SOCIAL PROTEST IN THE AMERICAN THEATRE:

1890 - 1915

THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF M. A.

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ABSTRACT

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by Thomas E. Dennery

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of the Progressive reform movement 1890-1915 on the American theatre, and to evaluate the theatre's contribution to that movement.

Few plays from this era have been published. The New York Public Library's Theatre Collection at Lincoln Center contains typescripts of many unpublished plays; however, newspaper reviews provide the only available information on many plays which were written during this era. The usually reliable New York Times has been supplemented by reviews and articles in the Grey Locke and Robinson Locke Collections as well as the Library's clipping file. These provide a cross section of critical opinion and useful biographical information. Articles on the theatre in the following periodicals have been used: The Forum, The Smart Set, The Arena, Hampton's, and The Public. Books on the theatre by Walter Prichard Eaton, Brander Matthews, Montrose Moses, and George Jean Nathan have been utilized. Autobiographies by Augustus Thomas and Bayard Veiller have also been consulted.

During the eighteen-nineties the social reform

movement was reflected in satires of the aristocracy which Bronson Howard had pioneered during the previous decade. Although plays of this type retained comic relief, subplots, and other melodramatic features, the business satire implied that luck and unethical practices rather than hard work brought about material success.

The protest movement was also reflected in the realistic dramas of James Herne. Herne's studies of the drab life of the New England workingman attracted the attention of William Dean Howells, Hamlin Garland, and other Boston intellectuals. His later plays reflected the influences of Henrik Ibsen and Henry George.

With the coming of the Spanish-American War the protest play was supplanted by the war play. War plays and romantic melodramas dominated the American theatre until 1904. A social satire by Clyde Fitch and a musical comedy by George Ade which criticized American imperialism in Asia were the only major protest plays of this era.

Beginning in 1904 the theatre reflected renewed public interest in social reform. Off-Broadway the Progressive Stage Society under the leadership of Julius Hopp advocated socialism as the only solution to America's class problems. During the remainder of this decade Hopp's theatre, despite continual financial difficulties, sought to win votes for the Socialist party amongst the masses on the

Lower East Side.

On Broadway popular melodramas by Charles Klein and George Broadhurst reflected the renewed interest in reform. Neither Klein's The Lion and the Mouse nor Broadhurst's The Man of the Hour contained any original ideas; they were successful because audiences assumed that they were taken from the findings of Ida Tarbell and Lincoln Steffens.

The peak years of protest in the Progressive Era's theatre were 1907-1910. During this era socialistic ideas were so common on the stage that one conservative, Cleveland Moffett, wrote a reply for the capitalists. Plays by Joseph Medill Patterson, Eugene Walter, and William Hurlbut were original contributions to the protest movement. They performed original research and dramatized their exposé.

Although Bayard Veiller and George Scarborough wrote melodramas to depict the battle against white slavery, muckraking was on the decline after 1910, and this was reflected in the American theatre. While criticism of existing institutions continued in plays produced in the growing little theatres, this protest belongs to a revolutionary rather than a reform movement. Playwrights like Philip Moeller, Floyd Dell, John Reed, and Eugene O'Neill rejected reform as impossible. Their ideas belonged more to the post-war spirit of protest than to the Progressive reform movement.

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PREFACE

Countless studies have been written to show the influence of the Progressive reform movement on the novel, and the influence of the novel on the reform movement: 1890-1915. While there is sufficient literature on the artistic merits of the American theatre of this era, no meaningful study of the relationship of the Progressive reform movement to the American theatre has been written. The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of the Progressives on the theatre, and to evaluate the drama's contribution to the reform movement.

The modern theatre historian has invariably compared the protest play of the Progressive era to plays by Eugene O'Neill or Clifford Odets. Furthermore, the theatre historian is primarily concerned with artistic merit and the development of the drama. Since most protest plays of the Progressive Era cannot be favorably compared to the left wing theatre of the mid-nineteen thirties or to the foreign social drama of its age, and because most of these plays have little intrinsic value as art and made no contribution to the development of the modern drama, theatre historians have paid little attention to protest plays written during this period.

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The modern theatre historian has invariably compared the protest play of the Progressive era to plays by Eugene O'Neill or Clifford Odets. Furthermore, the theatre historian is primarily concerned with artistic merit and the development of the modern drama. Since most protest plays of the Progressive Era cannot be favorably compared to the left wing theatre of the nineteen-thirties or to the foreign social drama of its own age, and because most of these plays have little intrinsic value as art and made no contribution to the development of the modern drama, theatre historians have paid little attention to protest plays written during this period.

While it is true that the American drama of the Progressive era was characterized by subplots, comic relief, and other melodramatic features, beginning with the plays of Bronson Howard in the eighteen-eighties the American theatre began to reflect the social reform movement. In fact, a reading of the New York Times' theatre pages suggests that aside from musical comedies and a short interval after the Spanish-American War few plays were written during this period that did not contain reform ideas. While it is also true that few dramatists prior to 1910 had any deep insight into the political, economic, and social problems of this age, the assumption that all was right in America was challenged in numerous American plays. In the eighteen-nineties the capitalist became a stereotyped figure who used acceptable business methods but questionable ethics to achieve materialistic goals which were not in the public interest. Because he used typical business methods, he can be differentiated from the typical villain who dominated the melodramas in the lower class theatres. After the turn of the century, writers like Charles Klein and George Broadhurst dramatized the reform battle against business influence on government. Several plays between 1907-1910 can be considered original contributions to the protest movement. Joseph Medill Patterson, Eugene Walter, and William Hurlbut went out and raked in

the muck. Their exposés were produced in the theatre of this era.

Although no drama comparable to The Jungle exists, there is considerable evidence that the theatre did influence the reform movement. Thousands attended the theatre weekly; continual exposure to plays which criticized existing institutions may have influenced some theatregoers to support reform candidates. The ideas of the Socialists were so frequently heard both on and off Broadway that Cleveland Moffett wrote a reply in defense of capitalism which was produced in 1908. Reviews in the muckraking press reveal that dramatists sometimes suggested ideas for further study by journalists. There are also several dramatists who claimed their plays had brought about specific reforms.

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I am particularly indebted to Professor Gilman Ostrander who supervised the writing of this thesis and offered many worthwhile suggestions. Thanks are due also to Professor Allen Schaffer, who suggested the need for such a study and whose criticism has been most helpful, and to James Maloney who read and criticized several chapters.

I extend grateful thanks for assistance to the librarians and staffs of the Michigan State University Library, especially to the Inter-Library Loan Division; the Princeton University Library, especially to Mrs. Herbert McAneny who made the theatre collection available to me; the New York Public Library, especially Paul Meyers and the staff at the Theatre Collection at Lincoln Center; the Rutgers University Library; the University of Pennsylvania Library; the New York State Historical Society Library; and the Taniment Institute Library, which contains the Rand School Collection.

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SOCIAL PROTEST AND SATIRE IN THE EIGHTEEN-NINETIES

During the eighteen-nineties International Copyright legislation and public interest in American situations provided native dramatists with an opportunity to assume leadership of the American stage. Several successful American dramatists dealt with political, economic, and social problems. Broadway audiences, however, insisted that the theatre provide amusement. Thus, even the American dramatist who sought to depict social problems retained comic relief, subplots, and other aspects of French farce.

The first American dramatist to use the theatre as a medium of protest against the power of big business was Bronson Howard. While his plays amused American audiences, they implied that unethical practices and luck rather than hard work led to material success. Also, during this decade Augustus Thomas dramatized labor's problems, Charles Hoyt depicted life in New York's slums, and Charles Klein illustrated the urban reform movement. On the lower class stage slum problems were used as background for melodrama.

The protest movement was also reflected in the realistic dramas of James Herne. Herne sought realism rather

than amusing satire. His studies of the drab lives of New England workingmen attracted the attention of William Dean Howells, Hamlin Garland, B. O. Flower, and other Boston intellectuals.

The protest spirit in the theatre died with the coming of the Spanish-American War. Jingoistic war plays supplanted protest plays before the United States declared war on Spain.

Although the satires of Bronson Howard reflected this age of social turmoil, the American theatre of 1890 was little more than a place for amusement. Outside the theatre was a world of conflict; the populist movement was growing and bitter strikes were frequent. Inside the theatre was a world of amusement; audiences watched melodramas and French farces. The theatre was a place where social problems could be forgotten, and the leading critic of the age, William Winter of the New York Tribune, used his tremendous influence to preserve the status quo.

Despite William Winter's influence the eighteen-nineties was a decade of change for the American theatre. The International Copyright Agreement of 1891, the influence of the European problem play, and the public's desire to see familiar scenes on the stage, all helped to bring about changes in the American theatre.

Prior to 1891 American dramatists wrote few original

plays; they adapted French and German plays for American audiences. Once the International Copyright Agreement was signed, American managers could no longer use European plays without paying royalties.[1] As a result Managers became more receptive to original plays written by American dramatists.

The European problem play had only an indirect influence on the American theatre. In America, most theatregoers and many dramatists disliked the gloomy European protest plays. They preferred melodramas with complicated subplots and frequent interludes of comic relief. However, during this decade American dramatists began to deal with the same social problems which had been treated by the European social dramatists. Thus, although American dramatists rejected the pessimism of the European social critics, they began to depict similar problems in their own plays.

Few European protest plays were produced in America; they were frankly mistrusted. Gerhart Hauptmann's The Weavers, produced at the Theâtre Libre in Paris during 1890, attracted enthusiastic audiences. Socialist leader Jaûres believed that Andrea Antoine's production of Hauptmann's drama, which portrayed life in the squalid mills of

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[1] Mark O. Sullivan, Our Times, Vol. I: The Turn of the Century (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), p. 219.

France, deserved much of the credit for the social reform accomplished during this decade.[1] A few months later in Newark, New Jersey, an attempt was made to produce the play with John Most, the famous Anarchist, in the cast. Instead of an enthusiastic reception the play was proscribed by the mayor, who feared that the drama would encourage local workers to strike.[2]

The public's desire to see American scenes and American situations on the stage provided a considerable impetus toward change in the theatre. In lower class theatres managers frequently used tenement houses and New York landmarks like the Brooklyn Bridge in their melodramatic studies of the slums. On Broadway the popular society plays depicted many of the problems faced by the newly rich in their battle for social acceptance.

Interest in American scenes and situations led to the protest play. Most Americans of this period were deeply involved in some aspect of the battle between capital and labor. American playwrights were naturally drawn to this issue just as the American novelist had been. While the theatre produced no writer comparable to William Dean Howells or Edward Bellamy, it did reflect the spirit

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[1] Mordecai Gorelik, New Theatres for Old (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1962), p. 144.

[2] New York Dramatic Mirror (hereafter N.Y.D.M.), November 10, 1894, p. 8.

of protest which dominated the age.

The foremost American dramatist in 1890 was Bronson Howard. His first successful play, The Banker's Daughter in 1879 satirized big business. Baron Rudolph, Young Mrs. Winthrop, and The Henrietta, produced during the eighteen-nineties, when Howard was the only full-time American dramatist, also related to business practices.

Like many American dramatists who followed in his footsteps, Howard came to the theatre after a career as a journalist. He was born in Detroit, where his father, a prosperous merchant, had once served a term as mayor. Because of poor eyesight Howard abandoned plans to attend Yale and turned to journalism. His training as a writer came as a reporter on the Detroit Free Press, Greeley's New York Tribune, and several other newspapers.[1]

Howard believed that business would become the major theme in the American theatre just as marital infidelity was a favorite subject in the French theatre, and the caste system was a popular topic in the English theatre.[2]

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[1]Arthur Hobson Quinn, A History of the American Theatre from the Civil War to the Present Time (2 vols., New York: Harper, 1927), II, 39-40: Montrose Moses, The American Dramatist (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1911), pp. 193-94; Grace Hortense, "Bronson Howard--Dean of American Dramatists," Theatre VI (April, 1906), p. 99.

[2]Brander Matthews, "An Appreciation," In Memorium, Bronson Howard (New York: Marion Press, 1910), p. 42.

His plays did much to bring this about. The Henrietta, for example, set the fashion for the eighteen-nineties.

No criticism of capitalist America written for the theatre during this decade compared favorably to The Henrietta. Behind a mask of comic relief and subplots necessary to amuse the audience, Howard attacked the Wall Street financier. The speculator was portrayed as little more than a gambler; luck was the chief ingredient in his success, but his materialistic ethics dominated American society.

Traditional family relationships and religious values were sacrificed to the pursuit of wealth in a society dominated by Wall Street ethics. Howard's leading character, Nicholas Vanalstyne, taught his son the morals of the market: "Sell an option on Nebraska and Montana; I'm going to water that stock tomorrow. Never gamble, my son; it isn't right. Squeeze the shorts, that business. . . . I see the Wall Street lambs are buying Nebraska and Montana very freely. . . ."[1] As a result of his education Vanalstyne, Jr.'s desire for economic power far exceeded any love of family the young man might have. No moral scruples prevented Vanalstyne, Jr. from trying to destroy his father's financial power when he thought he could benefit

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[1]The Henrietta, in Allan Gates Halline, American Plays (New York: American Book Co., 1935), p. 416.

from it.

Vanalstyne's gifts to his wife further illustrated the impact of materialism on this society. He gave money and urged her to invest in some particular stock. However, Vanalstyne's wife could not trust her husband; he always tried to win back the "gift" by some manipulation of the market.

The Henrietta also illustrated the influence of big business on government. Nicholas Vanalstyne's power surpassed that of United States Senators; he received Interstate Commerce Commission Reports before they were presented to the Senate. A conversation between the financier and his son revealed that government on both the state and the national level was controlled by powerful business interests. Howard's commentary on the extent of business influence on government was similar to the conclusions of Henry Demarest Lloyd in Wealth Against Commonwealth:

Vanalstyne, Jr.	"Butler of Omaha, writes that two more competing lines of railroads."
Vanalstyne.	"Tell him to buy them both."
Vanalstyne, Jr.	"The legislature of Nevada --"
Vanalstyne.	"Buy that, too."
Vanalstyne, Jr.	"The new Constitution of the state --"
Vanalstyne.	"Tell our agents to have it amended at once -- same as Missouri."
Vanalstyne, Jr.	"Holliston has been nominated for Congress in Kansas. Shall we contribute to his election expenses?"

Vanalstyne "No, wait till he gets to Washington. . . ."[1]

The impact of materialism on American religious leaders did not escape Howard's satire. In his Sunday morning sermons Rev. Dr. Murry Hilton preached Christian ethics and attacked "the universal struggle in America for more world fortune--especially the growing tendency towards speculative gambling."[2] During the remainder of the week like most members of his congregation, he speculated in the stock market.

A stock battle between Vanalstyne and his son occurred in the third act. Both threw their entire resources into the battle for survival. The act concluded with the death of the loser, Vanalstyne, Jr. His death occurred in a stock brokers office in a naturalistic scene with the "tick-tick-tick" of the stock ticker in the background.

The conclusion was not an endorsement of Herbert Spencer's social Darwinism, in which only the fittest survived; it was an indictment against a society which had forgotten Christian ethics and even the health of its members in a wild rush for profits. Although this ending might have been suitable for a Steven Crane novel of the eighteen-nineties, it was not suitable for the American

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[1] Halline, American Plays, pp. 416-17.

[2] Halline, American Plays, p. 429.

theatre of this era. A fourth act was necessary in which a proper happy ending was reached to satisfy the public.

The Henrietta ran for sixty-eight weeks and grossed nearly $500,000. Royalties from this production and frequent revivals of the play made Howard financially independent.[1] Brander Matthews noted that it was "in contradiction to the generally accepted theory that the novel is in advance of the drama in its investigations into society, the drama presented a picture of American life and character sharper in outline than had been achieved by any novelist, excepting the author of Silas Lapham."[2]

Howard's landmark play was followed by numerous imitations. The Wall Street speculator soon became a stereotyped character. As commonly portrayed, the speculator cared little about his family and sacrificed his health in a ceaseless struggle for greater financial power. Through intricate manipulations he cheated thousands of their hard earned savings and widows and orphans of their meager inheritances.

Writers of plays about speculators seldom understood the complexities of the market. Martha Morton attained some success in The Merchant as did Henry Guy Carleton in

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[1]Glen Hughes, A History of the American Theatre: 1700-1950 (New York: Samuel French, 1951), p. 285.

[2]Brander Matthews, "An Appreciation," In Memorium, p. 41.

A Guilded Fool, but both lacked Bronson Howard's ability to satirize the speculator's pursuit of wealth. The Speculator, produced in 1896, contained few original ideas, but it did demonstrate a certain vitality which was later to make George Broadhurst one of America's most successful playwrights. The melodrama pitted the power of two speculating firms against each other. The battle took place on the Chicago Board of Trade and anticipated Frank Norris' more critical study of Chicago speculators. Two stock tickers were used in the second act,[1] which of course reminded audiences of The Henrietta. The image of the speculator had not been improved; he was still portrayed as an unproductive profit seeker.

Probably the most pretentious attempt at satire during this decade was Sydney Rosenfeld's The Whirlwind. Rosenfeld put the Sixth National Bank muddle which had occurred a year earlier on the stage. He was a bit too subtle. A major character was made up to look like the Superintendent of the New York Clearing House. The New York Times stated: "Not one New Yorker in 5,000 knows Mr. Camp by sight, while to the majority even of 'first nighters' the operations of the Clearing House are as mysterious

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[1] New York Times, April 19, 1896, p. 4; New York Times, September 29, 1896, p. 5.

as the proceedings of the College of Cardinals at Rome."[1]

The satire of upper class values was another popular form of protest in the theatre of the eighteen-nineties. Bronson Howard's Aristocracy (1892) brought three levels of the idle rich into conflict; the "newly rich" of San Francisco, the Knickerbockers of New York, and the nobility of Europe. Howard's satire was described as "at times bitter and biting" by the New York Times critic.[2] He attacked the social ambitions of the newly rich. Particularly those members of this class who encouraged their daughter to marry impoverished members of the social elite in order to facilitate the family's entrance into society.

Members of the European nobility were even more desirable "catches" than American aristocrats. Several American girls were "lucky" enough to marry into the Nobility during this decade. William C. Whitney's daughter caught Sir Almeric Paget and Jay Gould's daughter caught Comte Boni de Castellane, but the biggest "prize" of all, the ninth Duke of Marlborough, was caught by Miss Consuelo Vanderbilt.[3] Howard's satire brought about no change in

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[1] New York Times, October 1, 1890, p. 4; New York Times, October 22, 1890, p. 4.

[2] New York Times, November 15, 1892, p. 5.

[3] Lloyd Morris, Postscripts to Yesterday: American Life and Thought 1896-1946 (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. xix.

this practice; Americans still sought social status through marriage to foreign nobility, and most Americans rushed to meet anyone even vaguely connected to the European aristocracy.[1]

Edward Harrigan's Reilly and the 400 was another study of New York's aristocracy, but Harrigan's talents were better suited to portraits of the lower classes. With the insight of the sociologist, Harrigan described the Irishman, the Italian, and the Negro, New York low life, which Howells thought might "be really higher . . . than the life of people who do not work for a living."[2] While Harrigan sought to amuse his lower class audiences, his portrayals of minority groups and the problems of slum dwellers placed on the stage indisputable evidence that America had numerous social and economic problems.

In The Woolen Stockings, Harrigan portrayed the owner of a small coal mine in Pennsylvania. Through the complexities of a stock battle, he lost the mine. Later blind and unable to take care of himself, he was shown with his daughter in the slums of New York. She sang in the streets to keep them alive. The river front hotels, the Jewish quarter, and the politics of the ghetto were all

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[1] "The Usher," N.Y.D.M., May 13, 1893, p. 4.

