

The Ministers' Corner

THOUGHTS ON THE THEATRE

By Rev. Wm. Grotefeld

The theatre is one of the institutions that furnishes amusement for the public. It is amusement and entertainment in the first place as we see it today, and education, instruction and edification in the second, third or fourth place, if the latter elements are aimed at all. Of course there is good and bad in every thing. The bee flies to the sweet flower and extracts the honey and leaves the poison behind. And between things good and things bad in theatres and shows lie many things. There are people that lived thru a happy time of youth and never danced, and others took dancing lessons and learned to cut all the funny and "classical" capers that are and went thru it all without harm and lived thru a very happy youth. So people have never been in a theatre and are perfectly happy and there are others that have gone and go and are happy. Its not the thing itself but rather the person and circumstances that surround it. Yes, it was the theatre I was speaking about.

As to amusement it stands on a higher level than the dance, seems to me. With dance there is motion particularly, but here is acting and speech. For many years back the theatre has taken the first place in public amusements and maintains its place up to the present day.

The Christian Church in its early days took a stand against the theatre, because of the allied connection of the theatre with the pagan religions and on account of many immoral things that ran together with the performances. Later the church changed its attitude towards the theatre and made it its ally. At Constantinople, at Rome, throughout Europe the church of the middle ages introduced theatrical work. And it might seem strange, it does to me, that the first thing dramatized was the Passion of Christ of which the Passion Play of Oberammergan is a relic. (By the way it was announced that the Oberammergan play will be given again in 1922.)

These religious plays degenerated soon. The funny and entertaining element introduced in the Bible text was out of keeping and was offensive. Nevertheless the religious theatre of the past became the mother of the secular theatre of today. Religious leaders and humanists soon began to busy themselves with the ancient literature and with present day movements and wrote their dramas and comedies. And even outstanding religious leaders took part in executing the dramas and plays. The great reformer, Phil. Melancthon, took active part in plays. Dr. Martin Luther sanctioned theatrical work when he said: "We must not forbid comedies in schools, but rather permit and recommend them because they give an excellent practice in free speech, they furnish opportunity to acquire the language of the poets and classics, and present before the eye many fine lessons that the public is unable to glean from the book. Good and bad is civilly contrasted."

Even Calvin permitted (1546) that his venerable citizens of Geneva give a religious play in which was portrayed that piety furnishes the greatest happiness. And the performance occurred on a Sunday evening. Lessing and Shakespeare, Goethe and Schiller and most of the classical writers had high ideals for the stage and intended the theatre to stand for the best. But they felt too that they could not lose sight of the amusement and entertainment side of stage work. Yet this was with them only a means to an end. Their object was to portray vice and virtue, misery and happiness, stupidity and prudence clearly and true. You thank God for a good conscience when you see Lady MacBeth shrouded in darkness of night wash her hands and asking for all the perfumery of Arabia to rid her from the odors of death.

In drama you can learn patience in suffering, learn to think seriously on things civic and national. Here, beside the pulpit and the daily newspaper, is an opportunity to preach the truth to the rich and powerful of the land.

These are some of the aims and ideals of the theatre of the past, and should be of today's. Some only want the amusement and the entertainment. Let that be taken care of properly, but let us not lose sight of the greater things.

Now let us be just, judge and condemn what is evil and a public menace, and laud and uphold what is good and conducive to better citizenship. Religion and work in their place and at their time, and amusement and entertainment in their place and their time. It is for each individual to learn to choose right like the bee chooses between honey and poison. And the more genuine religion and good sense a fellow has the

sure he will be in making the right choice.

"MAY MOON" TO SHOW TWO NIGHTS AT DICKE THEATRE

Fifty Little Tots of Downers Grove To Dance For Benefit of Fire Truck.

Another benefit for the fire truck fund will be given at the Dicke Theatre on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, May 17th and 18th when fifty little tots of the village will dance. The show is being given under the auspices of Miss Ruth Edison and those who will dance are pupils of her classes in this art.

There will be solo dancing by some of the more advanced pupils and chorus work by the entire assembly. Miss Edison will dance several numbers and there will be music.

Tickets for the affair are now in the hands of those who will appear and it is expected that this will be another home talent success for which the village is noted.

The tickets for "May Moon" have been selling so quickly it has been decided to give it two nights. Perhaps you have already "done your bit" toward the Fire Truck Fund. That shouldn't prevent you from buying tickets for this show because it will be well worth seeing.

The children are doing remarkable work and many splendid clear voices will be heard in the show.

Some of those who will do solo work are Shirley Maxfield, Rose and Marguerite Canty, "Peggy" Weinheimer, and Martha Bender.

Anyone who has heard Martha Bender sing knows that her part in the program will be well worth the price of admission.

Tickets are 50 cents and if you want to see one of the best shows ever staged in Downers Grove—get your ticket before it is too late.

HEAL—ROGERS

The marriage on Saturday, April 16th, at 2:00 p. m. of Miss Gladys Elizabeth Rogers and Mr. William Arthur Heal was of great interest to the numerous friends of the young couple.

The wedding service was read by the Rev. Gilbert Newland of the M. E. Church at the home of the bride's grandmother, Mrs. J. W. Rogers of Highland avenue, in the presence of immediate relatives.

Miss Rogers is the daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Rogers and comes from one of the old families of the county. While the groom is the oldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Heal of Belmont street. Mr. Heal was one of the last of our boys to return from overseas and saw strenuous fighting in the World War.

They returned on Monday from a short trip to Milwaukee, Wisconsin and will be at home after June 1st at 178 E. Maple avenue. Their many friends wish them happiness and prosperity.

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TWENTY-TWO YEARS AGO IN THE REPORTER

From the issue of April 20, 1899. Assessor Frank Rogers and his local assistant, J. B. Moss, are hard at work scheduling the personal property of the township for the tax officials.

The annual school election was held Saturday afternoon. D. G. Graham was re-elected president of the board and C. B. Blodgett and Ed. Wootton re-elected as members. There was no opposition to any of the candidates.

The annual village election was held on Tuesday. As there was no opposition but 90 votes were cast and the following elected: P. C. Gallup, President of the Board of Trustees; B. C. White, Village Clerk; H. H. Woelfersheim, M. K. Bush, G. H. Pearsoll and A. G. Prince, Trustees. The polls were in charge of J. W. Rogers, C. B. Blodgett and A. L. Palmer, Judges, and W. R. Colwell, James Penhony and Thos. Holland, Clerks.

Louis Beidelman was tendered a surprise party at the home of Mr. and Mrs. G. C. Moor last Saturday evening on the eve of his leaving for Kansas. The guests were: the Misses Dixon, Gilbert, Smith, Cossitt, Chambers, Stella Dixon, Hancock, Edwards, Carpenter, Coral Smith, May Cossitt, and Messrs. Zarn, Edwards, Wells, Kellogg, Moor, Brown, Mertz, Stanley, Towsley, Ennis, Holland.

Henry Hogrefe of Cass, has been appointed a deputy sheriff to enforce the game laws and apprehend horse thieves and burglars.

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