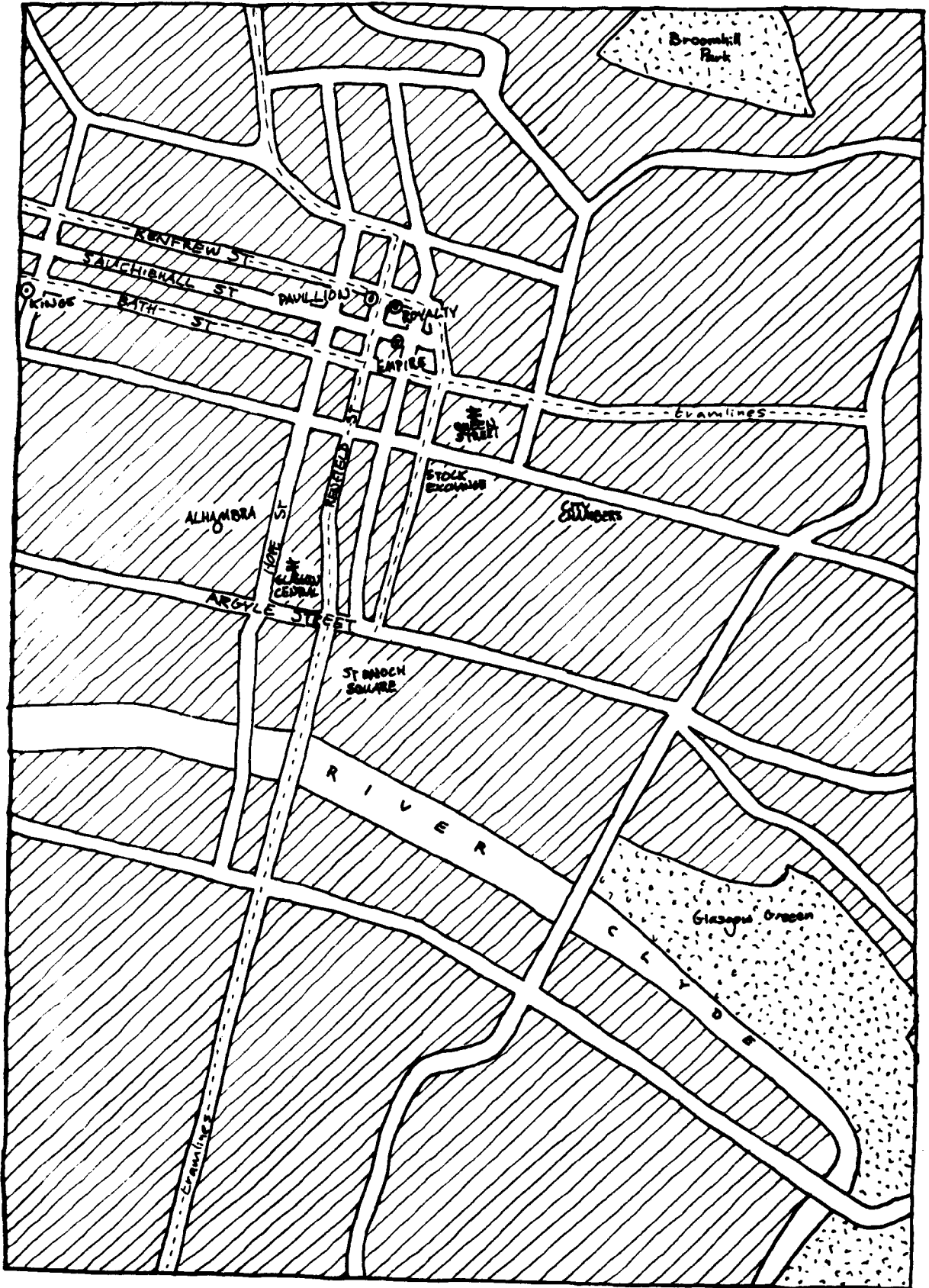
Feb 5	Penelope	W. Somerset Maugham
Feb 15	What Every Woman Knows	J.M. Barrie
Mar 12	Just to Get Married	Cicely Hamilton
Mar 15	The School for Scandal	Richard Brinsley Sheridan
Apr 2	Everyman	Anon. (Fifteenth Century)
Apr 7	The Lyons Mail	Charles Reade
Apr 24	The Boomerang	Winchell Smith and Victor Mabe
May 14	The Unwritten Law	Laurence Irving
May 28	The Morals of Marcus	W.J. Locke
Jun 7	A Marriage of Convenience	Alexander Dumas