[2] William Dean Howells, "Editor's Study," Harper's, LXXXIII, p. 477.

realistically depicted in the drama.[1]

Although Howells commended Harrigan's realistic studies of lower class life, slum conditions more frequently were used merely as background scenery for crude melodramas. These melodramas were written to entertain audiences in the cheaper houses. They offered simple solutions to difficult problems. Although they were not protest plays, they did put a side of America on the stage that many people would have preferred to forget. One such scene occurred in George Stout's Noah's Ark; a tenement in the Five-Points district of New York was depicted. The effective scene was described in the New York Times: "Every sordid feature of crowded life in the slums is before the eye when the villain enters and fires the place 'to make good the insurance.'"[2] Other popular melodramas of this era used gambling houses, Bowery scenes, and alley tenements. During the next decade similar tenement scenes were used by dramatists who hoped to bring about social and economic reform, but during the eighteen-nineties these scenes were merely a device to attract lower class audiences.

The battle between capital and labor was another popular subject in the lower class theatres. Plays in the

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[1] New York Times, October 1, 1893, p. 19; New York Times, October 10, 1893, p. 10; N.Y.D.M., October 14, 1893, p. 6; N.Y.D.M., October 21, 1893, p. 13.

[2] New York Times, January 18, 1891, p. 4.

cheaper houses seldom contained any deep insight into the problems of the working class. They relied on pro labor sentiment and hackneyed themes to attract lower class audiences. While in spirit these melodramas reflected the protest of the age, only a few of them dealt with specific grievances. One of these was William C. Hudson's A Man Among Men. Hudson's play illustrated the capitalists' disregard for the safety of his employees. Because a coal mine owner failed to make needed repairs in his mine, an explosion occurred and several men were injured. Later, labor class opinion of the company store system was illustrated. The miners were shown rioting against the system.[1]

Augustus Thomas wrote two plays about labor's problems during this decade: For Money with Clay Green in 1892, and New Blood in 1894. Thomas had considerable first hand knowledge of political and economic questions. At eleven, he had served as a page in the Missouri House of Representatives. Two years later, while holding a similar position in Washington, Thomas' artistic talents led to a brief but memorable meeting with General Benjamin Butler.[2]

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[1] New York Times, February 11, 1894, p. 10; N.Y.D.M., March 10, 1894, p. 8.

[2] Augustus Thomas, The Print of My Remembrance (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922), p. 21.

Thomas had drawn an amusing caricature of General Butler which circulated on the Democratic side of the House, particularly, when the General was giving a speech. Butler saw the drawing and located the young artist. He placed his Hancock hat on the boy's head. The hat was very large and had a high crown; the brim rested on Thomas' shoulders. As the air began to grow thin, Thomas heard the General say: "'When you can fill that hat, young man, you make caricatures of General Butler.'"[1]

Thomas first became involved with the union movement at the age of nineteen, while he was working in a railroad freight yard. Local members of the Knights of Labor realized that his knowledge of parliamentary procedure would expedite their meetings. Although underage, he was elected to an office, which he held during a protracted strike. A year later, although still underage, Thomas was the Labor Party's candidate for clerk of the circuit in St. Louis. He made the first of many campaign speeches during this campaign.[2]

Thomas' first drama, which dealt with some of the problems faced by labor, was never produced. The play required a burning oil tank car, a runaway hansom cab, and a

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[1]A. Thomas, Remembrance, p. 50.

[2]A. Thomas, Remembrance, pp. 305-06.

rolling mill with a red-hot steel rail made in full view of the audience.[1] It was, of course, impossible to achieve any of these effects in the theatre; technical problems alone made production of Pittsburg impossible.

Thomas soon realized the limitations of the theatre; For Money, written with Clay Green, was pro-labor, yet could easily be staged. The play illustrated the ties between big business and the military power of the state. The play's leading character was the president of a New York streetcar company and a colonel in the local militia. This concentration of corporate and military power, which generally existed without such obvious ties, was hardly a situation calculated to amuse labor leaders, but American audiences simply refused to accept the play's star, William Crane, in a serious role. Between tryout engagements in Cleveland and Washington, Thomas rewrote the entire play as a farce.[2]

At the play's conclusion Colonel Winfield Faragut Gurney led the militia on to the stage to quell rioting strikers at his streetcar company. As a serious drama the scene would have been strong satire. Labor was defeated by the union of big business with the power of the state to

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[1] A. Thomas, Remembrance, p. 192.

[2] A. Thomas, Remembrance, pp. 319-20.

suppress opposition, but as a farce the situation had little to do with the struggle between capital and labor. The strike was fostered by the capitalist himself through a bogus "walking delegate" in order to find out whether a widow loved him or his money.[1]

New Blood, Thomas' next play, depicted the formation of a great trust. As described by Augustus Thomas the trusts were not the natural outcome of a competitive struggle; they were the result of conspiracies between several large companies to cheat the public.

The plot of New Blood related the struggle of a young idealist to resist the formation of a trust. When he refused to join the trust, the other prospective members united and attempted to crush him. With the help of a wealthy friend, the young man established a co-operative factory and built a model town.[2]

New Blood was first produced during the summer of 1894 in Chicago. This was the summer of the Pullman Strike. The great strike began on May 11, when 3,300 workers protesting against wage cuts and high rents in George Pullman's company town, located north of Chicago, walked off their jobs. On June 26, the American Railway Union began a

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[1] New York Times, September 10, 1894, p. 10; N.Y.D.M., January 23, 1892, p. 2.

[2] New York Times, September 16, 1894, p. 2.

boycott of Pullman cars. A few days later Attorney General Richard Olney persuaded President Cleveland to send troops into Chicago. This increased the violence; on July 5, property damage was estimated at $340,000.[1]

New Blood was first produced in the tense atmosphere of a city under martial law. The train carrying the players passed by miles of burning freightcars on its way into the city. Theatregoers were obliged to show their tickets to patrols along the street. While vocal public opinion was against the strikers, Thomas' anti-business drama was popular in Chicago.[2]

In September, the play opened in the quiet atmosphere of New York. Press reaction was unfavorable, and the play had a disappointing run. Aside from the many technical blunders made in the production, the press found the solution sentimental. Furthermore, New York critics believed that a utopian town was a worse evil than a trust, because the co-operative town was paternalistic.[3] Years later Thomas concluded that the play had failed because the public read so much about labor problems in the newspapers and the magazines that they were tired of the issue, and

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[1] Ray Ginger, Altgeld's America (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965), p. 161.

[2] A. Thomas, Remembrance, pp. 339-40.

[3] New York Times, September 16, 1894, p. 2.

they did not want to hear more about the problem on the stage.[1] Theatre manager Charles Frohman disagreed. He argued that New Blood had failed because it was a document on the side of labor, which had little appeal to New York audiences.[2]

Nearly all of Thomas' plays had political overtones, but after the failure of New Blood he practically abandoned protest material. Not until the Prohibition amendment inspired Still Waters, which sent Senator Wayne B. Wheeler "into a tantrum" but had little popular success, did Thomas write another drama on a political protest issue. Yet, Thomas retained his interest in the working class. In his autobiography Thomas wrote: "I deeply sympathized with the working class of the country, to which I thought I belonged, and their problems became my own as far as I could express myself and be tolerated as a member of one of their principal political parties."[3] He also continued his active interest in politics. Although he declined opportunities to run for nearly every office in New York state from governor down to the local level, he campaigned and was an active Democrat. He served as president of the New Rochelle Democratic Club, and he once knocked out the editor of the local

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[1] A. Thomas, Remembrance, p. 341.

[2] A. Thomas, Remembrance, p. 341.

[3] A. Thomas, Remembrance, p. 337.

newspaper who had printed several slurring remarks about Thomas as a politician. In national politics he was a friend and strong supporter of William Jennings Bryan. He seconded the nomination of Bryan at Denver in 1908. During the 1912 campaign he supported Wilson. He introduced the Democratic candidate to a New York rally. After the election, there was wide speculation that the playwright would be appointed Minister to France; but when Thomas was called to Washington by Secretary Bryan, he was offered the position of Minister to Belgium. To his later regret Thomas declined the post.[1]

No other serious attack on the trusts was written during this decade. The trusts, however, were a popular subject for melodramas. The most notable of these was Charles T. Dazey's The War of Wealth, which described the elimination of several small competitors by a great trust. Members of the trust persuaded workmen to attack Robert Warfield's air line factory. When this failed to drive him out of business, the trust, aided by Warfield's junior partner, encouraged a run on Warfield's bank. Just as Warfield was confronted with an "angry mob of depositors clamoring for their money," Philip Norton, a young man of means in love with the banker's daughter, arrived with an express

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[1] George Henry Payne, "Augustus Thomas," Green Book Album, I, pp. 111-15.

wagon carrying half a million dollars in gold coin.[1]

While few trusts in 1896 staged bank panics to drive their competitors out of business, The War of Wealth did illustrate some of the popular misconceptions about trusts, and the public belief that most trusts used underhanded if not illegal practices to survive.

Political drama during this era was dominated by obvious satire, despite the fact that plays about government were frequently written by dramatists who had first hand political experience. Charges of corruption were frequently made, but no play written during this era could be characterized as an exposé, and no play offered a constructive program for reform.

The most successful political drama of this era was The Senator. This popular comedy was written by David Demarest Lloyd and Sydney Rosenfeld. Although Rosenfeld did write an unsuccessful satire on business methods, he was primarily a collaborator during this decade.[2] Lloyd had written For Congress, a satire of the district nominating convention in 1884. He had once served as Secretary to Supreme Court Justice Soloman P. Chase, and he was the Washington correspondent for the New York Tribune for several

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[1] New York Times, February 11, 1896, p. 5; N.Y.D.M., March 2, 1895, p. 2.

[2] New York Times, January 19, 1890, p. 12.

years. He was the brother of Henry Demarest Lloyd, whose controversial study of the trusts, Wealth Against Commonwealth, influenced many reformers during this era.[1]

The Senator aroused no great controversy. It did, however, comment on the practice of log rolling in a humorous manner. The leading character was based on Senator Preston B. Plumb, a Progressive but not radical senator from Kansas. The plot involved a senator's efforts to secure passage of a claim. The claim granted compensation for a ship lost during the War of 1812. In one scene, the senator returned to his office and told his secretary:

> I've got three more votes for the Denman claim. Make a memorandum that next session I am to vote for one marble post office for Senator Griffin, two granite customs-houses for Senator Melville, and one court house with a mansard roof for Senator Star. - Talk about log-rolling! The logs I roll to put through the Denman claim would build our new railroad.[2]

Lloyd's play did not bring about an end to log-rolling; however, after viewing the play one congressman remarked that he and other congressmen would "'raise the question of claims legislation in Congress the next session and endeavor to have it conducted in a more expedient manner in the

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[1]Caspar Nannes, Politics and the American Drama (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1960), p. 5.

[2]William Elsey Connelly, The Life of Preston B. Plumb: 1837-1891 (Chicago: Browne & Howell, 1913), p. 338.

future.'"[1]

Charles Hoyt had been a law student, a cowboy, a reporter, and a columnist, one of America's first, before he turned to playwriting. Hoyt held a low opinion of American audiences. They were, he thought, incapable of understanding complex ideas or even subtle humor.[2] As a result his plays depended upon blunt satire, frequently they lacked a clearly defined plot; nevertheless, they were successful. One of Hoyt's plays, A Trip to Chinatown, ran for 657 consecutive performances between 1891 and 1893. This established a record which lasted until 1919.[3]

In A Texas Steer (1890), Hoyt portrayed a rich, crude, Texas Congressman. Maverick Brander was elected ". . . to gratify the social ambitions of his wife, a hard working, ignorant woman, and his pretty daughter. . . ." In his district there were 6,000 voters. Brander was elected unanimously at a cost of $30,000 per vote. He quickly developed into a political leader, perfecting his ability to utilize poker, whiskey, bribery, and blackmail. In 1928 the play was made into a movie with Will Rogers playing the

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[1] New York Times, September 17, 1890, p. 8.

[2] Douglas Hunt, "The Life and Work of Charles Hoyt," Birmingham-Southern College Bulletin, XXXIX (January, 1946), pp. 31-33.

[3] Hunt, "Charles Hoyt," p. 15.

lead role.[1]

Neither Hoyt's stage views of politics nor his cynical view of the people deterred him from active participation in the politics of New Hampshire. He was first elected to the state legislature from the Charleston district in 1892. Although this was normally a Republican district, Hoyt, a Democrat, was re-elected in 1894. During the first term he received 145 votes for Speaker; 80 votes ahead of his party.[2]

The nearest Hoyt came to a bitter protest play was A Temperance Town, produced in 1893. In Norwich, Vermont, a restaurant owner violated the state's prohibition law. Since he could not pay the $7,000 fine, he was sentenced to work it out at thirty cents per day, or sixty years. Hoyt thought the law as cruel as the Inquisition, still he wrote mainly to provide amusement. While the play was in Boston, in February 1893, Hoyt took the company to perform or perhaps lobby before the New Hampshire State Legislature.[3]

The urban reform spirit of the eighteen-nineties was first reflected in the theatre by The District Attorney,

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[1] New York Times, December 16, 1890, p. 13.

[2] N.Y.D.M., November 19, 1892, p. 4; New York Times, January 8, 1893, p. 13.

[3] N.Y.D.M., March 26, 1892; Pittsburg Leader, March 1893; Clipping from the Charles Hoyt file, dated January 21, 1906; New York Times, February 26, 1893, p. 13.

produced in January, 1895. The melodrama was written by Charles Klein, a London born actor, and Harrison Gray Fiske, the editor of the New York Dramatic Mirror. Reform during this decade meant the elimination of graft and corruption in city government, and in Klein's play a young, recently elected district attorney sought to reform a corrupt city government.

The young reformer was supported by a local newspaper campaign and a legislative investigation in his battle against corruption. To the delight of the audience the campaign was carried to its conclusion despite the fact that the reformer's father-in-law was among the grafters exposed by the investigation.[1]

The play's theme was so timely that T. Henry French, who had been a New York theatre manager for twenty years, chose it as his first American production. Throughout the preceding summer and fall the Lexow Committee had focused public attention on similar corruption in New York City government. Vice and crime paid for immunity, police force members paid for promotions, storekeepers and shippers paid tribute;[2] newspaper headlines for months had proclaimed the

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[1] New York Times, January 22, 1895, p. 5; N.Y.D.M., January 26, 1895, p. 3.

[2] State of New York, Report and Proceeding of the Senate Committee Appointed to Investigate the Police Department of the City of New York (Albany: James B. Lyon, 1895), pp. 18-36.

battle against graft which Klein depicted on the stage.

Although Klein had written the play prior to the Lexow investigation, The District Attorney reflected the public's demand for reform, which followed the Committee's probe. Reviews assumed that the play depicted the recent investigation. The New York Times critic commented: "The play . . . deals with a subject novel to the stage and made particularly timely and interesting on account of recent political developments in this city."[1] The New York Recorder's reviewer believed: "This play is so reflective of present conditions of life in New York and so permeated with local atmosphere that it seems almost like a transcript of the stories which come to light from day to day in the local columns of the newspapers."[2] Klein's melodrama made no original contribution to reform thought. Like Klein's later plays, The District Attorney merely recorded the surface aspects of the urban reform movement. It contained no analysis of the causes of graft and corruption, and it offered no solution to these problems.

Advocates of realism in the theatre were not primarily concerned with social reform; however, because they sought to accurately portray American life, they became

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[1] New York Times, January 20, 1895, p. 10.

[2] Quoted in the N.Y.D.M., February 16, 1895, p. 17.

involved with protest issues. The leader of this movement was James A. Herne. His drab pictures of New England were not unlike Hamlin Garland's stories of the Middle Border. Herne's plays attracted intellectuals who usually avoided the theatre.

James Herne was born in Cohoes, New York. Chiefly self-educated, Herne was influenced by the writings of Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin. He was a highly successful actor and theatre manager in San Francisco, before he tried playwriting. After writing dramatizations of Oliver Twist and Rip Van Winkle, he collaborated with David Belasco on a popular melodrama, Hearts of Oak.[1]

Herne's next play was a radical departure from the melodramas of the age. Drifting Apart, which was first produced in May, 1888, was a didactic, sociological study of the impact of excessive drink on a man. If Herne had not turned the last two acts into a dream scene, Drifting Apart probably would have been a landmark in American realism. The happy ending, which was possible only because of the dream sequence, did not appease the New York critics, who, dominated by William Winter, opposed all drama which provoked thought.[2]

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[1]Herbert J. Edwards and Julie A. Herne, James A. Herne (Orono, Maine: University of Maine Press, 1962), pp. 333-34.

[2]Edwards and Herne, Herne, pp. 35-36.

Although Drifting Apart was not a financial success in Boston, it did attract intellectual and influential audiences. William Dean Howells witnessed a performance and praised the drama.[1] Soon after Charles Hurd of the Boston Transcript attended a performance, he handed two tickets to Hamlin Garland and said: "'You ought to know Jim Herne. He's doing the same thing on the stage that you and Miss Wilkins are putting into the short story.'"[2] After viewing the play, Garland wrote a letter to Herne commending the drama, and a long friendship between Garland and the Herne family followed.[3] "The Dean" as Garland was known to the Hernes, became a popular and respected guest at the Herne's home. Later he acquired the status of a genius when he read "Among the Corn Rows," "Under the Lion's Paw," and "The Return of the Private" to them. Herne could hardly have guessed that these first stories later published as Main Traveled Road would be the finest of Garland's work.[4] Garland listened to revisions of Drifting Apart and Herne's later plays and encouraged the dramatist in the direction of realism. Garland

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[1]Edwards and Herne, Herne, p. 49.

[2]Hamlin Garland, A Son of the Middle Border (New York: Macmillan, 1919), p. 391.

[3]Jean Holloway, Hamlin Garland (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), p. 42.

[4]Edwards and Herne, Herne, pp. 53-54.

also encouraged the socially conscious Herne to support actively the Single Tax, and the influence of Ibsen on Herne's later plays can be traced to Garland.[1]

Margaret Fleming, Herne's next play, was even more realistic than Drifting Apart. When no manager would take the drama, Howells suggested that the experimenters follow the example of Sudermann in Berlin, and "'hire a hall and become their own producers.'"[2] After a tryout in Lynn, Massachusetts, Margaret Fleming was produced in Boston's Chickering Hall on May 4, 1891. Garland believed that this was the first little theatre in America. He served as "Man in Front" for six weeks without pay, and his brother was in the cast.[3]

Despite the efforts of Hamlin Garland, B. O. Flower, and William Dean Howells, Margaret Fleming was not a financial success. A circular stating that the play was of interest to those "to whom melodrama no longer appeals" was endorsed by Garland and Flower.[4] Flower also praised the

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[1]Julie A. Herne, "Biographical Note," Shore Acres and Other Plays, ed. Mrs. James Herne (New York: Samuel French, 1928), pp. xviii-xix.

[2]Garland, A Son of the Middle Border, p. 334; Holloway, Garland, p. 43.

[3]Garland, A Son of the Middle Border, p. 393.

[4]A copy of the circular is printed in Lars Ahnebrink, The Beginnings of Naturalism in American Fiction: 1891-1903 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), pp. 454-55.

drama in The Arena: "An Epoch Making Drama," he called it. Howells described the play and its impact on Boston: the play was common and plain, but true and irresistible, "Literature, fashion, religion, delegated their representatives to see it . . . it became the talk of the whole city wherever cultivated people met."[1] In general, however, the critics disliked the play. One described it as "very modern, very gloomy . . . and very dull."[2] Another suggested that Herne might better "devote his energies to writing pamphlets or contributing to The Arena."[3] The play attracted only a few intellectuals; it lasted four weeks only because Flower helped to finance the production.

