

PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE.

A NEW PLAY BY A NEW AUTHOR.

First representations on any stage have always an especial interest for those auditors in whose breast the hope springs eternal of one day assisting at the discovery of a masterpiece. "Sinners" may not merit a profusion of superlatives, but, if the standard taken be that of a competent theatrical practitioner like Mr. H. A. Vachell, it answers the test with unusual adequacy. Sometimes it seemed doubtful, though the name of the author is new, if it were a first play, for the action was concise and compact, the characters strong and sound, and the dialogue telling and direct. The essential of the story is the Roman father and his rebellious children whom we have met so often in plays published and unpublished; the prototype is the "Heimat" of Sudermann, which we know as "Magda." The father is the last of a county family of legendary origin: no doubt his morbid fear of its extinction accounts for his perpetual insistence upon his great heritage of untarnished traditions. His code of social arrogance and his creed of religious intolerance are so oppressive that his two daughters, his only children, revolt, one openly, one clandestinely. The secret rebel is a mean, pitiful, callous little thing, whose nature is distorted by her deceit; the open rebel is generous, noble, and courageous. The younger sister has a very sordid episode in her life, for which the other sister takes the blame. In doing so the price of her sacrifice is almost her ultimate ruin, but matters are righted in a powerful and rapid scene by her lover, the strong man from America. To recount the plot except in very full detail is to discountenance the story, but the detail is so dexterous and so plausible that its improbability vanishes; it has much of the severity of logic which may be learned from Sardou. The management of situations, and especially the *Maison des scènes*, is commendable, with little indication of immaturity.

The acting is admirable. Miss Marga la Rubia as the actress has every effect calculated with exact precision; her strong personality and attractive temperament prevent the obtrusion of certain inconvenient questions. Miss Eva Leonard Boyne is commendably unrelenting in the representation of the detestable younger sister, Marion. Mr. H. K. Ayliff is an impressive stage baronet, with his ponderous bigotry and intolerance. The three other men—Mr. Lealie Howard as the irresponsible, very English boy who is about to marry Marion; Mr. Dennis Wyndham as the honest young man John, who "makes good"; and Mr. Wilfred E. Payne as the impudent and complacent blackmailer—are all excellent; whilst Miss Gertrude Sterroll as the suppressed, but not altogether suppressed, gentle mother plays a difficult part with unobtrusive firmness. The author, Mr. Brandon Fleming, who appeared in the uniform of a lieutenant with green gorget-patches, was applauded cordially at the conclusion, as he deserved.

(Birmingham Daily Post, June 4, 1918)

PLYMOUTH—ROYAL (M.D., James M. Glover; A.M., H. E. Jones).--Sinners is presented by Arthur Aldin. The chief rôle is portrayed by Margala Rubia, and Eva Leonard Boyne as Marion Barchester acts with success. H. K. Ayliff is a fine Sir Noel Barchester, while Gertrude Sterroll's Lady Chester, while Gertrude Sterroll's Lady Denis Wyndham is prominent as John Lynton. Others are Leslie Howard and Wilfred E. Payne.

(The Stage, June 27, 1918)