Appendix B

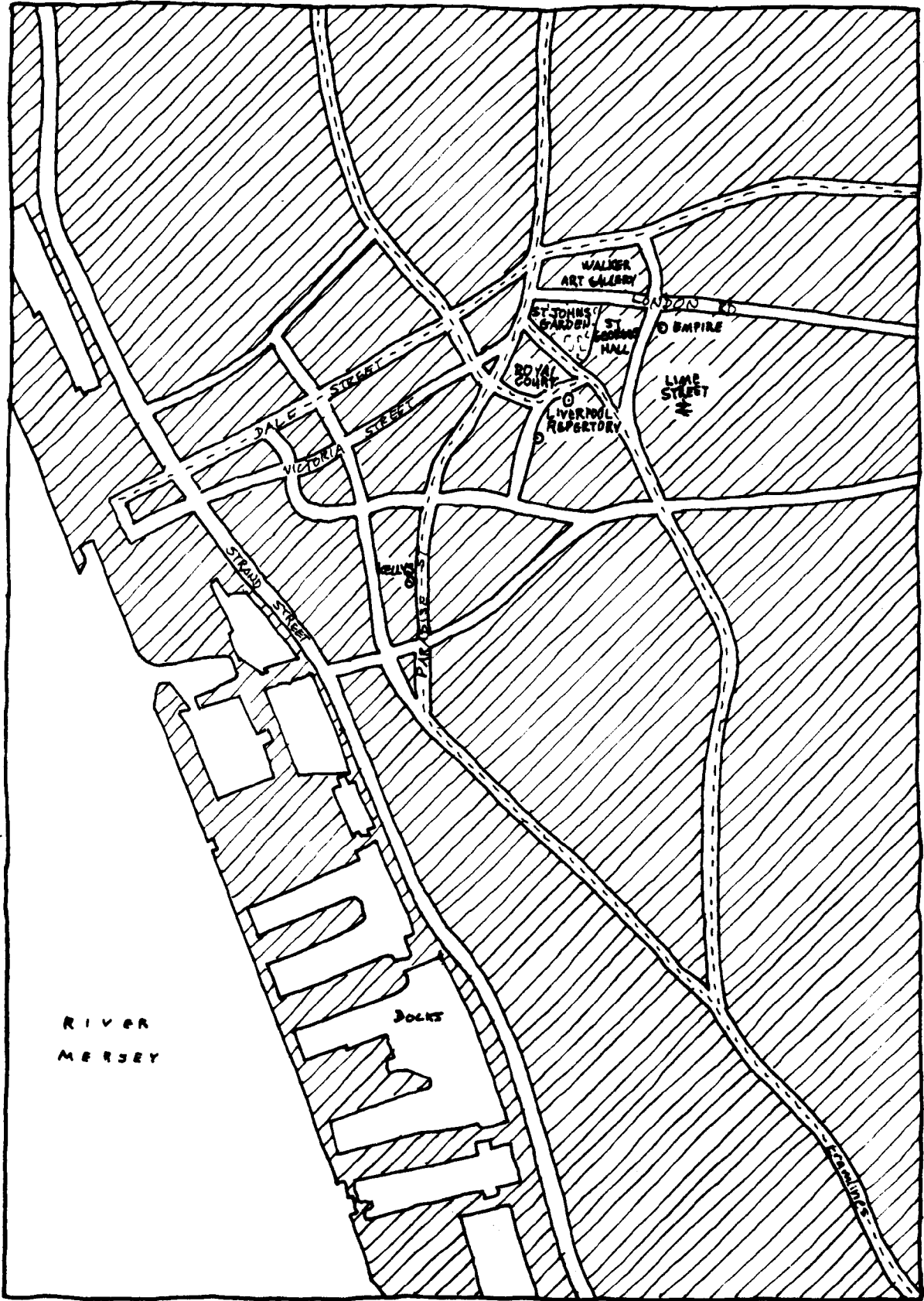
Maps and Illustrations



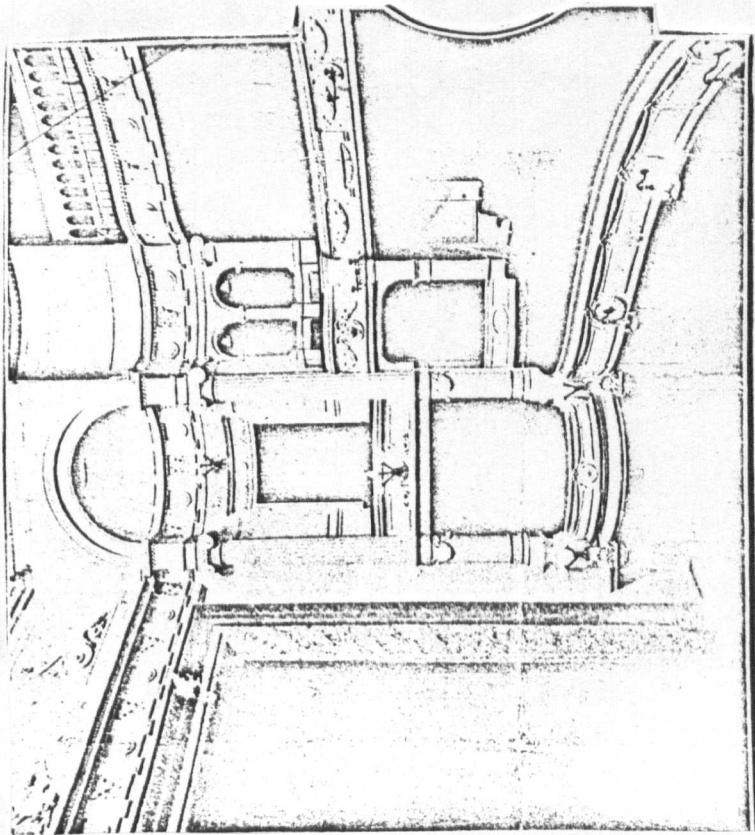