Although Herne aimed for realism and not propaganda in the theatre, in private life he was a vigorous campaigner for reform. He supported Bryan in numerous speeches, and he frequently lectured on behalf of the Single Tax. He once urged the Boston Theatrical Mechanics Union members not to join any state militia, "'You don't know the hour or the minute you will be called upon to shoot down your fellow workmen who is making a demand for principal.'"[4]

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[1] "Editor's Study," Harper's LXXXIII (August, 1891), pp. 478-79.

[2] New York Times, May 24, 1891, p. 13.

[3] N.Y.D.M., December 19, 1891, p. 3.

[4] N.Y.D.M., October 3, 1893, p. 3.

The Single Tax philosophy did appear in Shore Acres, a sentimental drama first produced in 1893. The drama described Martin Barrson's attempt to grow rich through land speculation. Aided by a local storekeeper and financier, he tried to turn his seacoast farm in Maine into a summer resort. The scheme failed, and the family farm was saved only when Martin's brother Nathaniel sacrificed his pension to pay debts incurred in the risky speculatory venture.[1] Herne's play probably won few converts to the Single Tax, but it was well received.

Garland wrote two plays which advocated the Single Tax during this decade, but not even Herne seriously considered producing them. One of them, Under the Wheel, was published in The Arena. It was later rewritten as a novel.

Like Garland, William Dean Howells tried his hand at playwriting. Howells had written numerous short comedies which were published by Harper's, but only a few had reached the stage as amateur productions. After Herne achieved some success with realism on the stage, Howells decided to attempt a full length dramatization of The Rise of Silas Lapham, and actor-producer William Crane expressed interest. Paul Kester assisted Howells in the project. When Crane lost interest in the project, Herne encouraged them to continue. However, when the project was completed, Herne

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[1]Edwards and Herne, Herne, pp. 54-55.

advised considerable revision. Howells was offended; he abandoned the project, and his friendship with Herne was strained.[1]

Use of the theatre as a medium of protest against political, economic, and social conditions showed a marked decline in the fall of 1895. The American theatregoing public was interested only in the question of Cuban independence. Patriotism supplanted discontent in audiences as the United States became involved in the Cuban revolution, and war plays replaced protest plays on the stage.

Theatre managers found that their attendance figures declined, because the public was more interested in the war than in the theatre. Audiences applauded patriotic songs; "The Star Spangled Banner," "Yankee Doodle," and "Dixie" were popular, but most audiences responded unfavorably to "Marching Through Georgia."[2]

The first play which capitalized on the public's interest in Cuba was Ambition. It was written by Henry Guy Carleton, who believed that amusement not agitation was the proper function of the stage. Carleton's melodrama involved

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[1] Life and Letters of William Dean Howells, ed., Mildred Howells (2 vols., Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1928), II, Howells letter to his sister Aurelia, May 1, 1898, p. 91; Howells letter to Henry James, July 31, 1898, pp. 94-95; Howells letter to S. L. Clemens, August 2, 1898, p. 96.

[2] New York Times, May 10, 1898, p. 6.

political chicanery in Washington and a bill to place Cuban sugar on the free list.[1]

A few months later Cuba, which was written by George Reno and Edwin Ardin, was produced in New York for the benefit of the Cuban revolutionaries. Spanish suppression of the Cuban people was depicted in The Last Stroke (1896).[2] In the last act of For Liberty and Love (1897) the Cuban people achieved peace and independence.[3]

Once the United States had entered the war, melodramas about American victories dominated the American theatre. The Man O' War's Man, which depicted a naval battle between ships of the United States Navy and the Spanish Navy, was among the many popular war plays. When the short war concluded, demonstrations of military prowess remained popular. The New York Times review of The Red, White, and Blue described the audience's reaction to a typical melodrama about the war:

> a fiery, jingo piece of American patriotism, acted to the rattling accompaniment of rifle and pistol shots. . . . There is barely enough story to carry all the powder burning that is done on the stage, but the more powder that was burnt the more pleased seemed the audience, which had evidently assembled in expectation of a jollification over the flag, and liked the smell of

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[1] N.Y.D.M., November 2, 1895, p. 16.

[2] New York Times, March 22, 1896, p. 10.

[3] New York Times, October 12, 1898, p. 7.

powder and the rattle of small arms.[1]

Numerous other melodramas capitalized on the jingoist spirit. The Dawn of Freedom portrayed the heroic efforts of American soldiers to save the rebels in the Santiago campaign.[2] Many veterans of San Juan Hill participated in a military spectacle about this battle, which involved a hundred men and a dozen horses. The spectacle concluded with a patriotic speech by a mock Colonel Roosevelt.[3]

The eighteen-nineties closed in the midst of a period of romantic melodrama, during which protest issues were forgotten. Although only Augustus Thomas made a serious effort to plead the reform cause, the frequent theatregoer could view the political, economic, and social problems of the age in satirical comedies, realistic dramas, and as background for melodrama.

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[1] New York Times, April 26, 1898, p. 7; New York Times, November 29, 1898, p. 6.

[2] New York Times, September 18, 1898, p. 14; New York Times, September 20, 1898, p. 14.

[3] New York Times, March 23, 1898, p. 7.

CHAPTER II

POST WAR ROMANTICISM AND SOCIAL PROTEST: THE AMERICAN THEATRE AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

Few protest plays were offered between 1899-1904. While protest ideas dominated the theatre during the remainder of the decade, they were unusual in the theatre in this era. Radical ideas were suspect; one anarchist production was suppressed. Clyde Fitch did, however, write a satire of New York's aristocracy with remarkable insight into the materialistic values of social climbers. George Ade's satire, The Sultan of Sulu, received considerable acclaim as a protest against American imperialism in Asia.

James Herne's last play was Sag Harbor. Herne contributed to the progressive movement both as a dramatist and as a lecturer. However, his efforts to popularize realistic drama were not successful. On the Broadway stage of this era realism meant graphic reproduction of familiar scenes. The popular ghetto plays of this era illustrated this. Charles Klein's popular melodrama, The Auctioneer, used ghetto conditions only as background material for comedy. Gimmicks such as machinery, mines, and slum scenes were frequently employed in lower class theatres to attract audiences, but social problems were rarely discussed on the

lower class stage.

The Spanish-American War had a pronounced affect on the public, and hence a lingering influence on the theatre. Long after the conflict had ended American victories were re-enacted in popular melodramas. The War also contributed to a revival of romanticism; the public awed by the display of American military power and the prestige of the empire, expected similar heroics on the stage. As a result, romantic plays with swashbuckling heroes enjoyed a vogue during this era.

The most outstanding American dramatist at the turn of the century was Clyde Fitch. He dominated the American stage as no one else ever has. He once had four plays running on Broadway at the same time; two of them had opened on the same night.[1]

Fitch was quite out of step with the values of the Strenuous Age. In an age which valued blustering energy, Fitch set patterns for refined manners and taste. His brownstone in the East Forties and his Italian country home exemplified his sound judgment by their elegant but not ostentatious décor. In contrast to the somber dress of the period, Fitch wore bright blue suits, white gloves, fur overcoats, and jeweled bracelets. In New York his clothes

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[1]Morris, Postscripts to Yesterday, p. 172.

caused quite a stir as they had at Amherst and in high school. His voice was so uncommonly high that even in ordinary conversation he sounded like a hysterical woman. His portrayals of female roles in college productions were a "sensation."[1]

Almost from his arrival in New York, Fitch traveled in the upper echelons of society. "'I live my life in a mist of shams,'" he once wrote to William Dean Howells.[2] He never saw life except as it was recorded in the society pages of the newspapers and in his own plays. The problems of the lower classes were never noticed by the playwright of the aristocracy.

After 1900, Fitch's plays frequently satirized and realistically portrayed conflicts between the newly rich and the aristocracy. He described The Climbers, produced in 1901, as "a picture of contemporaneous life in New York."[3] He advised other playwrights to write in a realistic manner about things they understood.[4]

Nearly every New York manager rejected The Climbers

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[1]Wesley S. Griswold, Hartford Courant, September 16, 1934; Undated clipping in the New York Public Library's Theatre Collection (hereafter N.Y.P.L.); Baltimore Sun, September 12, 1909.

[2]Morris, Postscripts to Yesterday, p. 175.

[3]Boston Herald, March 3, 1901.

[4]Clyde Fitch, "The Play and the Public," The Smart Set, IV (November, 1904), pp. 97-100.

because they feared the public would find the play's opening scene objectional. The scene depicted the conclusion of a society funeral. Nevertheless, The Climbers was popular, and critics found it far superior to Bronson Howard's Aristocracy, which was revived soon after the production of Fitch's play.[1]

In the opening scene Fitch unveiled the shams of aristocratic New York with an insight no other American dramatist of this era could match. The scene revealed that for the upper classes a funeral was merely another social event. In a conversation with her three daughters Mrs. Hunter described the "success" of her husband's funeral: "the whole thing over without a hitch. . . . My dear, it was a great success! Everybody was there! . . . Jesse, you've mortified me terribly today--that child hasn't shed a tear. People'll think you didn't love your father." Mrs. Hunter's youngest daughter had done better, Clara had cried bucketsful, but Clara had good reason to cry. Because of her father's death, she could not have a coming-out party that year. Mrs. Hunter, at least, could relieve her grief by thoughts of "her" social triumph. Even her husband, she believed, would not have complained about the turnout:

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[1]Montrose J. Moses and Virginia Gerson, Clyde Fitch and His Letters (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1924), p. 26; Richard Cordell, Representative Modern Plays (New York: T. Nelson & Son, 1929), p. 403.

"Well, you know he always found fault with my parties being too mixed. He wouldn't realize I couldn't throw over my old set when I married into his,--not that I ever acknowledged I was your father's inferior. I considered my family just as good as his, only we were Presbyterians!"[1]

Only one incident had marred the occasion. Another family had also used the funeral to further their social ambitions:

Mrs. Hunter. "One thing I was furious about,--did you see the Witherspoons here at this house?"

Clara. "I did."

Mrs. Hunter. "The idea! When I've never called on them. They are the worst social pushers I know."

Clara. "Trying to make people think they are on our visiting list! Using even a funeral to get in!"[2]

Miss Ruth Hunter, sister of the deceased, represented the values of a less materialistic era. She reproached Mrs. Hunter for staging a social spectacle instead of a proper funeral. Mrs. Hunter's problems were soon compounded by the news that her husband had died penniless. Pressed by his extravagant family and another costly coming-out party scheduled in the near future, Mr. Hunter had speculated in the market. It proved a disastrous failure. Mrs. Hunter

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[1]Cordell, Modern Plays, p. 405.

[2]Cordell, Modern Plays, p. 407.

feared that her daughters might have to work, or that they might have to take in boarders. Both these alternatives were abhorative to Mrs. Hunter; she had a better solution--an advantageous marriage. She had two eligible daughters, and young Mr. Trotter was available. He was newly rich and anxious to gain admission into society. Clara would be a fine catch for Trotter.

The arrival of two young society women brought about an interesting confrontation in which Fitch satirized the crass commercialism of his own society. The two young women visited the Hunters to offer sympathy and to profit from the family's misfortune. The girls were well aware that the Hunters had recently purchased dresses from Paris which would be out of style before the family's period of mourning was over, and they hoped to buy the dresses at bargain prices. Mrs. Hunter was anxious to sell the dresses, but she hoped to improve her financial situation as much as possible by the transaction. The bargaining scene which followed between expressions of sympathy was so impressive that critics forgot the melodramatic conclusion to the drama that followed. Howells praised the scene in The Atlantic:

> A certain essence of New York had never been so perfectly expressed. . . . The play is worth while if for nothing but that scene, in which the incomparable worldliness, the indecent hardness, breaking through at times the shed of their decorums, at all times palpable under them, represents these women the spirit of the most

commercialized society in the world.[1]

Other critics agreed; the New York Evening Sun's reviewers thought it "the most original, daring, and witty drama to which the American stage has given birth to in many a long day."[2] The New York American's critic found the play "almost vitriolic at times; so deeply does it burn under the surface. Clyde Fitch wrote it with the confidence of feeling that he knew exactly what he was writing about."[3]

Fitch failed to sustain the realism of the first act. The remainder of the play involved a melodramatic stock battle between Mrs. Hunter's son-in-law, Richard Sterling, and the sharp operators of the market. This battle between old wealth, Sterling, and the newly rich Wall Street wizzards could easily have been treated without melodramatic overtones. As Fitch demonstrated, this was a battle which Sterling could not win, for he did not even understand the rules of the game. He could not comprehend how he could win $100,000 in one day and lose even more the next. Fitch, however, unnecessarily complicated the plot by turning Sterling into a thief, who speculated with family funds. In a melodramatic conclusion, Sterling was forced to

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[1]"The Recent Dramatic Season," No. Am., CLXXII (1901), p. 475.

[2]New York Evening Sun, January 16, 1901.

[3]New York American, November 15, 1904.

admit his guilt.

George Ade was the only dramatist whose success rivaled that of Clyde Fitch during this era. Although Ade was a well established journalist and author of fables, he did not attempt a drama until 1901. His first drama, The Sultan of Sulu, was an unusually satirical musical comedy. It was the only protest play of this era which dealt with foreign affairs.

The Sultan of Sulu was the result of a trip which Ade made to the Philippines in 1900. American troops at this time were encountering considerable difficulty in their efforts to assimilate the natives. The most protracted opposition came from a group led by Acquinaldo. At the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, this group had revolted against Spanish rule. They claimed they had been promised independence by the Americans, and they vigorously resisted the imposition of American rule.

While other groups of natives did not resist American control of the islands, they did object to the substitution of American laws and customs for native traditions. From several friends,[1] who were in the Philippines to report on the progress of the war, Ade heard the story of American negotiations with an untamed Moro chieftain, the Sultan of

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[1]George Ade, "Recalling the Early Tremors of a Timerous Playwright," The Players, New York, The County Chairman.

Sulu, or Jolo. The Sultan was willing to be "assimilated" and accept American laws, but he preferred to retain certain customs of his own culture including polygamy and slavery. Although Americans tended to think of both these customs as especially barbaric, they wanted to avoid war. Ade thought the efforts of "American civilizers to play ball with the little brown brothers" would make an interesting topic for satire.[1] The Sultan of Sulu was the result.

The comedy began with the arrival of the American Army on the Island of Sulu. Sulu was the scene of continual tribal warfare between the Sultan, who was the most powerful chieftan on the Island, and several tribes who refused to acknowledge his rule. Through several victories the Sultan had captured several young women; they had been forced to become his wives. The American army was determined to civilize the island. They marched on to the stage singing the philosophy of imperialism:

> We haven't the appearance, goodness knows,
> Of plain commercial men;
> From a hasty glance, you might suppose
> We are fractions now and then.
> But though we came in warlike guise
> And battle-front arrayed,
> It's all a business enterprise;
> We're seeking foreign trade.

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[1]Ade, "Recalling," The County Chairman.

We're as mild as any turtle-dove
When we see the fire a-coming,
Our thoughts are set on human love
When we hear the bullets humming,
We teach the native population
What the golden rule is like,
And we scatter public education
On 'ev'ry blasted hike!

We want to assimilate, if we can
Our brother who is brown;
We love our dusky fellow-man
And we hate to hunt him down,
So, when we perforate his frame,
We want him to be good.
We shoot at him to make him tame,
If he but understood.[1]

The Americans quickly instituted democratic reforms; the sultan renounced his title and became Governor of the Island, and four New England school-ma's were brought in by the army to educate the natives. Democracy had both advantages and disadvantages for the natives. The Governor demanded protection from the attacks of Dotto Mordi, a rival chief, which was granted by the army. However, because the constitution followed the flag, the Governor was forced to give up all but one of his wives. The captive wives might continue to serve the Governor if they chose, but he was required to pay them union wages if they stayed. Later, the Governor was sent to jail by the Americanized local court, because he could not pay the alimony required by American law to his seven captive wives. The Governor was later

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[1]George Ade, The Sultan of Sulu (New York: R. H. Russell, 1903), p. 12.

freed by the Supreme Court, which ruled that this case involved interference with native rule.

Ade did not believe that American culture could be exported. Laziness and the drinking of cocktails, Ade predicted, would be the only lasting effects of American occupation of the Philippines. Although Ade had serious doubts about American foreign policy, he did not wish to be serious or didactic.[1]

The Sultan of Sulu was written as an amusing musical comedy, but neither audiences nor critics considered the play an ordinary musical comedy. Audiences ignored the play's simple plot and music, but they enthusiastically applauded Ade's witty commentary on American foreign policy. One critic compared the author favorably to Aristophanes.[2]

In Ade's next play he described an election in a small midwestern town. Despite a trite subplot, in which one candidate was in love with the daughter of his opponent, Ade's character sketches and his description of a political campaign have retained much of their original vitality, and the play has been revived occasionally as an example of early twentieth century realism in the theatre.

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[1]"George Ade Talks of His Stage Ideals," Theatre, IV (November, 1904), pp. 287-88.

[2]New York Times, December 2, 1902, p. 9; New York Times, January 11, 1903, p. 34.

Although The County Chairman was realistic, it was not a protest play. In fact, except for The Sultan of Sulu, Ade's plays aimed at realistic and humorous portrayals of the American Middle West, but not at social reform. He had little interest in progressive reform.

Unlike either George Ade or Clyde Fitch, James Herne advocated progressive ideas to reform American society. He spent much of his spare time giving speeches on behalf of the single tax. As a result Herne's death in 1901 was felt deeply by the Progressives. B. O. Flower wrote of Herne: "Almost to the day of his death he was ever ready to give his services freely for the cause of the single tax."[1] In the first issue of The Single Tax Review, Henry George, Jr. noted Herne's services to the movement: "He gave much time and effort and was liberal with his purse for the new slavery cause, and there are probably few large cities in the United States where on some Sunday afternoon or evening, in church or theatre, he has not discussed the great theme with that exquisite blending of actor's art and propagandist's intensity which gave singular fascination to his elegance."[2]

Herne was not a radical in the theatre because he condemned the upper classes; he ignored them. He was a

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[1]"James A. Herne: Actor, Dramatist, and Man," Arena, XXVI (September, 1891), p. 287.

[2]"James A. Herne," Single Tax Review, I, pp. 1-3.

radical because he sought to dignify labor "by his portraits of the everyday life of the working class." It was not always beautiful, but Herne believed that art demanded truth. Years later in Theatre Arts Fredrick Morton compared Herne's approach to the problems of the lower class to that of Clifford Odets:

> It was even more disturbing to Herne's contempories that he wrote plays about the simple lives of lowly people: New England farmers, seafaring men at home in Long Island harbors, small tradesmen and their sons who thought of going west as a "hazard of new fortunes". . . . There is little actual difference between Herne's lowly folk and those of Odets except a few labels. Herne's men fight with the storms of nature on their farms and their ships, and Odets' fight with the machine.[1]

Herne's last play was Sag Harbor. It depicted life in a small, fishing village on Long Island, where Herne maintained a summer home. It was more sentimental and more popular than Margaret Fleming or Drifting Apart. Howells described it as "not quite believable."[2] Herne was already in poor health as a result of a political campaign and his direction of Israel Zangwill's Children of the Ghetto, when Sag Harbor opened in Boston. After a record run of thirteen weeks in that city, Herne took the play to Chicago, where he

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[1]Theatre Arts, XXIV (December, 1940), pp. 899-900.

[2]Undated clipping in the Players' Collection, N.Y.P.L.; Sag Harbor Pilot, October 28, 1899, p. 1; William Dean Howells, "The Recent Dramatic Season," North American, CLXXII (March, 1901), p. 472.

became too ill to continue.[1]

Plays about Ghetto problems enjoyed a brief vogue during this era. Few of these were written in a realistic manner. In fact, the most successful of the Ghetto plays treated social and economic problems of these areas in a humorous manner. Nevertheless, even the humorous plays depicted the squalid conditions of life in the slums.

The most elaborate production of a Ghetto play was George Tyler's presentation of Israel Zangwill's Children of the Ghetto. The leader in the movement toward realism in the American theatre, James Herne, who was also a talented actor, was hired to direct a star-studded cast. Zangwill advised Tyler and Herne to utilize the New York Ghetto as a source of background material. As a result, although the play was set in London, it accurately depicted New York slum conditions. Herne hired many extras from the Ghetto for mob scenes and engaged a Yiddish interpreter to translate his directions.[2]

Zangwill's play delineated differences between liberals and conservatives within the Jewish religion. Probably because New York theatregoers had only a superficial

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[1]Edwards and Herne, Herne, p. 147.

[2]Edwards and Herne, Herne, p. 136; Letter from Zangwill to George Tyler, April 22, 1899, George Tyler Collection, Princeton University.

interest in religious and social problems, Children of the Ghetto had only a brief run on Broadway.

Charles Klein, who was always keenly aware of the spirit of the times, wrote a popular Ghetto play in 1902. The Auctioneer depicted typical Ghetto scenes and characters, but it was written as a comedy with no intellectual discussion of religious or social conditions.

Direct attacks on American institutions were unpopular during this era. No American dramatist except Herne advocated radical change in political, economic, or social institutions. After the assasination of President McKinley radical ideas were suspect, even on the foreign stage. An Anarchist production of Senza Patria was blocked by New York police.

Senza Patria (Without a Country) was written by Pietro Gori, an anarchist of international reputation. Anarchists of the New York area arranged for the production. They rented a hall in the Bowery, hired a company of actors, and engaged the West Hoboken Band. The performance was scheduled for November 10, 1900, which was the thirteenth anniversary of the hanging of the Chicago Anarchists. The proceeds from the performance were to go to the family of Gaetano Bresci. Bresci, a silkweaver from Patterson, New Jersey, had assasinated King Hubert of Italy in July.[1]

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[1] New York Times, November 11, 1900, p. 3; New York Herald, November 11, 1900, p. 7.

At seven-thirty the anarchists began to arrive at the hall. They were surprised to find that a group of policemen and plainclothesmen had occupied the building. The law officers maintained that since the group had not obtained a license, they could not hold the performance. A group of several hundred angry anarchists gathered outside the hall. Among them reportedly was Caetano Bresci's family.[1] After a vehement exchange with the police, the group adjourned to Mori and Lorenzi's Cafe on Beeker Street. At the cafe a few speeches were given. One radical charged that Consul General Branchi had persuaded the police to stop the production. The meeting was brief; it was broken up by the much hated police. "Are we slaves, or is this a free country?" asked one disgusted member of the group as they disbanded.[2] Some of the more determined members of the irate group began another meeting at 228 Thompson Street,

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[1]The New York World's account, which differed considerably from those in the New York Times and New York Herald, reported that Mrs. Bresci had been intercepted by the police on the way to the theatre and persuaded not to attend.

[2]New York Times, November 11, 1900, p. 3; According to the New York World's more dramatic account, the anarchists had already occupied the theatre when the police arrived. Led by Sergeant Charles A. Place the police marched into the theatre. The anarchists proved hostile. In answer to a police question the anarchists replied that they had no leaders, and when the police ordered them to leave the anarchists urged the band to begin playing. However, the authorities prevailed. They turned out the lights, and the radicals decided to leave the hall.

but again they were pursued by the police. This time the anarchists dispersed, but they threatened revenge.[1]

Melodramas about slum problems offended no one. They often dealt with the problems of the lower classes, but because they did not suggest a plan for action, they were not a threat to the existing order. Frequently they relied on simple gimicks to attract audiences. New York landmarks, factory scenes, mine tunnels were popular. The heroine of Maude Banks' The City's Heart, for example, traveled from a fashionable Fifty Avenue apartment to the "Blue Elephant" and other Bowery dives.[2] The operation of an iron works was shown in A Human Slave. Miners at the bottom of a coal shaft loaded cars and operated an elevator in Pennsylvania.[3]

The problems of the lower classes were the theme of numerous melodramas by Scott Marble and Theodore Kremer. Both were deeply aware of the problems of slum-dwellers, but neither expected to use the drama to reform society. They wrote for audiences in the cheaper houses. Marble was aware that Charles Dickens' novels had brought about numerous reforms, but he did not write to bring about reform. In The Daughters of the Poor, Marble attacked the installment system which resulted in prolonged hardships for many people

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[1]New York Herald, November 11, 1900, p. 7.

[2]New York Times, April 25, 1902, p. 9.

[3]New York Times, January 26, 1902, p. 11.

who were struggling to escape poverty. However, Marble's indignation was limited; "I don't take my own plays seriously. They are written to satisfy a certain class of theatre-goers. I am content if they accomplish this purpose,"[1] he admitted.

Theodore Kremer's melodramatic portrait, The Road to Ruin, described police ties with vice in much the same manner of Lincoln Steffens' later exposé:

> It is teeming with gamblers galore and strewn with ladies whom the programme calls "of the tenderloin" when they are only wicked and "desperate women" when they are very wicked. Whenever a policeman meets a lady "of the tenderloin" he extracts a bill from her, if he meets "a desperate woman" the price is a roll of money.[2]

Leaders of the social protest movement received little encouragement from the theatre of this era, but they remained optimistic. The theatre had played a vital role on an intellectual level in societies of the past, progressives were confident it would assume a similar position in future American society. Hellen Potter expressed the progressive viewpoint in The Arena:

> We have a stage that openly honors idle luxury and the emptiness of the title and aristocracy: where aristocracy means not what the word expresses; "the best and noblest," but merely the richest, and often the worst. We have a stage where the workers have no place, where the thinkers have no place, where noble ideals have very

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[1] "Scott Marble on Playwriting," N.Y.D.M., March 14, 1898, p. 2.

[2] New York Times, March 25, 1903, p. 9.

> little part, but which is chiefly a faithful reflection of the baser, the more sordid and artificial elements of modern life. Before the stage of today lies one of the grandest opportunities ever offered to humanity: that it once more resume its ancient office, become again the educator of the people, the best friend of the proletariat, remembering always that all hope for art that does not rest on the elevation of the masses is a house built on sand--is basically unsound.[1]

Some critics did believe that the American theatre was improving. Brander Matthews noted that the American theatre still offered many French and German plays, but during this era they were offered as translations. No longer were Americans adapting foreign plays to American situations.[2] Despite this "progress" the theatre was infrequently used as a medium of social criticism during this era. Certainly there was no suggestion from the plays of this era that two dramatists would in the next three years achieve brilliant successes by utilizing the ideas of the muckrakers of the stage.

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[1] "The Drama of the Twentieth Century," Arena, XXIII (February, 1900), p. 158.

[2] "The Question of the American Theatre," North American, CLXXIV, pp. 305-408.

CHAPTER III

THE RISE OF THE MUCKRAKING MELODRAMA: 1904-1906

During this era the American theatre reflected renewed public interest in social reform. On Broadway the protest movement was best reflected in Charles Klein's The Lion and the Mouse and George Broadhurst's The Man of the Hour. While neither play contributed any original ideas to the protest movement, both achieved considerable success because audiences assumed these melodramas were based on the findings of Ida Tarbell and Lincoln Steffens. Their popularity illustrated the impact of the progressive movement on the American theatre.

Older forms of protest were also employed during this era. Managers anxious to capitalize on the public's demand for reform improvised with adaptations of muckraking novels and crude melodramas. Some like The Pit proved a financial success, but none received critical success. Louis Anspacher and Owen Davis wrote popular melodramas which reflected the reform movement on the lower class stage, and numerous amateur productions dealt with social and economic problems.

Off-Broadway by 1904 the Progressive Stage Society

was producing socialist plays. This group, led by Julius Hopp, sought to win votes for the Socialist party in their dramas about the problems of the working class. Although Hopp's group attracted the support of numerous intellectuals on the Lower East Side, they faced continual financial difficulties. This group's efforts mark the first attempt to establish a theatre that would contribute to and not merely reflect the Progressive movement.

In the eighteen-nineties audiences had applauded satire directed at capitalists in the plays of Bronson Howard and Augustus Thomas. During this era, audiences began to look for something stronger in their protest drama--even outright propaganda. In 1894, Gerhart Hauptmann's The Weavers had been banned in Newark; by the end of this decade plays by Shaw and Ibsen, as well as Hauptmann had been frequently been performed in American theatres, and an American play had been banned in one German city. The years 1904-06 were a transition period. The transition can be seen in the change in tone from The Pit in 1904 to The Lion and the Mouse and The Man of the Hour in 1906. The success of The Pit depended upon a sensational scene rather than the power of Norris' attack on the speculators. The success of The Lion and the Mouse and The Man of the Hour depended upon the public's assumption that both were based on the findings of the muckrakers.

The chief target of the protest plays during this era was the power of big business to limit competition, dominate labor, and influence all levels of government. Theatregoers could choose among widely divergent forms of theatre. The socialist-realism of the Progressive Stage Society, the journalistic muckraking melodramas of Broadway, and the hackneyed melodramas of Third Avenue all echoed the public's demand for reform.

The muckraking melodrama, which evolved during this period, was a combination of the European "problem play" and the American determination to conclude a play with a "happy ending." By the end of the decade the "happy ending" barrier was broken, but during this era only the off-Broadway Progressive Stage Society dared to challenge the public's optimism. While most Americans believed that all was not "right" in American society, they were convinced that women's suffrage, a single tax, socialism, or Theodore Roosevelt would solve America's problem. While the theatre reflected the protest in American thought, it also echoed the public's belief that "the promise of American life" would be fulfilled.

The two leading exponents of the muckraking melodrama were Charles Klein and George Broadhurst. These journalist-dramatists read New York Newspapers and recorded the battle for progressive reform in their plays. Both

Klein and Broadhurst were established dramatists, and both had written plays about reform issues in the past. Klein's The District Attorney in 1895 had dealt with police corruption like that which the Lexow Committee had uncovered in New York City. Broadhurst's The Speculator had dealt with speculation on the Chicago grain market. During the Spanish-American War and the interval which followed Klein had written historical and patriotic melodramas, and Broadhurst had written a series of popular farces. When public interest in reform was awakened by journalists like Lincoln Steffens and Ida Tarbell, Klein and Broadhurst again turned to reform issues in their plays. While neither Klein nor Broadhurst could be favorably compared as a social critic to Shaw or Galsworthy, both were acclaimed as "theatrical muckrakers" by less sophisticated American audiences.

Klein was born in London, where his family had immigrated from Russia. His father was an eminent musician; his brother was music critic on the London Times. Klein studied law for a short time, but this had little influence on his plays. He came to the United States as an actor, and during the eighteen-nineties he turned to playwrighting.[1] Although some of his early melodramas were successful, none had a run comparable to that of The Lion and the Mouse.

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[1]Ada Patterson, "Some Theories of Playwriting by a Playmaker," Theatre, VI (June, 1906), p. 158.

The Lion and the Mouse began a run of two years in November, 1905. G. W. Dillingham, publishers of a novel based on the melodrama, estimated that two million people would see the play before the end of the 1905-06 season.[1] Klein's royalties from road companies, stock productions, and the Broadway run totaled some $500,000.[2]

In The Lion and the Mouse Klein brought into conflict a young lady, who had written a muckraking novel, and a powerful, business titan. The young lady was Shirley Rossmore; her father was a famous judge, whom the "interests" were trying to remove from office. The commercial titan was John B. Ryder; his power surpassed that of United States Senators. Benjamin O. Flower described him in the Arena:

> The present day Croesus, the masterful mind, keen, penetrating, brilliant, and resourceful on the intellectual plane, but morally blind, the character of John Ryder has no equal in American literature.[3]

The plot illustrated the influence of a great trust over the national government. When Judge Rossmore bought some stock, John Ryder was able to arrange that the uncorruptable judge was sent more stocks than he had purchased. A congressional investigation followed, and John Ryder controlled enough votes to insure the impeachment of the judge.

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[1] Theatre, VI (September, 1906), p. xvii.

[2] N.Y.D.M., March 9, 1895, p. 13.

[3] Benjamin O. Flower, "Theatre for a Higher Civilization," Arena, XXXVII, p. 502.

Shirley Rossmore was able to enter the home of John Ryder because the titan was interested in her novel which had been published under a pseudonym. Ryder persuaded her to write his authorized biography, but only because she hoped to find evidence to help her father among the business leader's papers. Klein concluded the drama in typical melodramatic fashion. When Shirley failed to find anything to help her father among Ryder's papers, she made a strong emotional appeal. With the help of Mrs. Ryder, Shirley persuaded Ryder to save the judge. The commercial titan emerged with his power unchecked, but he had been "rationally" persuaded to use that power to save an honest man.

Audiences and critics assumed that the play dealt with the influence of the Standard Oil Corporation on the national government. A few critics noted that John Ryder was dressed to look like H. H. Rogers, but most believed that Klein had put John D. Rockefeller and Ida Tarbell on the stage. Mark Sullivan, for example, described the play as "a melodramatic portrayal of John D. Rockefeller."[1] The New York World thought that Shirley Rossmore's arguments seemed to come straight from Miss Tarbell's articles.[2]

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[1]Mark O. Sullivan, Pre-war America, Vol. III: Our Times (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930), p. 461.

[2]New York World, November 21, 1905.

Invariably critics compared the stage battle between reformer and corporate power to the real battle that was taking place outside the theatre.

As a result of these comparisons the play's reviews suffered. Corporation leaders who exercised influence on the national government were motivated only by material considerations. Viewed in this light Klein's melodramatic conclusion seemed impossible and as Charles Darnton remarked, "almost farcical."[1]

Klein insisted The Lion and the Mouse was not inspired by Ida Tarbell's History of Standard Oil. It was, he claimed, the result of a trip he had made to Washington on behalf of the American dramatists' copyright bill. While there, he had noticed that most of the Senate's work was done in committees, which were influenced by big business. Klein maintained that John Ryder represented any commercial magnate; he was not necessarily John D. Rockefeller.[2] Most reformers, however, were convinced that Klein had captured the spirit of Miss Tarbell's articles, even if he had not been inspired by them.[3] Even socialist playwright Julius

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[1]Charles Darnton, New York Evening World, November 21, 1905.

[2]Asa Patterson, "Theories," Theatre, VI, p. 158.

[3]B. O. Flower, "Theatre for a Higher Civilization," Arena, XXXVII, p. 502.

Hopp commended Klein's effort.[1]

Contrasted with the melodramas of the previous era The Lion and the Mouse was an advance. Theatre historian Barrett Clark thought that John Ryder was a modern villain: "Klein's villain was not the old time suave stage villain, but a more or less respected rich man, the kind who until the days of Lincoln Steffens and Ida M. Tarbell was pointed to as an ideal of successful manhood."[2] Klein's description of the Congressional investigating committee hearing was another improvement over previous melodramas. In their testimony before the Committee, members of the trust did not condemn the judge with treacherous lies as would have occurred in earlier melodramas, they merely refused to testify. By implying their own guilt they subtly condemned the judge. The New York Times recognized the limitations on the American dramatist and concluded that Klein had treated "his subject courageously and in such a way that an underlying ethical purpose is most evident."[3]

Klein probably did not feel limited by the theatre conventions of his era. He disliked the pessimistic approach taken by realists, like Herne, in America. Shaw,

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[1]New York Telegraph, September 23, 1907.

[2]Barrett Clark and George Freedley, A History of Modern Drama (New York: Appleton-Century Co., 1947), p. 10.

[3]New York Times, November 21, 1905, p. 9.

Ibsen, and other European intellectuals were, he thought, too much dominated by the ideas of Nietzsche and Darwin. While it was true that hypocrisy was everywhere, Klein preferred to believe that man was still an ethical creature. He did admire Pinero, who, like Klein, had considerable acting experience. This could sharpen one's dramatic instinct which Klein thought was more important than intellectual abilities in making a successful dramatist.[1]

In The Daughters of Men, produced in 1905, Klein further explained his political ideas. The plutocrats, he thought, contributed little to American society because they were ruled by greed. The socialists, Klein thought, had some constructive ideas for reform. For this reason they were gaining in strength, but Klein feared the movement would be taken over by leaders who thought in terms of violent solutions to all social problems. He preferred a moderate course.

The Daughters of Men was a radical departure from Klein's usual melodramas. The characters in the play were symbolic figures who represented various kinds of capitalists and labor leaders. The old entrepreneur spirit of an older generation of capitalism was illustrated by Richard Milbank. Now retired, he was ambitious but not cruel.

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[1]Charles Klein, "Religion, Philosophy, and the Drama," Arena, XXXVII, pp. 492-93.

Matthew Crosby and James Thedford were typical modern commercial executives. They were only interested in making money and avoiding bad publicity. Regonald Crosby and his wife Bella, a former movie star, exemplified the affluent, ostentatious rich. They thoroughly enjoyed conspicuous consumption. Matthew Crosby and James Thedford forced Regonald off the board of directors of the Milbank Company, because of newspaper criticism of a breakfast given by Regonald and his wife at which "he floated his great yacht in a miniature lake of champagne." Spectacles of this kind had been acceptable during the eighteen-nineties, but in the twentieth century business executives had learned adverse publicity could quickly be turned into votes by Populists or Socialists candidates.

James Burress was a potentially dangerous leader within the ranks of labor. He had enrolled anarchists, Maffia members, and nihilists in the organization, which he hoped to use to obtain political power by violent means. His lieutenants were Louis Stolbeck and Oscar Lackett. Stolbeck was a big, burly, Bohemian type of German-American Socialist; Lackett was the editor of a Socialist newspaper which advocated violence. He had once printed the instructions for the manufacture of nitroglycerine in the newspaper. (Klein may have been aware of a handbook printed by Johann Most. Most had worked for a short time in a Jersey

City, New Jersey, explosive plant and then published the manual in Freiheit, an Anarchist weekly, which explained the manufacture and handling of home made bombs.)[1] John Stedman could have been used as a model Progressive in Richard Hofstadter's The Age of Reform. He was a Westerner, a graduate of a state university (Wisconsin), and a victim of "the status revolution." Stedman's father was a minister; his grandfather was a state governor. He wished to marry Grace Crosby. When her family questioned his ability to provide for Grace, Stedman commented: "Socially. . . . Your father, Mr. Milbank, sold hides and made tallow--my grandfather was Governor of his state."[2] His concern for labor's grievances was genuine; yet, he retained the conservative's disdain for violence or radical political and social change. His reforming zeal was directed at both sides. As a typical middle class reformer he believed that if the radicals on both sides could be balanced, the moderates would redirect American democracy along the best possible lines.

Instead of a melodramatic plot The Daughters of Men was a series of arguments which related to a bitter strike.

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[1]Barbara W. Tuchman, The Proud Tower (New York: Macmillan, 1966), p. 80.

[2]Charles Klein, The Daughters of Men (New York: Samuel French, 1917), p. 28.

At the conclusion the strike was not settled, but Klein left the audience with hope for the future.

Despite the fact that Klein's plays suffered from a lack of realism and perhaps a lack of sincerity, they did represent a significant advance toward a theatre of more effective social criticism. He did not analyze the complex questions he raised. Klein was a journalist; his muckraking melodramas accurately reported the issues of his day. For this reason his plays were more significant to the historian of the period than some of the better dramas of the day.