MANCHESTER.



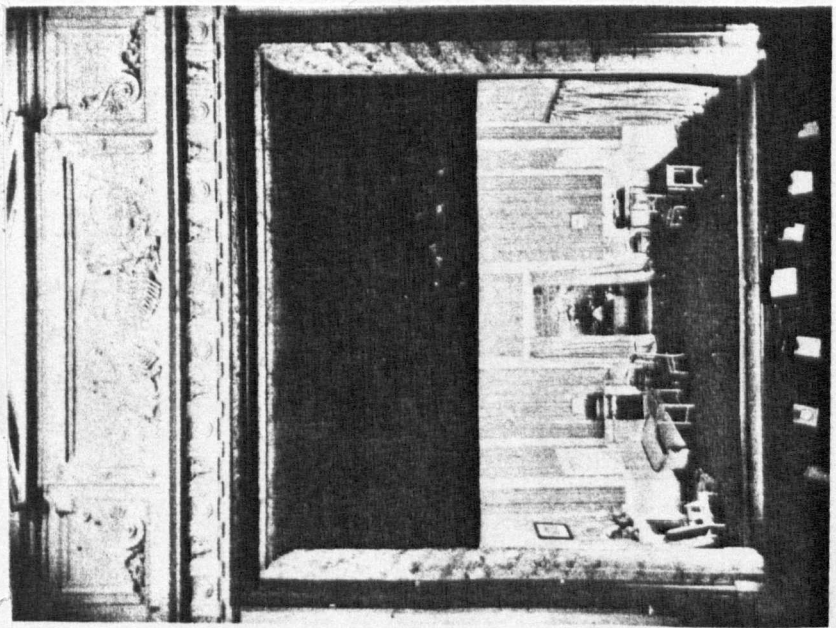
GLASGOW.



LIVERPOOL.



INTERIOR OF THE GAIETY THEATRE, MANCHESTER.