George Broadhurst was also born in England. His mother hoped he would study for the clergy, but at sixteen he joined his brother in the United States. His knowledge of speculators was gained first hand as a clerk on the Chicago Board of Trade.[1] Later he served as an advance agent for theatre companies touring the Midwest. Before going to San Francisco, where he managed the Bush Theatre, Broadhurst edited a newspaper in Grand Forks, North Dakota. While he was managing the Bush Theatre, Broadhurst met Bronson Howard, who encouraged him to finish his first play. With the completion and success of The Speculator,

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[1]Otheman Stevens, "From Clerk to Playwright," Los Angeles Examiner, March 6, 1909; New York Times, February 1, 1952; New York Review, November 4, 1911, p. 1; Cleveland Leader, March 9, 1913.

Broadhurst became a full time dramatist.[1]

Broadhurst's The Man of the Hour was as melodramatic and as popular as The Lion and the Mouse. Klein's play dealt with the national government; Broadhurst's play dealt with local government, but the issue was the same--business influence on government.

Audiences and critics assumed that The Lion and the Mouse was based on Ida Tarbell's articles on the Standard Oil Corporation; The Man of the Hour offered a wider choice. The issue involved the granting of a streetcar franchise. It related to separate battles fought by various reformers in cities all over America. Audiences assumed the struggle on the stage referred to the particular battle which they had witnessed in their local government. Depending on the city in which the play was offered, audiences were reminded of Lincoln Steffens' articles, or the reform battles fought by Joseph Folk, Hazen Pingree, Samuel Jones, Tom Johnson, or Judge Dunne.

Under the old system private companies were granted a franchise to provide public services, such as water, gas, or streetcar lines, for periods of fifty years or longer by local governments. The private companies sometimes paid nothing to a city to obtain the franchise and could set

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[1]Clipping marked Milwaukee, Wisconsin, dated May 29, 1907; Columbus Journal, August 2, 1912.

their own rates. Since profits were high under these monopolies, many individuals were willing to pay to gain these franchises. Charles T. Yerkes and others used bribery to obtain and hold long term control of streetcar lines in Chicago and other major cities. Once in control, an individual could charge extravagant rates and accumulate fabulous wealth. Yerkes became the subject of two of Theodore Dreiser's novels: The Financier (1912) and The Titan (1914).

A valuable streetcar franchise was at stake in The Man of the Hour. A battling young mayor fought to maintain enough votes on the City Council to uphold his veto of a corrupt franchise bill. The combined forces of a prominant political boss and a railway magnate were allied against the reform mayor.

The methods and policies of the political boss were taken from former Tammany Hall boss Richard Croker. The boss explained his methods to the railway magnate: "I don't trust nobody. I write no letters, I sign no receipts, I keep no accounts, I have no witnesses. It's my word and the other fellow's. I keep mine and I see that he keeps his. . . ."[1]

The boss argued that the mayor must sign the bill

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[1]George Broadhurst, The Man of the Hour (New York: Samuel French, 1916), p. 39.

out of gratitude to the men who made him. It might lead to charges of graft; but,

> every man is a grafter. A lawyer will take a fee for showing his client how he can break the law and evade the punishment--graft! Churches and Colleges accept money they know has been obtained by fraud and oppression--graft! Newspapers and magazines publish advertisements they know to be fakes and worse--graft! A railroad president accepts stock in a firm which ships over his line--graft! Senators become millionaires on a salary of seventy-five hundred dollars a year--graft! And so it goes, high and low, rich and poor--they all graft, in fact the man who doesn't graft hasn't the chance or else he's a fool.[1]

Alderman Phelan, a retired police commissioner and the mayor's strongest supporter on the City Council, provided an interesting comparison to the political boss. Phelan was elected because of his genuine concern for the poor. He gave them turkeys at Christmas and picnics in summer. As many as 2,500, chiefly women and children, attended a single picnic.

Critics blasted Broadhurst's conclusion and with good reason. The bosses were defeated and in a reasonable fashion, as it might have happened outside the theatre. Broadhurst, however, perhaps to satisfy the galleries, labored to find a way to put them into prison. The railway magnate's secretary was dramatically revealed to be the son of a man ruined by the great financier. He supplied the evidence to convict the grafters.

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[1]Broadhurst, Man of the Hour, p. 69.

The boss was also the target of criticism. "The up to date boss was not the blustering individual shown on the stage, he belonged to an earlier era," was a typical comment made by the Toledo Times Bee.[1]

Like most audiences, the critics generally associated The Man of the Hour with some local reform battle. In New York the critics were certain that the young mayor was George B. McClellan, Jr. The issue was the Remsen bill, which the young mayor had signed.[2]

The Remson bill was a permit for the Consolidated Gas Company to move a plant from Riverside Drive in Manhattan to Astoria in Queens. Mayor George McClellan signed the bill, because he believed that the plant made one of New York's most attractive sections almost uninhabitable. William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer, who rarely agreed on anything, both opposed the bill in their newspapers. Nevertheless, Governor Odell's representative, Thomas F. Ryan, had promised the Mayor that the bill would be signed by the Governor. After the Mayor had approved the bill, Odell changed his mind and vetoed the measure. Later one of Boss Murphy's lieutenants explained to the Mayor that

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[1]Toledo Times Bee, January 19, 1908.

[2]Karl Decker, New York Morning Telegraph, December 17, 1906; New York Herald, December 9, 1906; N.Y.D.M., December 15, 1906, p. 2; New York Dramatic News, January 15, 1912.

the Tammany Boss had wanted the bill signed because Harry Rogers of Standard Oil promised to carry Murphy's stock if the bill was signed. The shocked Mayor asked: "In other words, do I understand that Murphy delivered me behind my back?" The Mayor was reminded that Charley Murphy never took an interest in a bill unless he "got something out of it."[1]

George Washington Plunkitt explained the Remsen bill was an example of honest graft. The gas house was a nuisance; no voters in his district worked there. Its employees were all "Dagoes" from New Jersey, and he owned property in the neighborhood. The value of his real estate would increase by one hundred percent, if the gas plant were removed.[2]

The idea for The Man of the Hour resulted from the reading of numerous newspaper articles about investigations of graft and corporate influences on government, and a particular scandal which Broadhurst had witnessed first hand in Pennsylvania. While visiting Harrisburg, Broadhurst saw

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[1]Harold C. Syrett, The Gentleman and the Tiger: The Autobiography of George B. McClellan, Jr. (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1956), pp. 211-13; State of New York, Public Papers of Benjamin B. Odell, Jr.; Governor For 1904 (Albany: James B. Lyon Co., 1907), pp. 103-09.

[2]William L. Riordan, Plunkitt of Tammany Hall (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1963), pp. 62-63.

a new state building. It was a magnificent building, but open spaces on both sides of the door seemed odd. Broadhurst inquired and found that two bronze tablets which listed architects, contractors, and others responsible for the building belonged in these spaces. The tablets were lying in the basement, because anyone found connected with the building faced an indictment on charges of graft. Several years later Broadhurst learned some of the men listed on the tablets were in prison, but he did not know if the tablets had been set in place.[1]

While The Man of the Hour was no dramatic landmark, it was another significant example of the influence of the muckrakers on the American theatre. The public was eager to see on the stage the same kind of reformer that it had supported in municipal elections. The author's royalties totaled over $200,000. President Roosevelt, an infrequent theatregoer during his term of office, attended a performance in Washington.[2] Senator La Follette publicly commended the play.[3] One Republican candidate for Congress hoped to capitalize on the play's popularity. He rented the Academy

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[1]George Broadhurst, "How I Write a Play," Des Moines Register, October 20, 1912.

[2]New York American, January 21, 1908.

[3]Clipping dated February 27, 1907, N.Y.P.L.; New York Times, February 23, 1907, p. 9.

of Music in Philadelphia and offered free tickets to prospective voters to Broadhurst's play.[1] The reform minded candidate was defeated despite this dramatic effort.

Managers were hard pressed to find plays about reform issues. They were anxious to capitalize on the public interest in graft and corruption, but no play written during this decade reflected the Progressive movement as effectively as The Lion and the Mouse or The Man of the Hour. Frequently managers were forced to rely on plays which were better suited to the theatre of the eighteen-nineties or on low level melodrama. Sometimes they depended more on the title than the play to attract protest minded audiences.

Plays like Fritz of Tammany Hall, A Square Deal, and The District Leader mirrored the protest of their age only because they involved political corruption and election issues. Fritz of Tammany Hall probably reminded older theatregoers of Carles Hoyt's plays. A Square Deal and The District Leader dealt with rural politics in a manner not unlike that used by George Ade, but neither contained the realistic humor of The County Chairman.

Jay Hunt's The Master Workman was typical of a class of plays which aimed at lower class audiences. It made no attempt to portray in a realistic manner the struggle between capital and labor. It was simply a display of union

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[1]New York Telegraph, November 5, 1906.

power for the working classes to applaud. The foreman of a mill was falsely accused of murder by the plant's general manager and was sent to Sing Sing, but union power enabled him to get out on bail, despite the fact that he had been charged with murder and helped him to find the villain.[1]

While the plots of most melodramas in the lower class theatres were as hackneyed as that of The Master Workman, occasionally a more realistic play was offered. Louis Anspacher's The Embarrassment of Riches and Owen Davis' The Power of Money, while not intended for intellectual audiences, were more realistic presentations of the need for reform than were usually seen on the lower class stage. Neither play, however, compared favorably to the dramas which Anspacher and Davis were to write during a later era.

Anspacher did not preach reform; he illustrated the problems of life in a settlement house. The New York Times thought that his portrayal of a political boss was particularly well drawn.[2] Davis illustrated how a great trust might steal the secret of a manufacturing technique from a small company. While he did substitute violence for the more subtle techniques usually employed by the great trusts, the "heart" interest, which even Klein and Broadhurst had

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[1] N.Y.D.M., September 28, 1906, p. 3.

[2] New York Times, May 15, 1906, p. 9.

retained, was absent from Davis' melodrama. Violence was, of course, sometimes employed by the great trusts. Henry Demarest Lloyd found a fine of fifty dollars was paid by certain individuals "for conspiracy to blow up an oil refinery" in Buffalo, New York.[1] However, the violence in The Power of Money was more direct. The hero was beaten and nearly killed by men employed by the trust.

Titles taken from or similar to muckraking works were devices which were sometimes used to attract audiences. No dramatist could hope to convey the power or the plot of The Pit or The Jungle on the stage. Yet, because of their popular appeal, both were dramatized during this era. The sensational findings of The Jungle were so ill suited to the theatre that not even Upton Sinclair's appearance on stage could save the play.[2] Sinclair wrote several other plays, but no New York theatre would produce them. Broadway audiences demanded more than gimmicks, such as machines and cows, in the protest plays of this era.

The Pit proved a financial success, despite Augustus

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[1] Henry Demarest Lloyd, Wealth Against Commonwealth, ed. Thomas C. Cochran (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 78. See also, Ida M. Tarbell, The History of Standard Oil (2 vols.; New York: McClure, Phillips and Co., 1904), II, Chapter 12.

[2] New York Times, February 7, 1904, p. 9; New York Times, October 4, 1906, p. 9; New York Telegram, November 2, 1906; New York Times, October 7, 1906, p. 9.

Thomas' warning that "You can't dramatize descriptions of office buildings at night."[1] The play's success depended more on one sensational "pit" scene, and to Frank Norris' reputation than to any of Norris' ideas as found in the novel.

Probably the most obvious attempt by a theatre manager to exploit interest in social and economic problems was A Case of Frenzied Finance. The play involved a case of mistaken identity and an investment of "fifty" which was interpreted as fifty thousand by a stock broker.[2] This farce clearly had nothing in common with Thomas Lawson's muckraking study, "Frenzied Finance," but public recognition of the title might bring an audience eager to see the capitalist lampooned. In this case the emphasis on luck as the way financiers obtained their wealth may have satisfied the protest minded audience, but this device quickly wore thin. Audiences soon demanded that their dramas protest more vigorously against the rule by plutocracy.

Amateur productions offered broader opportunity for dramatic experimentation. Despite innovations with techniques the amateurs also relied heavily on the theme of

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[1]Channing Pollock, Harvest of My Years (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, Co., 1943), pp. 127-30. New York Times, March 10, 1904, p. 9; Theatre, IV (March, 1904), pp. 57-58.

[2]Theatre V (May, 1905), pp. 109-10; N.Y.D.M., April 15, 1905, p. 16; New York Times, April 2, 1905, iv, p. 5.

concentrated financial power in American society.

Ann Wynne's The Broken Bars invoked the symbolism of the medieval morality play to describe the battle between capital and labor. The production was staged by the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. The principal characters were Father Religion, multi-millions, poverty, and sin. Only Father Religion could save the modern world from destruction by poverty and his horde. At the play's conclusion multi-millions and poverty were made to shake hands.[1]

While the medieval morality technique appealed to a limited audience, a later production by the same organization led to a Broadway run for Cora Maynard's The Measure of Man. The play illustrated how a young inventor could quickly become entangled in the corrupt world of finance once he sought financial backers to market his idea. The play dealt with an experience of Miss Mayard's father. Although Augustus Thomas thought it was "the greatest play ever written by a woman," the critics agreed that Miss Maynard's knowledge of the business world was limited.[2]

William De Mille's realistic one-act play, The Land

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[1]New York Times, November 10, 1906, p. 9; New York Times, November 17, p. 9; N.Y.D.M., November 24, 1906, p. 13.

[2]Clipping dated September 24, 1906, in the Grey Locke Collection, N.Y.P.L.; New York Times, February 2, 1906, p. 11; Philadelphia Telegraph, October 5, 1906; Boston Transcript, October 4, 1906.

of the Free, was another amateur production of this era. The plot was taken from a newspaper story about the plight of an Italian immigrant for whom "the Promise of American Life" proved to be a nightmare. Luigi worked for three years to save enough money to bring his wife and two children to the United States. He earned only nine dollars a week as a common laborer. Finally, the great day arrived, and the family reached New York. Luigi met them at an immigration office, where his problems began. An immigration officer noticed that Luigi's wife was not well and that Luigi's salary was small. Since he could not support his family and his wife was not able to work, the family was ordered to return to Naples. Now, Luigi wanted to return with them, but he had only seven dollars in his pocket, which was less than half the fare.[1]

The socialist-realist plays of the Progressive Stage Society were far more radical than anything done by "muckraking melodramatists" on Broadway or by any other amateur group in New York. This organization, which produced European and American socialistic drama, aimed not at simple protest, but at revolutionary change in the economic system of the United States.

While social revolution was the ultimate objective,

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[1]New York Times, April 8, 1906, iv, p. 2.

the society also sought revolution in the theatre. The capitalist theatre could not, the society maintained, represent the aspirations of the masses, because its sole aim was profit. This meant that the capitalist theatre could serve to amuse the leisure class, but it could not produce art. One leader of the group explained that true art came only from the people. A quality American theatre, he argued, could not result from upper class philanthropy "like Rockefeller's oilsoaked university or Carnegie's bloodstained library. . . ."[1]

The Society's leaders hoped to win the support of New York's Lower East Side population. Immigrants from Eastern Europe had settled in this district where they dominated the garment unions.[2] They brought with them a tradition of going to the theatre and a tradition of voting for socialists. The Progressive Stage Society could appeal to both these traditions, and its dues were kept within the means of the working class.

To join the Progressive Stage Society one paid an initiation fee of twenty-five cents. Dues, which were fifty cents, were paid before each performance. Membership in the

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[1]Courtney Lemon, "Commercialism and the Drama," Progressive Stage Society Bulletin.

[2]David Shannon, The Socialist Party in America (New York: Macmillan, 1958), p. 12.

organization entitled one to a seat, selected by a general drawing, at each performance.[1] By January, 1905, just a few months after the Society was organized, the group claimed 1,200 members. They were drawn more from Socialist intellectual groups than the working class.

The guiding spirit of the organization was Julius Hopp. Hopp was a German immigrant, and he had been in America only a few years when he organized the society. Although he could count on aid from several prominent socialists, and he had discussed the project with Courtney Lemon, editor of The Worker; Horace Trauble, editor of The Conservator; and Elsie Barker, a socialist poet;[2] most of the organization's work was done by Hopp.

It would have been difficult to find a leader more dedicated than Hopp. He cared little for himself, and he had no interest in material possessions. His home was in the heart of the East Side.[3] A friend once estimated that Hopp never had more than four dollars in his pocket at any one time. He was known to have borrowed collars and even

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[1]Progressive Stage Society Bulletin; Brooklyn Daily Eagle, January 8, 1905; p. 10. Theatre, V (January, 1905), p. xiii.

[2]Whitman Bennett, "A Dramatic Enthusiast, the Truth about Julius Hopp and his Venture," Boston Transcript, August 25, 1906.

[3]Bennett, Boston Transcript, August 25, 1906.

Courtney Lemon's razor.[1] Hopp's dedication to the cause of socialism was a source of humor for several New York newspapers, but the New York Star reminded them that Edison and the Wright Brothers had once been laughed at as dreamers.[2]

A story printed in the Cleveland Leader illustrated Hopp's dedication. It explained that the usually confident and energetic Hopp appeared quite dejected when he met a friend one morning. He told the friend that he badly needed funds so that he might be free for a fortnight to complete a project, which was vital for the cause of art and socialism. The friend was sympathetic. He inquired how much Hopp would need. Hopp thought for some time, finally, he replied: "'I guess about $5 would see me through.'"[3]

Hopp believed that his age was a period of transition from commercialism to socialism. This change, he thought, would bring about an end to poverty, and economic security would replace the wide divisions which presently existed between plutocrats and workers under the capitalistic system. The social revolution would be brought about by the working class. Although Hopp recognized that the workers constituted a democratic majority and could come to

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[1] Cleveland Leader, May 5, 1910.

[2] New York Star, January 19, 1909.

[3] Cleveland Leader, May 5, 1910.

power through elections, he was not opposed to revolution.[1]

The dramatist could, Hopp believed, provide leadership for the revolution. Because the theatre involved direct contact with the audience, a drama could be more effective than a novel in obtaining active response from the proletariat. If the modern dramatist dealt with modern problems and recent events, Hopp thought, the theatre could promote freedom, universal happiness, and peace.[2]

Freedom, universal happiness, and peace according to Hopp's theory would not come about until a revolution had occurred. The social dramatist, Hopp argued, should be directly involved in the revolution he advocated on the stage. Maxim Gorki had already accomplished this. Hopp noted that Gorki's audience had cheered his revolutionary play in the theatre, then, joined Gorki behind the barricades. Gorki was the product of the intellectual and social rebellion in his own country, and he in turn influenced this rebellion.[3] In addition to Gorki; Tolstoy, Ibsen, Hauptmann, Maeterlink, and Shaw were also writing significant protest drama in Europe, but Hopp thought the time was right for America to develop its own social drama. Admirable work

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[1]Julius Hopp, "The Social Drama and its Purpose," Eclectic Magazine, CXLVI (1905), p. 6.

[2]Hopp, Eclectic Magazine, CXLVI, p. 7.