The stage of the Gaiety Theatre, 1910



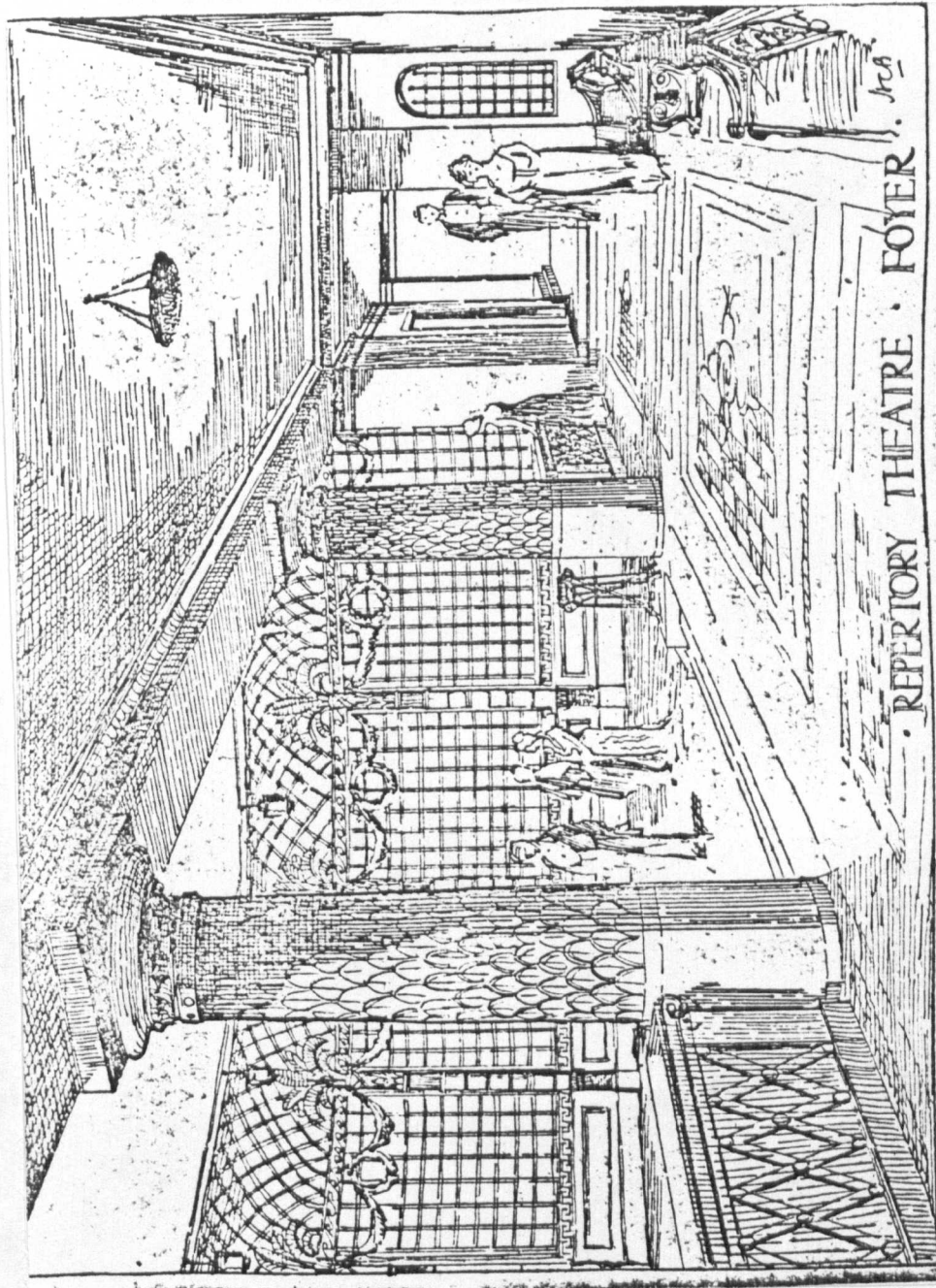
ROYALTY THEATRE, GLASGOW

(From the back of the Pit).

From a Drawing made in September 1910,
by MUIRHEAD BONE.

Subscribers to QUEEN, February 1931.
Country Press, Bradford, Yorks.

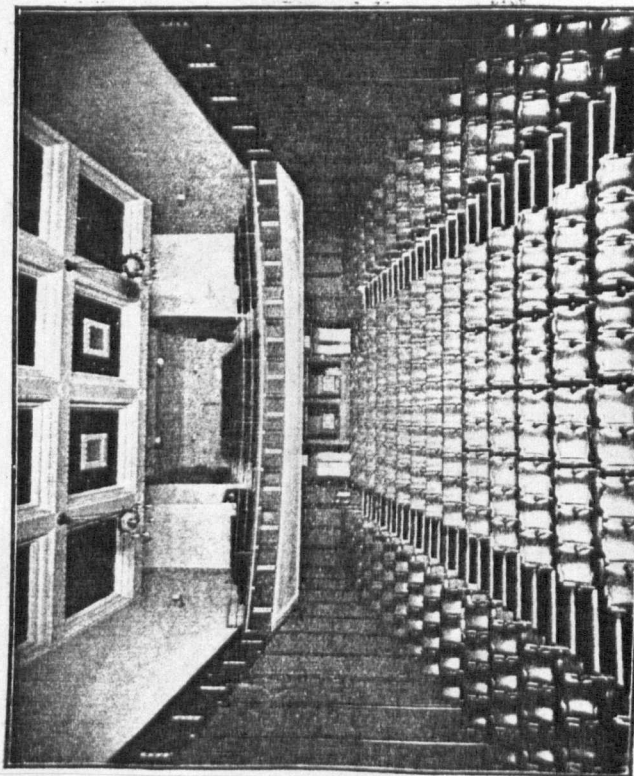
The curtain has just risen on the last act of
Bernard Shaw's "Man and Superman."
Presented by Alfred Wareing and produced by Granville
The persons on the stage are
Violet Robinson (Marriell Pope) and Old Malone (G. W.
Anson)



REPERTORY THEATRE · FOYER ·

A VIEW OF THE FOYER, WHICH IS TO BE A SPECIAL FEATURE OF THE NEW THEATRE.
 (FROM DRAWINGS BY PROFESSOR ADSHEAD, THE ARCHITECT)

THE BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE.



AUDITORIUM FROM THE STAGE.

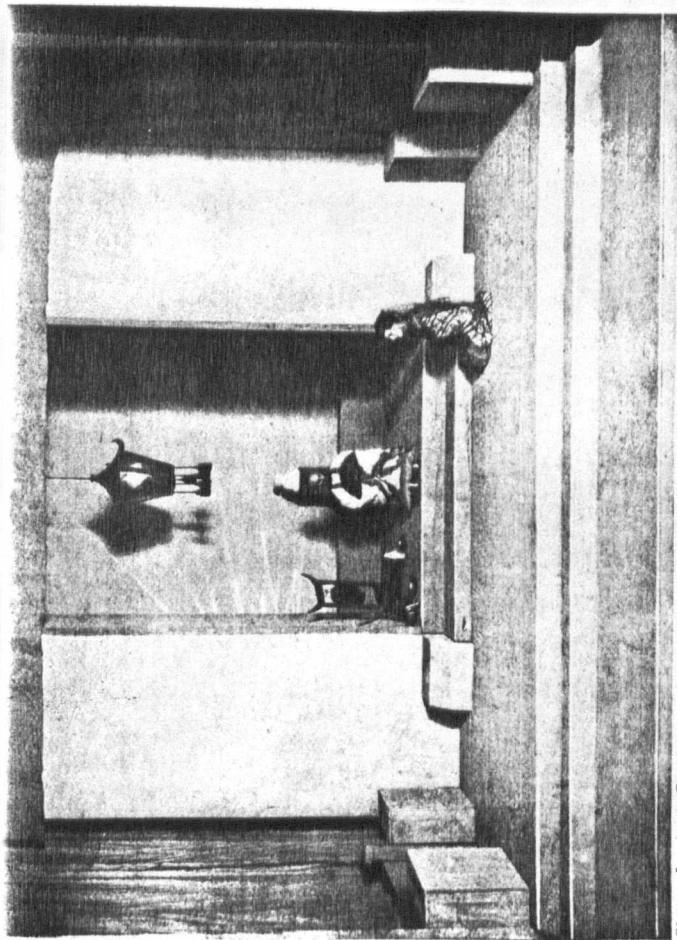


Photo: Lewis & Randall

"THE FAITHFUL."

DESIGNED BY BARRY V. JACKSON

The arrangement for the interior scene is shown; for the exterior scene the side curtains were withdrawn and the opening at the back closed by a shutter on which a conventional window was painted. Prevailing colour grey.



Fig. 4.—THE PLAINS OF PHILIPPI.

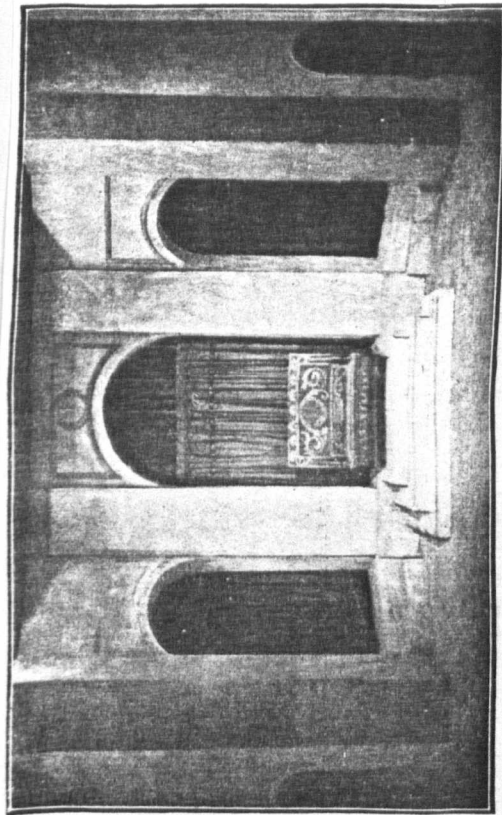


Fig. 3.—THE SENATE HOUSE.