[3]Hopp, Eclectic Magazine, CXLVI, p. 7.

had already been done by novelists David Graham Phillips and Jack London.[1] Hopp thought that the Progressive Stage Society would help to stimulate the writing of socialistic plays because American playwrights could be sure they would get a hearing from this radical group. Enthusiastically he explained what might happen as a result:

> Just think what it could be for America, if a powerful playwright should arise here and by excoriating the injustice of the trusts, the corruptions of our political system, and the wickedness of society, cause a reform movement that would clear the air and the soul of people, so we could revert to the pure upright standards on which the good and true must stand. Suppose Philadelphia was shown on the stage for the corrupt and contented pesthole that it is, suppose the "frenzied financiers" were lampooned out of existence, suppose that Newport and its exiles were held up to ridicule and satire that the "400" would return to the simple life. Would these not be gains for the people? Then, too, suppose the proletariat could find a stage that would talk to him about problems that he faces every day, about problems that were not dead and buried with Hamlet's father, would not that be a gain? All these things and more the society stands for and means to do.[2]

The Progressive Stage Society's initial production was greeted by a capacity house on November 27, 1904.[3] One American socialist play was on the program. Socialist poet Elsie Barker, encouraged by Hopp, wrote The Scab for the occasion. In addition, the Society produced Tola Dorian's

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[1]Hopp, Eclectic Magazine, CXLVI, p. 11.

[2]"Teaching Socialism by the Drama as Tried in New York, Popular," Brooklyn Daily Eagle, January 8, 1905, p. 10.

[3]Brooklyn Daily Eagle, January 8, 1905, p. 10.

Soldiers and Miners.

Miss Barker's play emphasized class loyalty during a strike. The disloyal member of the working class, the strikebreaker or scab became a familiar figure in America during this era. In Theodore Dreiser's Sister Carrie, Hurstwood's last attempt to find work was as a strikebreaker during a Brooklyn streetcar strike. Dreiser emphasized the individual's decline, and the capitalist's ability to profit from it; Miss Barker emphasized the need for class solidarity. The scab was portrayed as a traitor to his class, because he put personal comfort before class loyalty. The hero remained loyal to the working class despite the threat that his family might starve, and pressure from a capitalist landlord and a finance company.

The Scab was set in a typical workingman's tenement home during a bitter strike. Living with the workman were his wife, their daughter, and his brother-in-law. Like all strikes it was a difficult time for the laborer and his family. The rent was not paid, installments on their meager furniture were due, and the young daughter could not understand why there was no food in the house. The wife's brother was gone all day; he returned with an armful of food, and explained that he had found a dollar in the street. As the hungry family sat down to supper, the workingman noticed a bobbin in his brother-in-law's pocket. He

immediately realized that the food had been obtained by "scabbing." The honest worker took the food from the table, even the bread that his daughter was about to eat, and tossed it out the window. The scab was driven from the home. "'We want honest food in this house,'" declared the class conscious worker, "'or we shall have none.'"[1] Starvation was better than acceptance of help from a scab, even when the strikebreaker was a member of one's own family.

The drama ended with a victory for the strikers, but it was not a typical American "happy ending." The mother, who had been outdoors helping her daughter with her lessons during the strike, had to return to the squalor of the mill. Learning that her mother would have to return to work, the daughter remarked, "'Then, I don't see why you are glad the strike is over.'"[2]

Tolan Dorian's Miners and Soldiers was even more pessimistic than The Scab. European influences were more obvious. Miss Dorian was a Russian exile living in the United States. The play depicted the conflict between labor class solidarity on one hand, and patriotism and military obedience on the other. Forced to choose between helping strikers dynamite a mine and following military orders to

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[1] Brooklyn Daily Eagle, January 8, 1905, p. 10.

[2] Brooklyn Daily Eagle, January 10, 1905, p. 10.

guard the mine entrance, a young soldier committed suicide.[1]

After two performances the Progressive Stage Society was nearly bankrupt. Strife between individuals regularly interrupted meetings. Hopp proposed that members dues be changed to five dollars per year, and that theatre seats be sold at regular prices. This, he hoped would provide sufficient funds to keep the organization going, but his proposal drove the anarchists' wing out of the group. Hopp was catering to the rich, they charged. In addition, European intellectual drama failed to draw well. Ibsen and Bjorson were over the heads of the working classes, and Hopp's third rate actors butchered their parts so badly that educated Americans refused to attend the productions. The Progressive Stage Society endeavored for a while to exist on contributions collected during their productions, but this Salvation Army method proved insufficient.[2] Hopp turned to the unions for aid and after some controversy the Theatre of Labor was established. Under this system the Progressive Stage Society was subsidized by union funds.[3]

Among the Theatre of Labor productions was Poor People, a one-act drama by Hopp. In addition to its

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[1]Brooklyn Daily Eagle, January 10, 1905, p. 10.

[2]Whitman Bennett, Boston Transcript, August 25, 1906.

[3]N.Y.D.M., March 24, 1906, p. 9; N.Y.D.M., April 14, 1906, p. 13.

realistic portrayal of life in the slums, the play anticipated numerous novels and plays which dealt with the economic basis of prostitution. Before World War I this became a major theme in the American theatre.

The Theatre of Labor lasted only a short time. Hopp's uncompromising Socialism led him to take a critical view of the New York unions in his next play. As a result the unions withdrew their support.[1] Hence, by the end of this era the radical theatre in New York again faced a financial crisis. However, the radical theatre like the Broadway stage had made its voice of protest heard during this era.

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[1]New York Sun, January 22, 1907.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIALISM COMES TO BROADWAY: 1907-1910

The peak years of the Progressive era's protest theatre occurred between 1907-1910. During this era several plays which contributed to the protest movement reached the Broadway stage. Joseph Medill Patterson exposed the influence of big business on the newspapers, Eugene Walter probed the theatre industry, and William Hurlbut attacked the tenements of Trinity Church. These were writers who had raked in the muck and dramatized their exposé. Like Hopp, who continued to promote socialism during this era, they contributed to the protest movement.

Charles Klein and George Broadhurst continued to reflect the reform movement in their plays. Klein's plays provided ideas for more vigorous attacks against the capitalistic system by reviewers in the muckraking press; Broadhurst moved in the direction of socialism. Edward Sheldon's plays also reflected the reform spirit. His attack on racist values in America which appeared in The Nigger aroused considerable controversy during this era.

Socialism was advocated in numerous plays that dealt with lower class conditions by dramatists who were convinced

that reform under capitalism was impossible. In fact, protest against the capitalistic system was so frequent during this period that one conservative dramatist, Cleveland Moffett, wrote a defense of the existing system. Moffett's play provoked considerable debate. By 1910, however, the protest movement in the theatre was on the decline. The public lost interest in reform, and this was reflected in the theatre. After 1910, few plays dealt with socialism. Charles Kenyon's Kindling alone merits recognition.

Radicals in politics were not quite radicals in dramatic technique. Protest plays of this era remained melodramatic; however, the typical American "happy ending" was abandoned by several writers. When the public seemed overly "shocked" by these innovations, a New York manager might force revisions in the radical drama, or he might send the play on the road. In the West, pessimistic and radical dramas were more successful than in New York.

American writers who took a pessimistic approach toward reform were influenced more by direct contact with the problems of the lower classes than by European social drama. Prior to 1912, with the exception of Julius Hopp, European drama had very little influence on American writers. Charles Klein was, of course, familiar with Ibsen and Shaw, but he found them too pessimistic for American tastes. Most writers to the left of Klein had gone out and raked in

the muck. They had seen the tenements, dope rings, and red light districts which were, they assumed, manifestations of a capitalistic economy.

Once they had made this assumption limited reform seemed futile. Some clung to a desperate hope for reform, but all cast doubt on the typical Progressive solution--legislation. If society was to offer opportunity for all, most radical American dramatists believed that a fundamental change in society was necessary. Some believed that man could be persuaded to adopt a more altruistic attitude toward his fellow man, and others argued that religion offered the only solution to serious social problems in America; however, the most radical playwrights maintained that only socialism could solve the deep-seated social problems which afflicted American society.

The idea of a fundamental change in the economic order was not new to Julius Hopp. He had been advocating socialism in his off-Broadway dramas for several years. Hopp continued, despite continual financial difficulties, his struggle to interpret the aspirations of the masses. Because Hopp's drama, The Friends of Labor, had portrayed the leaders of the Central Federated Union as incompetent tools of the capitalists, the union had withdrawn their support from the Theatre of Labor; nevertheless, Hopp was able to produce the play in January, 1907.

The drama depicted a meeting in which the grievances of streetcar workers were to be arbitrated. However, the president of the traction company, who was also the boss of the Democratic party, won the support of the foolish union president. The Democrats, led by the boss, decided to campaign as pro-labor candidates and as supporters of municipal ownership of public utilities. Only Lawrence, a Socialist, saw through the scheme and protested, but he was quickly shouted down.[1]

Later a second supposedly pro-labor group was organized. This group intended to throw their support to the Republicans at the last minute. A sham battle between the two groups was conducted to win the votes of the workers.

In the last act the workers were shown after the election. Again they were on strike, because their demands had been rejected. This time strikebreakers were brought in. A battle between workers and scabs was depicted. The strikebreakers with the aid of the militia easily won. Lawrence, the Socialist, convinced his brother to desert from the militia, but when the socialist stepped between warring factions in an effort to end the fighting, he was shot and killed.[2]

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[1] New York Sun, January 22, 1907.

[2] The Worker, May 25, 1907, p. 2; New York Sun, January 22, 1907; The Worker, June 1, 1906, p. 3.

In an effort to obtain funds for additional productions of The Friends of Labor, Hopp read the drama before several groups at the Rand School of Social Science. One audience consisted of just two men. They were representatives of the Industrial Workers of the World, and Hopp hoped to gain their financial support. Finally in May, Hopp was able to produce the drama for a week in the Kalick Theatre in the Bowery.[1]

An agreement was signed with Bill Kahn manager of the Kalick. Five percent of the receipts from tickets sold in advance at the office of The Worker were to be donated to the Haywood-Moyer-Petibone defense fund.[2] Kahn later extended the deal until the opening performance and agreed to give five percent of the entire gross to the fund.[3] Following the New York production the play was booked at the Blaney Theatre in Newark, New Jersey. Ten percent of the Newark proceeds went to the Haywood fund.[4]

Despite the "worthy" cause, response to The Friends of Labor was disappointing. Courtney Lemon, who reviewed the drama for The Worker, thought the author's use of mobs, mass effects, and social groups compared favorably to

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[1]The Worker, September 22, 1906, p. 1; New York Sun, June 9, 1907; The Worker, June 9, 1907, p. 3.

[2]The Worker, April 20, 1907, p. 6.

[3]The Worker, May 18, 1909, p. 1.

[4]The Worker, May 11, 1907, p. 1.

Gerhart Hauptmann's in The Weavers, which had once been proscribed in Newark. The opening night's attendance at the Kalick theatre was impressive; a packed house which included Upton Sinclair and Edward Markham attended the performance, but this level of support was not sustained. The size of the audience, Lemon commented, was a reproach to the Socialists of the city of New York. After three years of hard work, Hopp's results were being ignored by his comrades.[1]

The Haywood, Moyer, and Petibone case which provoked demonstrations in New York, Boston, and Chicago, and which Hopp had supported with his meager funds, was depicted in a drama by Socialist writer John Spargo. Spargo's novel The Bitter Cry of the Children was widely known. Julius Hopp immediately acquired the rights to produce the drama, entitled Not Guilty, but he never produced the play. Spargo's drama consisted of arguments which were suitable in a pamphlet but made very poor material for the stage. One New York critic read the play and promised to eat his hat, if the entire three acts took longer than fifteen minutes to complete on stage.[2] Not Guilty's influence was restricted to readers of the Ariel Press publication of the tract.

Hopp's involvement in the Haywood case illustrated

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[1] The Worker, May 25, 1907; New York Sun, May 22, 1907.

[2] New York Telegraph, January 16, 1907.

his eagerness to fulfill his own conception of "the social dramatist," which involved participation in the revolutionary events he advocated on the stage. He sought a theatre where he could become involved in the election of 1908. He hoped to establish a theatre where he could present Socialist ideas within the price range of the masses. After a long search, he located a small theatre on Third Street in the Lower East Side, where the famous Russian actress Mme. Nazimova had made her first American appearance. Hopp offered both Yiddish and English plays; admission was ten cents.[1]

Hopp's first production at the Third Avenue theatre was The Pioneers, which he had written. The drama had been tried out earlier at the Rand School of Social Science. Critics believed the play was a biography of J. G. Phelps Stokes. Walter Armstrong was his father's private secretary. Walter's father was the president of the Tunnel Construction Company, which had recently built a tunnel with cheap labor and defective materials. The structure soon collapsed, and many were killed. The Company's chief engineer, Richard Mason, was in love with Walter's sister and her money.

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[1]New York Times, March 19, 1908, p. 1; New York Times, January 23, 1909, p. 5; Clipping dated September 21, 1908, in the Grey Locke Collection, N.Y.P.L.; New York Times, April 5, 1908, p. 11; New York Times, September 22, 1908; N.Y.D.M., October 3, 1908, p. 4.

However, Helen was more interested in social welfare. She read an article in The Truth, a Socialist newspaper, which blamed the company for the disaster. When she confronted her father with the story, he answered: "'Competent engineers will be employed.'" Hired testimony might convince a jury, but it did not satisfy Helen or her brother. Helen persuaded Mason to admit that the tunnel was built with materials little better than paper maché. Walter published a letter which clearly established his father's guilt. It revealed that the scheme, if successful, would have made a profit of eight million dollars for the Tunnel Construction Company. At the play's conclusion both Helen and her brother joined the Socialist party and began new careers as settlement workers.[1]

Hopp's next play had a measure of commercial success. The Dolls was written for the Socialist Sunday School of the Eighth Assembly District of New York. An early production was given for the East Side children who were depicted in the play. The drama contrasted the daughter of a rich doll manufacturer with the poverty stricken daughter of a doll factory employee. When the employee sought aid on behalf of her daughter, the rich manufacturer accused her of stealing one of the dolls. This prompted a long lecture on socialism.

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[1]New York Sun, October 22, 1908; New York Telegraph, September 10, 1907.

The Dolls was purchased by the owner of a vaudeville house.[1]

At the Pioneer Theatre on Third Street, Hopp had planned to produce American Socialist drama; however, because he was limited to his own plays, he sometimes resorted to European plays. During the summer of 1909, for example, he obtained the rights to two plays by Johannes Wiegand, a popular German dramatist. One play dealt with an American trust magnate who sought to control the world and went insane.[2]

Prolonged illness and perhaps discouragement virtually ended Hopp's career as a dramatist in 1909. After The Dolls he completed only one play, an anti-war drama in 1915.[3] Hopp did, however, remain involved in the New York theatre.

The Wage Earners Theatre League offered low cost quality drama to the masses. With Winthrop Ames, who had organized the New Theatre to bring uncommercial quality drama to New York, decided to hold a series of "people's nights," he immediately turned to Hopp for help in organizing the project.[4] Hopp, who had aimed his own productions

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[1]New York Times, March 28, 1908, p. 9; New York Telegraph, June 8, 1908.

[2]Clipping titled "More High Brow Drama from the Fatherland," dated July 13, 1909, N.Y.P.L.

[3]New York World, June 2, 1915; New York Sun, April 22, 1919, p. 4.

[4]Boston Transcript, July 9, 1911; Lynde Denig,

at the same economic group, proved an ideal choice. Tickets were distributed to people who ordinarily could not afford to attend first class productions.

After the New Theatre closed, Hopp continued to operate the Wage Earners Theatre League and later the Educational Theatre League and the Modern Stage Society, through the regular Broadway theatres. Lee Shubert began the practice of selling tickets at reduced rates near the end of Broadway runs through the Wage Earners Theatre League; other managers quickly adopted the practice.[1] The system was popular with the producers and with the public. During another protest era, the nineteen-thirties, Hopp revived a similar project.[2]

Although Charles Klein had been a leading writer of muckraking melodramas during the previous era, he had never really "protested" against existing conditions. During this era of more vigorous protest, Klein's plays continued to reflect the spirit of the times.

In The Next of Kin, Klein illustrated how easily a lawyer could cheat a young orphan out of her rightful inheritance. While Klein's play was not an attack on the

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"Theatre Tickets at Cut Rates," Theatre, XXI (April, 1915), p. 186.

[1]Denig, Theatre, XXI, p. 186.

[2]New York Sunday Mirror, November 12, 1933.

whole legal profession, it furnished Hampton's reviewer with an opportunity to do just that. In its review of the melodrama Hampton's questioned the ethics of the entire American Bar Association. If the association ever cleaned house, Hampton's contended, they would hardly have enough members left to have an "association." That would require at least three members; Hampton's thought they might find that many, but the lawyers could certainly hold their meetings on a streetcorner.[1]

The Third Degree dealt with police brutality and the influence of the yellow press against an accused man. While the police were more often attacked for their failure to enforce the law than for excessive enforcement during this era, numerous articles in the liberal press endorsed Klein's play. B. O. Flower associated the third degree with the power of reactionary materialism. Louis Post's The Public found considerable evidence to support Klein's thesis. A new police building in New York was equipped with "roast and freeze" rooms. They contained bare walls, pipes for quick changes of temperature, and electric lights for quick changes in the lighting of the room.[2] In another issue, The Public published a remarkable interview with Captain

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[1]"Plays and Players," Hampton's Magazine, XXIV (March, 1910), p. 405.

[2]The Public, XIII (February 4, 1910), pp. 99-100.

McDonnell, Chief of Detectives, of the Detroit police force. After attending a performance of Klein's play he insisted there was no third degree in Detroit. He then elaborated:

> I am a police officer, not a lawyer. We've got to make laws of our own. If we suspect a man we see that he doesn't get a lawyer near him until we get through to him. We question him, and corner him up until he confesses. There was that young fellow who murdered the old woman and who was acquitted by the jury though he confessed. We used no brutality. He said he wanted to confess, after some facts were shown to him. If a man committed murder, we are going to get that man to confess if we can. They break down. But brutality, man, none of that.[1]

The captain went on to compare the Canadian system to Detroit's. In Canada, the police were obliged to warn a suspect that anything he said might be used against him. In Detroit, this was never done. "'Why,'" said the Captain, "'they'd never talk if we were to tell them that.'"[2]

George Broadhurst's muckraking melodrama, The Man of the Hour, had mirrored the reform impulse in 1906. Although he still hoped for progressive reform, he admitted in 1909 that he was "leaning toward socialism."[3] In The Dollar Mark produced in 1909 Broadhurst supported Senator Robert La Follette's contention that financiers had brought on the panic of 1907 in order to discredit the reform movement.

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[1]The Public, XII (July 2, 1909), p. 625.

[2]The Public, XII (July 2, 1909), p. 625.

[3]Otheman Stevens, Los Angeles Examiner, March 6, 1909.

Broadhurst was deeply concerned with the unequal distribution of wealth in American society. He used two headlines from a New York newspaper to illustrate his position. The first stated: "Russell Sage's Will Probated--He Leaves Sixty-four Million Dollars." In the next column the headline noted: "Sleep With Unclaimed Dead--Two Hundred East Siders Find Refuge in the Morgue." "Do not," asked Broadhurst, "these two incidents show that something is wrong?"[1]

Broadhurst's The Dollar Mark had only a brief run on Broadway. The play's producer William Brady was convinced that the public was tired of protest plays; however, in the West the public remained militant. Despite failure in New York the play's value was estimated in excess of $50,000 because of its popularity on the road. The Dollar Mark had a remarkable run of ten weeks in Los Angeles. One critic suggested the Socialists and other agitators could afford theatre tickets in Los Angeles, but in New York ticket prices had been too high for these groups.[2]

Although Charles Klein and George Broadhurst

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[1]Otheman Stevens, Los Angeles Examiner, March 6, 1909.