THE GAIETY, MANCHESTER.

Setting of "Julius Cæsar."

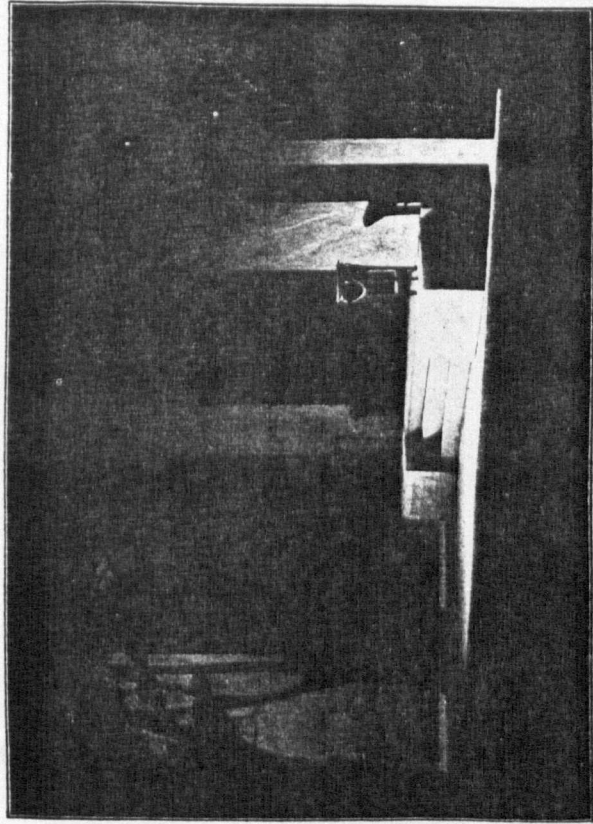


Fig. 2.—BRUTUS' ORCHARD.

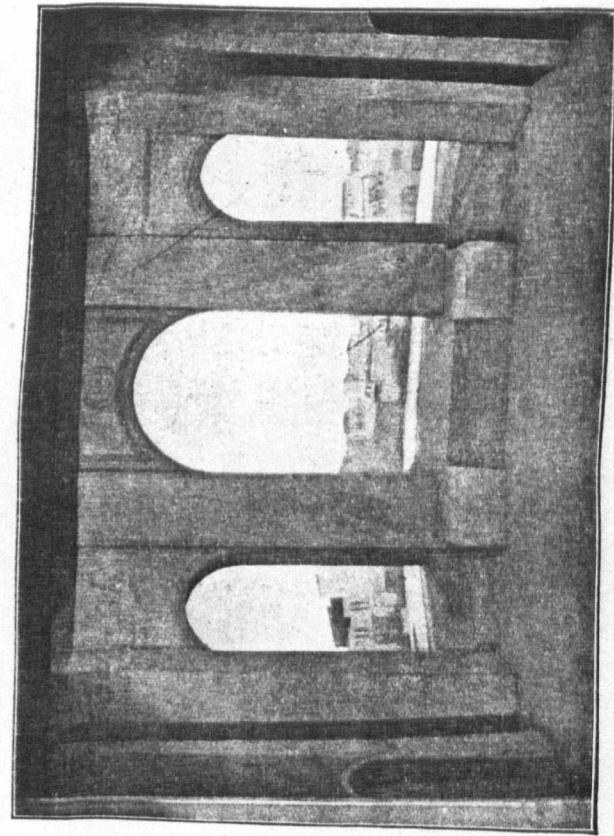
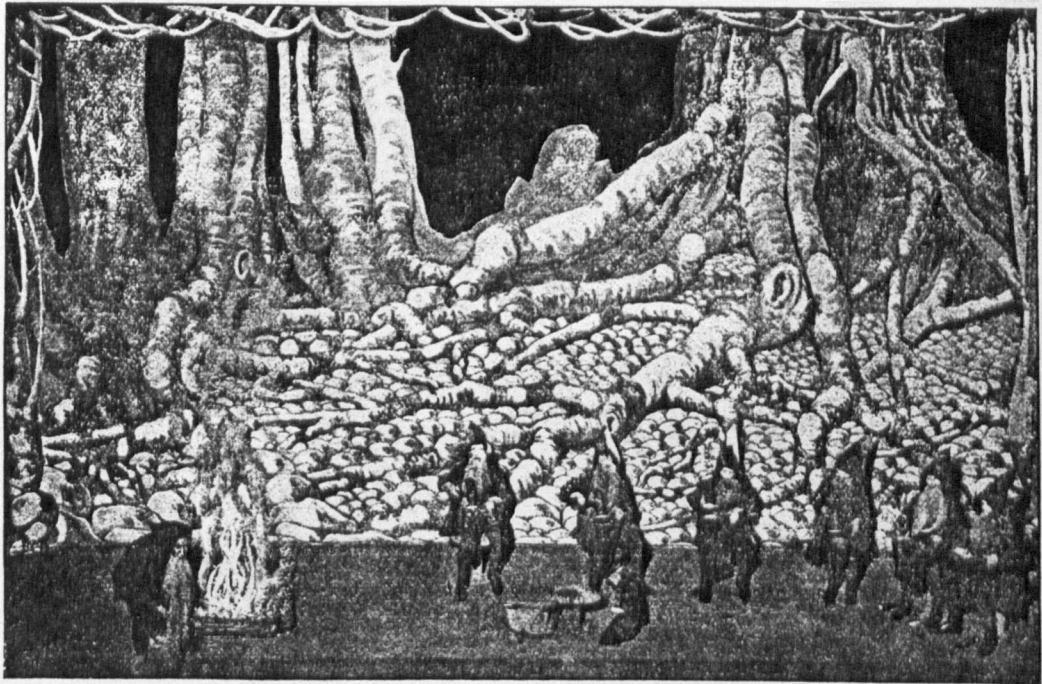


Fig. 1.—THE FORUM.



DOWN AMONG THE ROOT OF THINGS.

Designed by LESLIE CASEY.

Painted by VICTOR MACCLURÉ.

Photo by Couper



THE GLEN O' TH' GNOMES.

Painted by LESLIE CASEY.

COLIN IN FAIRYLAND - DECEMBER 1910

Royally Recker Glasgow

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**CAMPBELL
OF KILMHOR**

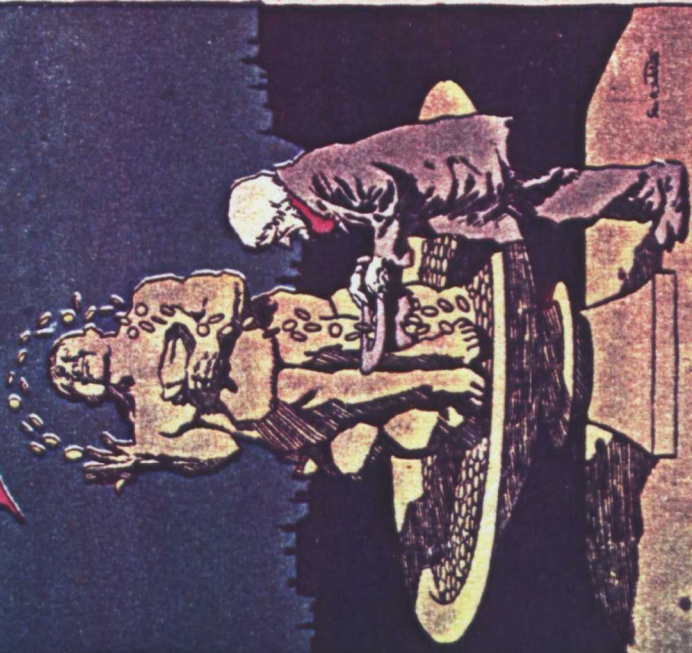
J.A. Ferguson

LONDON & GLASGOW: GOWANS & GRAY LTD.

In the Ground

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The Fountain



George Calderon

LONDON & GLASGOW: GOWANS & GRAY LTD.