[2]Rennold Wolf, New York Telegraph, n.c.; Constance Skinner, "The Coast Defenders," Green Book Album, III (April, 1910), p. 856; Perry Beaumont, "East No Longer Likes Graft Plays," Philadelphia Times, October 14, 1909.

continued to reflect and perhaps to some extent contribute to the protest movement, after 1907 the leaders of the theatre of protest were two more militant socialists, Joseph Patterson and Eugene Walter.

In 1906, while Charles Klein and George Broadhurst were getting very rich on political melodramas, Joseph Medill Patterson as Commissioner of Public Works was fighting the department store owners and the political bosses of Chicago. Patterson, whose family owned the conservative Chicago Tribune, had earlier served a term in the Illinois State Legislature. This had proved to be a rather unpleasand experience. Patterson was young and impatient, he had been elected on a municipal ownership platform, and the Illinois Legislature seldom passed reform bills, especially the kind Patterson sought. He rebelled against the Legislature's delay by leading a demonstration in which books, inkstands, and blotters were hurled at the speaker of the house.[1] After one term Patterson chose not to seek reelection, but he had not yet given up on reform politics. He campaigned for Judge Dunne, the Democratic candidate for mayor in Chicago, because the Judge's platform included

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[1]New York Times, May 26, 1946; New York Herald Tribune, May 27, 1946; The Public, VIII (April 29, 1905), p. 39; John Chapman, Tell It to Sweeney: the Informal History of the New York Daily News (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1961), p. 34.

municipal ownership of public utilities which Patterson, a Republican, believed was the main issue. After his election, Dunne appointed Patterson Commissioner of Public Works. The new Commissioner quickly found that urban politics was much like state politics in Illinois. Although he was able to force department store owners to pay a half million dollars in fines for extending their basements under Chicago's streets, he was unable to get his reform bills through the boss controlled city council. After a year in office, Patterson suddenly resigned saying:

> The whole body of our laws as at present formed are ridiculous and obsolete. . . . They are designed always to uphold capital at the expense of the community. . . . I realized soon after I took office that to fight privileges under the present laws would be a jest.[1]

Patterson announced that he was now a Socialist. This announcement caused a nationwide stir. Shocked Mayor Dunne commented that Patterson's views on capitalism need not have interfered with his holding public office in Chicago.[2]

Despite Patterson's lofty family position and his Yale education, he had a genuine interest in the common man. He frequented Chicago's North Side Bars dressed like the

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[1]Wayne Andrews, The Battle for Chicago (New York: Harcourt, 1946), p. 225; New York Times, May 26, 1946; "The Resignation of Joseph M. Patterson," National Committee of the Socialist Party, Chicago, February 28, 1906.

[2]Andrews, Chicago, p. 225.

workingmen he met there. Chicago's First Ward on the North Side was a Midwestern Barbary Coast. It contained the most disorderly houses and had the heaviest vice toll. The North Side's political bosses were notorious "Hinky Dick" Kenna and John F. "Bath House John" Coughlin. Kenna ran the Workingman's Palace, billed the greatest tramp saloon in the country. Mugs at the Palace were so large that patrons used two hands to lift them. If one let the mug touch the bar, any loafer was permitted to snatch it if he could. To prove himself every now and then, Patterson would pick a fight with a tough loafer.[1]

Patterson knew the problems of the lower classes, and he had tried reform within capitalism; he turned to socialism as the only chance for true reform. Nevertheless, he remained pessimistic about reform, and this was reflected in his protest plays.

Articles such as "The Confession of a Drone" which was published in The Independent and circulated widely as a Socialist pamphlet, and a novel had already established Patterson as a socialist writer before his first play reached Broadway in 1908. The Fourth Estate belonged to an

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[1]Jack Alexander, "Vox Populi," New Yorker, August 6, 1938, p. 16; G. K. Turner, "The City of Chicago," McClure's, XXVIII (April, 1907), p. 383; Andrews, Chicago, p. 22; Charles Edward Russell, "Chaos and Bomb Throwing in Chicago," Hampton's, XXIV (March, 1910), p. 317.

era of melodrama, but it was a radical departure from The Lion and the Mouse.

The major theme of The Fourth Estate was the influence of business on the press. A secondary theme involved corruption in the federal courts. The plot illustrated the difficulties faced by a young reporter who had uncovered evidence of corruption which involved a federal judge. He found his newspaper lacked the courage to print the story.

Patterson's drama demonstrated that newspapers hesitated to print exposé of corruption because business interests frequently withdrew advertising from the muckraking press. In the first act of The First Estate a "newspaper lobbyist" visited the editor's office of The Advance. He warned that if the newspaper printed a second article which implied a certain federal judge had been bribed by corrupt business interests, advertising would be withdrawn from the newspaper. He reminded the editor that he represented thirty thousand dollars in advertising, and he demanded that the editor fire the young muckraking reporter who had written the first article.

The reporter was saved by the arrival of the paper's new owner. The owner had acquired the newspaper with new wealth found in the West, but he had not always been so furtunate. Once he had been sent to jail by the judge involved in the article to break a strike. He was willing to sacrifice

advertising to see the Judge exposed. The rich, however, soon forgot the problems of the lower classes. The owner's family was eager to gain admission into society. The owner's son at Harvard, his daughter at Bryn Mawr, and his wife in the community all found family ownership of a "muck-raking" newspaper a barrier to social success. As a result they put pressure on the owner, and he in turn demanded that the reporter obtain more evidence that the judge was guilty.

The last act shocked the New York audience. The reporter convinced the judge that he would print the truth about the case unless he was paid $10,000 in cash at the newspaper office. As the judge handed over the money a flash photograph was taken. Even this evidence failed to convince the owner, who by now had gone over to the capitalists side, he ordered the editor to drop the story. In despair the young muckraker committed suicide.

In The Fourth Estate, Patterson had probed into the influence of business on the newspapers, and he had charged the federal judiciary with corrupt practices. He concluded the play with a suicide that left no hope for reform. Critics thought the ending was logical, but producer George Tyler feared "the public would not stand for it."[1] The

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[1]James O'Donnell Bennett, Chicago Record-Herald, November 4, 1909.

ending was revised to permit a compromise. The judge agreed to resign, and his daughter married the reporter. This left no need to publish the exposé. Despite the change The Fourth Estate was far more successful on the road than in New York. Its long run in Chicago prompted Walter Prichard Eaton, a critic and professor at New York University, to comment that Chicago was ahead of New York in its appreciation of good drama.[1]

Patterson's conclusion that big business controlled the content on many newspapers was readily accepted by the public and the critics. "There are not many owners who prove the faith that is in them by hewing to a line that leaves the half-page advertisements of a Boston stock-jobber out of the papers and the fact is just as well known inside the office as out of them," commented James O'Donnell Bennett in the Chicago Record-Herald.[2] The American Magazine agreed that Patterson had dealt with "conditions actually faced by most newspaper proprietors. . . ."[3] Oswald Villard, publisher of the New York Evening Post, illustrated the influence of business on the newspapers in a lecture entitled,

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[1]James O'Donnell Bennett, Chicago Record-Herald, November 4, 1909.

[2]James O'Donnell Bennett, Chicago Record-Herald, November 4, 1909.

[3]"Plays that Make People Think," American Magazine, LXIX (January, 1910), p. 413.

"The Moral Responsibility of the Press." He described a Western town where a staff of reporters were given the power to support a reform movement by the paper's proprietor. When the reformers seemed certain of victory, certain business interests persuaded the proprietor to withdraw the paper's support from the reform cause. The bosses, as a result, were re-elected. Sometime afterward Villard again visited the town. He found that the reporters continued to work on the newspaper, but they had become cynical.[1] Hampton's review proved to be the most ironical commentary on Patterson's drama. It stated that the "so called 'free press' of this country" was a myth.[2] Within a few years "the interests" were to put Hampton's, the most radical muckraking magazine, out of business.[3]

Hampton's also agreed with Patterson's charge that the judiciary was corrupt: "We all know that the big sin in the United States is the corrupt judiciary. . . ." Theodore Roosevelt had also stated this view of the judiciary, noted the muckraking journal.[4] The Outlook disagreed: "The

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[1]New York Times, February 20, 1911, p. 7.

[2]Hampton's Magazine, XXIII (December, 1909), p. 816.

[3]Louis Filler, Crusaders for American Liberalism (New York: Collier, 1961), pp. 337-38.

[4]Hampton's Magazine, XXIV (February, 1910).

reputation of the Federal judiciary . . . is so high that it ought to withstand the presentation on the stage of the possible venality of a single judge as portrayed in The Fourth Estate."[1] The Public thought most critics had missed the point of the play. Stage techniques required a more dramatic portrayal of influences which in practice were more subtle. Bribes to judges were not necessary, nor were reporters paid to keep quiet; nevertheless, plutocratic interests did influence both newspapers and courts. This was the important message of The Fourth Estate.[2]

Neither Patterson's dramatization of his novel, A Little Brother of the Rich, nor his last major play, Rebellion, attained popularity comparable to The Fourth Estate. As a novel A Little Brother of the Rich was a bitter arraignment of modern society; however, on the stage it was just another satire of the rich.[3] In Rebellion, Patterson questioned the Roman Catholic Church's stand on divorce. The heroine was tied to a drunken, worthless husband. Although Rebellion was endorsed by the Drama League, it was only a

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[1]Outlook, XCIII (October 30, 1910), pp. 484-85.

[2]The Public, XIII (April 8, 1910), p. 3.

[3]New York Times, December 28, 1909, p. 9; Charles Darnton, New York Evening Post, December 30, 1909; George Jean Nathan, "The Drama of Fore and Aft," The Smart Set, XXX (March, 1910), p. 146.

moderate success.[1]

Patterson's last two dramatic efforts were one act plays for vaudeville audiences. Both dealt with tenement conditions, and both expressed the same pessimistic attitude toward reform which had characterized The Fourth Estate.

By-Products was written originally for William Morris' vaudeville circuit, but it was later performed by the Hull House Players in Chicago. During a trip to Europe this group performed By-Products in Dublin Castle.[2]

In By-Products, Patterson depicted a dark cellar tenement home, where a consumptive girl and her mother toiled against the ominous forces of a society they could not understand, because their values were from a bygone era. Her sister was an employee of a department store, where she attracted the attentions of a young man from a quite different economic class. Unlike her dying sister and her mother, this working girl was determined to escape the meager existence of life in the slums. She bargained with the rich man to get her sister into Chicago's best hospital. Her shocked mother reminded her of their "honest" home. To this the

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[1]James O'Donnell Bennett, Chicago Record, December 8, 1911; Burns Mantle, Chicago Tribune, October 8, 1911; Roswell Field, Chicago Examiner, September 30, 1911.

[2]Percy Hammond, "News of the Theatre," Chicago Tribune, April 14, 1910.

girl replied: "Home! Do you call this a home? All it looks like to me is a place to get out of as soon as I can and stay away from as long as I can!" Her mother then invoked the threat of a traditional hell. This had little effect on a girl whose concept of hell and damnation were in terms of this life. "'All the girls in the store say so. We get our hell right here,'" she replied.[1]

Dope was set in a drug store located on the ground floor of a large tenement house. Haggard victims of drug addiction were shown procuring their daily envelopes of cocaine and heroine. Some of them opened their envelopes before they left the store. Eagerly they sniffed the dope.

Two young reformers, Mr. Brown and Miss Jones were anxious to end the dope trade. They threatened to have the police close the drugstore; however, in the conversation which followed Patterson demonstrated that the closing of a single drugstore would not even begin to solve the problem of dope addiction.

Mr. Brown was revealed to be the son of a drug manufacturer; he was heir to millions, and much of the fortune came from profits on the sale of cocaine and heroine. In fact, his father's company supplied the dope to the druggist

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[1]Chicago Record, April 19, 1910; Amy Leslie, "By-Products a Hit," Chicago News, April 1, 1910; New York Times, November 10, 1913, p. 9.

involved. Miss Jones was revealed to be the daughter of a tenement owner; she was heir to millions, and much of the fortune came from the profits of slum ownership. In fact, her mother owned the very tenement in which the drugstore was located. The druggist believed that the conditions in the building led many to the drug habit.[1]

Patterson was taken on a tour through the "coke" and "hope" sections of Chicago by Dr. J. J. Mahoney before the sketch was written.[2] Despite the fact that it was performed in vaudeville houses between dancing girls and acrobats, reviewers remembered the deep impression the play made on those who saw it. Years later Henry Lieb expanded the play into a three act drama, but critics preferred the older version.[3]

Eugene Walter was born in Cleveland. He worked in the lumbering camps of Northern Michigan and searched for gold in Alaska. During the Spanish-American War he enlisted in the First Ohio Cavalry. His military career was distinguished chiefly by his dislike of horses and a stay in a Florida typhoid hospital. After the war he drifted from one

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[1]"The Secrets of Cocaine Traffic Revealed on the Stage," Toledo Times, February 18, 1912.

[2]Clipping in the Grey Locke Collection, dated December 31, 1909, N.Y.P.L.

[3]New York Herald-Tribune, January 4, 1926; Brooklyn Citizen, January 4, 1926.

newspaper to another across the country.[1]

Walter campaigned in Ohio for Eugene Debs long before socialism became fashionable. Later he was a reporter on the Detroit News, while Governor Pingree was battling for reform in Michigan. While he was a reporter on the New York Sun, he had studied the Bowery in the same manner used by O. Henry. Once he was arrested while on an investigating tour of a "red light" district. He preferred the lower classes to the wealthy, who, Walter believed, had stolen control of the timber and water power resources and railroads. Even after he had attained success on Broadway, Walter preferred life on his Montana ranch to New York high society.[2]

Walter's first successful play was The Undertow. It was never performed on Broadway, but it was popular on the road and as a stock play.[3] The Undertow was quite similar to The Man of the Hour both in theme and in melodramatic style. As in The Man of the Hour the drama concluded with a melodramatic twist.

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[1]Clipping in the Grey Locke Collection, dated March 2, 1913, N.Y.P.L.; New York Telegraph, November 2, 1909; the Hattons, "Eugene Walter: Pater of the 'Wollop' Play," Chicago Herald, November 8, 1914; Kansas City Star, April 12, 1916; Green Book Album, January, 1911.

[2]The Hattons, Chicago Herald, November 8, 1914.

[3]Lynde Denig, "Vissitudes of a Playwright: No. 1.--Eugene Walter," Theatre, XXI (May, 1915), p. 235.

Walter's next play, Paid in Full began very much like a sociological study of New York. The leading character sounded like a typical militant socialist in the first act, but he degenerated rapidly into a thief, and the play became a study of adultery. Critics, who were aware that most New York managers had rejected the play, believed that Walter had been forced to make revisions in the original play, which probably had followed the line of socialistic thought taken in the first act.[1]

In The Easiest Way, Walter depicted conditions which some thought the theatre should ignore. It was denounced by Archbishop Farley of New York, and it was banned in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and Cassel, Germany.[2] However, anarchist Emma Goldman, who usually limited herself to European drama, liked the play and based a popular lecture on it.[3]

The play's "heroine" was Lura Murdock, a second rate actress who obtained good parts in New York productions, because she was also the mistress of an influential stock broker. On a summer tour she met John Madison an itinerant

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[1]New York Times, February 26, 1908, p. 7; Walter Prichard Eaton, The American Stage of To-Day (Boston: Small, Maynard & Co., 1908), p. 51; New York Times, March 1, 1908, vi, p. 1.

[2]New York Times, February 14, 1909, v, p. 8.

[3]Boston Transcript, January 24, 1913; N.Y.D.M., January 14, 1912, p. 31; "An Interview with Emma Goldman," New York Times, February 14, 1909, vi, p. 8.

reporter, who, like Walter, had worked on newspapers throughout the West. He was capable of brilliant work, but he preferred the life of a good natured vagabond. Lura promised to reform, and John decided to work seriously and save money so that they could marry in a year.

The second act took place in a cheap theatrical boarding house. David Belasco produced a memorable scene, remarkable in every detail. Mordecai Gorelik compared it, albeit unfavorably, to Antoine's French productions. Brocton had used his influence with the managers so that Lura was not able to find a job. She had already sold most of her clothes, and her rent was overdue. Her landlady and her friend urged her to return to Brocton. After considerable thought she followed their advice, but she did not notify Madison of her decision despite a promise to Brocton that she would do so.

In the last act, Madison returned to find Lura and Brocton obviously living together. He left, and Brocton surprised to find that Lura had deceived him too, also decided to leave.

While the plot and subject matter of The Easiest Way shocked many, most reviewers liked the drama. Channing Pollock thought it was "the best play ever written by an American." Theatre historian Arthur Hobson Quinn thought

the play was more melodramatic than realistic,[1] which in a dramatic sense it was. However, as a study of the economic basis of prostitution The Easiest Way belonged to the protest drama of the early twentieth century.

If Olga Nethersole, a star of the period, had not urged William J. Hurlbut to write a drama for her, he probably would never have become a part of the American protest theatre. Unlike Patterson or Walter, Hurlbut was not a Socialist, and he had little interest in reform. In his only previous play, The Fighting Hope, a capitalist had been the hero.

While Hurlbut was best known as the grandson of an Indiana general, who had known Lincoln, Miss Nethersole was known to be a Socialist, who hoped to use the theatre as an effective means of protest against existing social conditions. She had seen Pennsylvania coal mines where ten year old boys picked slate ten hours a day, Southern cotton mills where girls developed consumption from cotton dust, and prisons where the victims of an immoral capitalist system were kept. Whenever possible she lectured on Socialism or woman's rights. She took Hurlbut on a tour of Trinity's tenements, where tubercular germs were spread in garment

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[1]Channing Pollock, "Some Performances and a Play," The Smart Set, XXVII (March, 1909), p. 145. A. H. Quinn, American Theatre: Civil War to Present, II, p. 106.

sweatshops and pickling bottles. As a result of this tour Hurlbut wrote The Writing on the Wall,[1] a protest against the conditions in New York's worst tenements.

New York's worst tenements were owned by Trinity Church. They were located on the Lower West Side on a grant of land given to the Church by the King of England in 1705. Most of the tenements were built by people who had obtained leases from the church. By refusing to renew these leases, Trinity acquired the buildings. The church made no effort to improve living conditions in these tenements, which were poorly ventilated and very crowded. As a result the tenements owned by Trinity had the highest tuberculosis and death rate in New York City.[2]

The church opposed all reform efforts, which might have improved conditions for slum dwellers. During the eighteen-nineties the church fought and nearly defeated the passage of a New York state law which required tenement

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[1] Fort Worth Record, December 5, 1909; Indianapolis Star, March 27, 1910, Philadelphia North American, February 4, 1909; Rochester Times, February 3, 1909.

[2] Ray Stannard Baker, "The Case Against Trinity," American Magazine, LXVIII, May, 1909, pp. 2-16; Charles Edward Russell, "The Tenements of Trinity Church," Everybody's Magazine XIX (July, 1908), p. 47; Report as to the Sanitary Condition of the Tenements of Trinity Church, and other Documents (New York: Evening Post Job Printing House, 1895), pp. 29-30.

owners to provide water on the second floor of their buildings. Jacob Riis stated that Trinity had nearly destroyed his many years of work to improve slum conditions.[1]

During the era of muckraking Trinity's tenements were the target of numerous writers including Ray Stannard Baker, Samuel Hopkins Adams, and Charles Edward Russell. Russell wrote several articles which described specific conditions and locations owned by Trinity. His general impressions were published in Everybody's:

> It seemed to me after a while that I had no need for a list of Trinity's holdings; I could pick them out unaided, could tell them as far as I could see them, tell them by indubitable signs. Whenever I saw a house that looked as if it were about to fall down, one that looked in every way rotten and weary and dirty and disreputable, I found that it was owned by Trinity or stood upon its ground.[2]

William Hurlbut's contribution to the protest theatre was a melodrama, complete with subplots and unrelated incidents, of the sort that Charles Klein might have written. Yet, The Writing on the Wall did reflect the pessimism found in plays like The Fourth Estate and The Easiest Way. It illustrated tenement conditions as they had been described by Charles Edward Russell and other muckrakers.