Two of the series of "Repertory Plays" initiated by Alfred Wareing

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Primary Sources

Books cited

Periodicals cited and consulted

Books consulted

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Ref. 8181-8184

GLASGOWCity Archives

Theatre plans of the Royalty Theatre

Documents relating to a proposed municipal
theatre in Glasgow, including letters
from G.B. Shaw and Graham Moffat
Ref: B4/12/1/3176

Mitchell Library

Programmes for the Royalty Theatre 1909-1914

Introductory brochures for Spring 1909,
Autumn 1910, and Spring 1911, seasons at
"The Repertory Theatre"

Manuscript of Colin in Fairyland, by G.S. Hamlen

HUDDERSFIELDHuddersfield Central Library

Scrapbook compiled by Alfred Wareing mainly of
press-cuttings about the Citizens' Theatre,
many from the 1920s, some undated, with odd
cuttings of general theatrical interest and
several caricatures of himself and drawings
of his theatre

LIVERPOOLLiverpool Record Office

Miscellaneous Documents, MD45, contains a large selection of items relating to the 1911-1917 period of the Liverpool Repertory Theatre including:

Reprints of articles on the Theatre from the Liverpool Courier and the Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, March, 1911.
 Director's Reports 1911, 1913-1918.
 Souvenir, November, 1911.
 Booklet entitled Liverpool Repertory Theatre, Its Plays and Players (1911).
 Printed Address to Shareholders 1912 and Appeal to Shareholders 1914.
 Reprint of appeal for increased support from Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, October, 1912.
 Printed sheet "Interesting Record of Work Done by Members at the Liverpool Repertory Company, Season 1911-12".

Also, newscuttings relating to the theatre. Programmes for the theatre, souvenir brochures and playbills are also held.

LONDONEnthoven Collection (Victoria and Albert Museum)

Programme for the Gaiety (1912), Sutro Perplexed Husband

Programme for Basil Dean's Fifinella

Programme from 1921 when the theatre was still owned by Miss Horniman; includes seating plan

British Library

Letters from Harley Granville Barker to William Archer. Ref. 45290, ff 22-169

Playscripts from the Lord Chamberlain's Office

British Theatre Institute Library

An album of photographs of Gaiety productions, mainly post-1912

A collection of plays, some with prompt books (P.B.); actors' parts (Pts.); property lists (P.L.); and lighting plots (L.P.). The collection includes: -

Ferriport Election, Frank G. Layton, (P.L. P.B. Pts.)
Loves Cheats, Basil Dean, (P.B.)
Hindle Wakes, Houghton, (Pts. P.L. L.P.)
Dear Departed, Houghton, (Pts.)
Younger Generation, Houghton, (P.L. P.B.)
The Apostle, P.H. Loyson, (P.B.)
The Unemployed (Independent Means), Houghton, (P.B.)
Driftwood, Seamas O'Kelly, (Pts. P.L.)
Mother to Be, Basil Dean, (P.B. Pts.)
Master of the House, Houghton, (P.B. Pts.)
Parish Pump, Frank G. Layton, (Pts. P.B. P.L.)
The King Who Had Nothing to Learn, Leon M. Lion (Pts.
P.L. P.B.)
The Great Silence, Basil Hood, (P.B.)
Before the Dawn, Kampf, (P.B. Pts.)
The Feud, Garnett, (P.B. Pts.)
The Devil's Star, F.J. Jewbold, (P.B. Pts.)
The Postern Gate, B. Iden Payne, (P.B. Pts.)
The Tallyman, E.A. Parry, (Pts. P.B.)

MANCHESTERJohn Rylands Library, University of ManchesterThe Horniman Scrapbooks

Sixteen volumes of newspaper and periodical cuttings about the Gaiety; reports of Miss Horniman's public speaking; articles about the Gaiety Company on tour; and articles about related theatres and theatrical projects, eg. the funding of the Liverpool Repertory Theatre and Milton Rosmer's repertory season in Leeds in 1913. The cuttings are arranged chronologically and cover the period 1907 to 1921, but there are few cuttings on the Theatre after 1917.

Manchester Public Library

Collection of letters on microfilm from Miss Horniman to various friends and to writers like Shaw and St. John Hamkin. Letters from celebrities such as Marie Stopes and John Galsworthy to Miss Horniman. Letters to Tom Barr, a Manchester clergyman from Miss Horniman. Most of the manuscript correspondence has disappeared since it was photocopied in 1959, Ref. HO.10.

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<u>The Glasgow Herald</u>	1909-1914
<u>The Glasgow Evening News</u>	1909-1914
<u>The Leeds Mercury</u>	1913
<u>The Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury</u>	1911-1917
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