In The Writing on the Wall, Barbara Lawrence the

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[1]John P. Peters, "The Tale of Trinity," Independent, LXVI (February, 1909), pp. 355-63.

[2]Baker, Everybody's Magazine, p. 11.

wife of a tenement owner was persuaded by an old friend, a reformer, to inspect the conditions of her husband's holdings. She found a ten by twelve foot room in which a woman and her four children lived. During the day seven night workers paid the woman five cents for space to sleep on the floor. It was an inside room, without light or air. In this unhealthy atmosphere the woman made liners for baby carriages.

When Mrs. Lawrence suggested improvements for the tenements, her husband had one argument; the tenements owned by Trinity church, where they had been married, were in far worse condition than his. Lawrence did, however, promise to replace the fire escape on one old building.

Later Lawrence changed his mind and decided to paint the old fire escape, because this was less expensive than installing a new fire escape. The painters provided the public with an interesting spectacle. They erected scaffolding on which to work; because, they were afraid to stand on the old fire escape. Lawrence arranged to have the fire inspector paid off, and the problem was settled. However, in the last act a fire broke out in the building. Many were killed when the fire escape collapsed. Mrs. Lawrence's young son and her friend the reform politician were among those who died in the fire.

Despite the dramatic weaknesses of the melodrama and

Miss Nethersole's somewhat old fashioned histrionics, The Writing on the Wall was a popular exposé. Not long after the play was produced Trinity Corporation decided to pull down seventy of its tenements. Olga Nethersole claimed the drama was responsible for the reform.[1] While other factors perhaps deserved some of the credit for influencing Trinity decision, the drama certainly contributed to the pressure on the church to reform. The play also led to a bill, introduced by Congressman McGavin of Illinois, which proposed an investigation of the safety of fire escapes in the District of Columbia.[2]

From a dramatic standpoint Edward Sheldon's Salvation Nell was probably the best study of life in the slums. Sheldon was just out of Harvard where he had studied in Professor Baker's class.[3] Professor Baker began offering English 47 in 1905. The class taught technical aspects of writing plays and gave perspective dramatist an opportunity to try out their ideas.

Since Sheldon had no particular interest in economic or social theories, Salvation Nell belonged to the protest theatre only to the extent that it realistically portrayed

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[1]Indianapolis Star, April 6, 1910; St. Louis Star, March 31, 1910.

[2]New York Morning Telegraph, January 16, 1909.

[3]Quinn, Civil War to the Present, II, p. 86.

life in New York's slums. The setting for the drama was the Cherry Hill section of New York. Murders were common there, and thieves rolled sailors whom they called "gold fish." Old Mother Oleson's place was next to the original Salvation Army headquarters in this district. A sliding panel separated a cigar store from a notorious dive.[1]

Harrison Grey Fiske carefully reproduced the atmosphere of this section of New York on the stage. Some viewers thought that he had outdone Belasco, who was famous for scenic realism. For the barroom scene, Fiske had purchased the entire contents of Sic McGoven's bar which had been located in the Cherry Hill section. In the original production he had even used real beer on the stage, but when the W.C.T.U. objected, Fiske changed to Weiss beer which looked real but contained no alcohol.[2] The scene most praised by reviewers showed a street scene in a tenement neighborhood. Slum dwellers leaned out of windors, and "rags dangled from rickety fire escapes."[3] Probably no other bit of scenic realism so effectively conveyed an impression of the wretchedness of life in the slums during this era.

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[1]Press Release, Dramatic Scrapbook, no. 207, Robinson Locke Collection, pp. 49-50; New York Times, November 15, 1908, vi, p. 5.

[2]Providence Journal, November 13, 1908; Indianapolis Star, January 3, 1909; Cleveland Leader, March 7, 1909.

[3]Charles Darnton, New York Evening World, November 18, 1908; Louis De Foe, New York World, n.d.

One critic compared the drama to Gorki's The Night Refuge and another thought Sheldon's motto was "give me realism or give me death."[1] Although the setting was realistic, the drama itself was not. Sheldon's play was a romantic portrayal of the regeneration of a young scrubwoman. Religion enabled her to rise above her position as a scrubwoman in the low saloons of her district and to avoid the temptations which made prostitutes of others like Nell. It saved Nell and eventually her lover, who had already spent time in prison for his part in a barroom killing.

Sheldon's next play was the first American drama produced at the New Theatre, which had been established in 1908. Winthrop Ames manager of the New Theatre hoped to attract a sophisticated audience, which ordinarily did not attend the theatre, to his intellectual and "quality" dramas.[2] It was assumed that these serious dramas could not succeed in a commercial theatre. Prior to Sheldon's The Nigger, the New Theatre had relied exclusively on European drama.

Civil rights did not have the same attraction as slum problems during the Progressive Era. A few articles

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[1]William Bullock, "Sheldon's Salvation Nell," New York Press, n.d.

[2]Thomas H. Dickinson, The Case of American Drama (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1915), pp. 5-8.

did appear in McClure's and the other muckraking magazines, and there was something of a public outcry when President Wilson approved segregation in the post office, but for the most part the problems of the Negro were ignored during this era. William De Mille's Strongheart (1905) began as an attempt to dramatize the Negro's social isolation, but he compromised and made the hero an Indian.[1] However, Professor Baker encouraged drama about the Negro, and both Edward Sheldon and Eugene O'Neill responded.[2]

The idea of a white Southerner who found that he had Negro blood was not original in Sheldon's The Nigger. It had been used by Dion Boucicault in The Octroon during the eighteen-seventies. Later this theme was used by Sinclair Lewis in Kingsblood Royal. Some critics found The Nigger revolting, especially a scene in which the Governor, who was now aware that he had Negro blood, made love to his aristocratic girl friend. A few minutes earlier she had "loved" him; now she thought he was a monster. The ironic scene was a powerful commentary on racists values in America.

The Nigger was enthusiastically received in New York, and a successful tour followed. The realism of the play was

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[1]Montrose Moses, "The Theatre," Cambridge History of American Literature, ed. William P. Trent, John Erskine, Carl Van Doren (New York: Macmillan Co., 1931), II, p. 266.

[2]Oscar Cargill, Intellectual America: Ideas on the March (New York: Macmillan, 1941), p. 333.

illustrated by an article which appeared in the St. Joseph New Press (Missouri). A woman in New Orleans was struck and killed by an automobile. She was said to be "colored" in one of the newspaper accounts of the accident. Her family sued the newspaper, but in the investigation which followed a remote member on one side of the family was found to be a Negro. As a result of the investigation the dead woman's sister was declared to be no longer married because mixed marriages were illegal in Louisiana, and a brother was forced to transfer to a Negro college. A general investigation was instituted "to separate the sheep from the goats in New Orleans society."[1]

Prior to this era conservatives had little reason to consider the theatre a threat to the existing social and economic order. While the capitalist had frequently been attacked in plays since The Henrietta, no successful Broadway play had contained a serious argument for socialism until this period. Comic relief had detracted from the serious aspects of earlier protest plays, even of muckraking melodramas like The Lion and the Mouse and The Man of the Hour, but between 1907-1910 playwrights like Joseph Patterson and Eugene Walter avoided comic relief in their protest plays. When the playwright of this era deviated from his

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[1]St. Joseph (Mo.) News Press, March 3, 1911.

main theme, it was frequently to attack more vehemently the capitalist system. Managers in the past, while capitalizing on the public's interest in reform, could exclude radical plays from the theatre. During this era they modified some of the more radical plays, but the theatre was so full of drama in which the "socialists" were the heroes, it was inevitable that a dramatic spokesman for the conservative position would arise. Somewhat surprising, however, was the fact that the conservative spokesman was a muckraker himself.

Cleveland Moffett's "The Shameful Misuse of Wealth" was called one of the few mistakes of the muckraking era by Louis Filler, in Crusaders for American Liberalism.[1] In The Battle, a drama derived from his novel A King in Rags, Moffett turned from preaching against the excesses of the wealthy to preaching against the laziness of the poor. Despite his conservative play, however, Moffett continued to write for Hampton's

Moffett maintained that by hard work and less complaining slum dwellers could alleviate their own plight. He also tried to prove that the profit motive was stronger than socialistic ideals. The hero was John J. Haggleton. He was a wealthy capitalist whose wife had run away taking their son with her. Before she died, she arranged to have her son

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[1]Louis Filler, Crusaders for American Liberalism (New York: Collier, 1961), p. 118.

brought up as a socialist. Years later Haggleton entered the East Side slums under an assumed name to find his son and persuade the young man that socialism would not really help the poor. Haggleton provided the funds for his son and a few friends to open a bakery. Almost immediately the bakery owners began to operate like a small trust. They bought flour in quantity from Wisconsin at lower prices than their competitors, and gradually forced all other bakeries on the East Side to either join their small trust or go out of business.

Reaction to The Battle was favorable. While many disagreed with Moffett's viewpoint, and most agreed with Amy Leslie that the Socialists had not been given an opportunity to present their views in the drama,[1] all agreed that the play's thesis was unique and controversial. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. attended one performance and sent his Bible class to another. According to Malcolm McDonald, a Cleveland critic, Rockefeller actually contributed to the argument used by the capitalist.[2] Numerous clubs used the play as a subject for discussion meetings.[3] Liebler and Company, producers of the play, opened the Savoy Theatre for a Sunday

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[1]Chicago News, September 28, 1908.

[2]Cleveland Plain Dealer, August 29, 1909.

[3]New York Times, January 20, 1909, p. 9; New York Times, February 13, 1909, p. 11.

night debate. Socialists were invited to reply to Moffett's arguments. Response was immediate; Nicholas Murry Ely, Edward Markham, W. J. Ghent, F. H. Giddings, J. G. Phelps Stokes, Professor Ely, and Gaylord Wilshire all promised to attend. The theatre was filled for the debate, and 1,500 were turned away.[1]

Although Socialists were not converted to conservatism by Moffett's play, their influence in the theatre declined after 1910. Political protest was not absent from the stage after that date, but the emphasis in plays about corrupt practices clearly shifted away from reform.

Edward Sheldon's The Boss has frequently been cited as a play which illustrated the impact of Progressive on the theatre. Although Sheldon did write the play after reading an article on Buffalo's political boss, Fingy Conners,[2] The Boss was not a protest drama. It was a realistic portrayal of a fascinating Irish-American who fought his way up the social ladder and married the daughter of the town's respected family.

In Fine Feathers, Eugene Walter touched on corruption in the construction business, but reform was not the main issue. Walter dealt in almost naturalistic fashion

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[1]New York Times, January 3, 1909, p. 11.

[2]A. H. Quinn, American Theatre: Civil War to the Present, II, p. 89.

with the force of materialism on an individual. The "hero," a chemical inspector, was influenced by his extravagant wife to accept a bribe of $10,000 to approve low grade cement which was used in the building of a dam. The money was soon lost speculating in the stock market. Just when the hero and his wife arrived at an understanding of their financial status and the future appeared brighter, the dam burst and hundreds were killed. The hero chose suicide over prison or flight to Europe.

Charles Kenyon's Kindling was the best example of socialistic protest thought in the American theatre between 1910-1915. The play was based on a New York newspaper clipping Kenyon had read about a Vermont trial.[1]

Kenyon had been educated at Stanford University. After college because of tuberculosis, he had spent three years as a cowboy. He later tried the egg business and acting without success. At the time he wrote Kindling, Kenyon was an obscure reporter in California.[2]

Kindling compared the ethical theories of social workers with those of Maggie Schults, a New York tenement dweller. Maggie's husband was a stevedore, who went to

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[1]New York Times, October 2, 1917.

[2]Will Irwin, "Will 'the Road' Reverse the Judgment of Broadway?," Collier's, February 17, 1912; Walter Prichard Eaton, Plays and Players (Cincinnati: Stewart & Kidd, 1916), p. 13-14.

meetings and read "dangerous" social theories. He believed that tenement dwellers should not bring children into the world, because they would probably suffer from disease and would become the tools of the capitalist class.

While Maggie agreed with her husband and the local settlement workers that children should not grow up in the slums, she was not content to live without children. She was determined to escape the slums, even if she had to steal to obtain money. Eventually she did become a thief; she stole from her employer to obtain the funds to finance a trip to Utah. Only after she and her family were settled in the West did she reveal how she had obtained the money.

Kindling's first run in New York was unsuccessful, but near the end of its run Clayton Hamilton and Walter Prichard Eaton saw the play. They began a campaign to bring the play back to New York after its Chicago run. Hamilton dragged each and every member of the Player's Club to see the drama. A circular letter addressed to the writers of New York and Chicago was signed by thirty prominant writers including George Middleton, Fredric C. Howe, Julian Street, Lincoln Steffens, George Jean Nathan, and Norman Hapgood. They referred to Kindling as "'one of the greatest American plays in years.'"[1]

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[1]New York Times, January 23, 1912; N.Y.D.M., January el, 1912, p. 31; Clipping dated January 27, 1912, N.Y.P.L.

Despite these successful protest plays after 1910, the fashion was clearly dying. William Brady quickly gave up on George Broadhurst's The Dollar Mark. Joseph Patterson had joined his cousin, Robert McCormick, to win a proxy battle for control over the Chicago Tribune in 1910. Although By-Products was kept alive by the Hull House Players for several years, Patterson made no additional contribution to the protest theatre. Charles Klein told Channing Pollock that the public was tired of problem plays, and that he was now working on a comedy. The muckraking period was coming to a close both inside and outside the theatre. The historian of the muckrakers, Louis Filler, found that by 1910 the leaders of the movement had turned from exposé to programs for change. They had used sensational material to educate the public; now, they turned "to more sophisticated planes of discussion."[1] This was clearly less dramatic material for the theatre. The magazines were also on the decline. By 1912 they had like The American shifted their emphasis, or they were like Hampton's about to be driven out of business. The American public was losing interest in crusades. In politics and in economics interest turned swiftly to apathy. Only extreme issues like women's suffrage and white

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[1]Filler, Crusaders, p. 224; Jack Alexander, "The Duke of Chicago," Post Biographies of Famous Journalists, ed. John E. Drewry (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1942), p. 224.

slavery sustained the interest of the general public between 1910 and World War I. The socialist like the reformer had utilized the theatre to build support, but they were unable to act quickly enough in the political realm to sustain this interest.

CHAPTER V

WHITE SLAVES, WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE, AND WAR

Muckraking journalism declined after 1910, and this was reflected in the theatre. The battle against white slavery was depicted in reform plays by Bayard Veiller and George Scarborough, and reform ideas dominated the early women's suffrage plays, but progressive reform ideas no longer dominated the Broadway stage.

Women's suffrage plays of this era included revolutionary ideas regarding the rights of women. Revolutionary ideas, European influences, and dramatic innovations were included in the little theatre movement which emerged during this era. Floyd Dell, John Reed, Rose Pastor Stokes, Philip Moeller, and Eugene O'Neill rejected reform as impossible. Their plays, produced by the Washington Square Players and the Provincetown Players, attacked the conventions of middle class America and depicted slum conditions which were far worse than those shown on Broadway. Their revolutionary ideas shaped the protest spirit of post-war America.

Anti-war plays achieved some success prior to World War I. This suggested that the theatre had become an accepted medium of social protest during the Progressive era,

and it reflected the efforts of women to exert a greater influence on their society.

Floyd Dell thought a "New Spirit" had come to America in 1912. The "New Spirit" meant the election of Wilson, Edna St. Vincent Millay's "Renascence," and the poetry of Vachael Lindsay. For the theatre the "New Spirit" meant Hindle Wakes in New York, the Irish Players in America, and the Little Theatre movement in grassroots America.[1] The "New Spirit" was visible in the women's suffrage plays and the anti-war plays. Those who best exemplified it wanted to change society, but they were not convinced that "uplift" was possible or even desirable. The white slave plays which enjoyed a vogue in 1913 were the last stand of the reform melodrama.

The issue of socialism no longer aroused great controversy. Between 1907-1910 it had been a popular topic for debate on the Broadway Stage, but after 1912 few serious plays touched on this issue. Radical groups were free to advocate revolution in their plays without fear of police suppression. William Haywood and John Reed staged a Socialist pageant in Madison Square Garden in the midst of the Paterson strike. The white slave plays aroused opposition; not because they advocated economic reform, but because they

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[1]Floyd Dell, Homecoming: An Autobiography (New York: Farrar, 1933), p. 218.

dealt with topics offensive to Puritanical censors.

Interest in white slavery lagged somewhat behind other issues during the Progressive Era. The United States was not represented at the international conference on white slavery in 1904; however, the treaty which emerged from the conference was proclaimed by President Taft. Most of the state legislation on commercial vice came after 1911, and most of the muckraking books and articles on this subject appeared between 1910 and 1915.

The white slave literature of 1911-1912 like the Vice Report of the City of New York, which had been published in 1902, emphasized the need for higher wages in department stores and factories, where large numbers of young women were employed. Although reformers did influence the passage of the Mann Act in 1910, they believed economic change would bring about reform that no other legislation could accomplish. Both The Social Evil in Chicago, a report by the Chicago Vice Commission published in 1911 and banned from the United States mail, and a series of articles by James Addams in McClure's during 1911 and 1912, concluded that prostitution was caused by economic factors. Miss Adams also noted that farm girls and immigrants were most likely to become victims of the white slave system.[1]

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[1]Cargill, Intellectual America, pp. 591-92.

The idea that the prostitute was a victim of society more to be pitied than condemned was one major change in the thinking of many Americans during the Progressive Era. In the protest theatre the prostitute had long been portrayed as a victim of capitalism. In Julius Hopp's Poor People, an unemployed factory worker turned to the life of a woman of the streets because her father was sick and the family needed money. In Eugene Walter's The Easiest Way, Lura Murdock remained the mistress of a stock broker so that she could find work as an actress. In Joseph Patterson's By-Products, a department store clerk found that prostitution offered the only chance to escape the slums.

The two most controversial white slave plays of 1913 were The Lure and The Fight. Both were endorsed by reformers; yet, they were closed by New York police, and were allowed to reopen only after they had undergone considerable revision. The Lure opened first and ran for four weeks before the police took any action.

The Lure was written by George Scarborough. He had written one earlier play, but it had not been produced. Scarborough had worked as a court stenographer and as a reporter in Texas, where his father was a lawyer. For several years he had investigated the white slave traffic in the Midwest as a secret service agent. After a particularly offensive case, a colleague urged him to write a play about

the incident. The result was The Lure.[1]

Scarborough took the play to Lee Schubert who thought the plot seemed impossible. Only after Shubert had consulted with reform leaders in New York and Stanley W. Finch, who was head of the branch of the Department of Justice in charge of suppression of the white slave traffic in Washington, did he decide to produce the play. The Lure was approved and endorsed by Finch and numerous other reformers.[2]

The Lure described a situation familiar to most social reformers. A girl needed money to pay for an operation her mother must have. At this time of financial crisis, she was discharged from the department store where she sold stockings. At the stocking counter she was exposed to many well dressed women. One of them had offered her a chance to earn extra money at night. When the crisis occurred the girl accepted the offer and found herself in a well known house of ill fame.

The Lure was advertised as "the Play that Reformed the World." Despite some criticism it was generally accepted by the public as a play which was intended to "uplift"

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[1]New York Times, March 8, 1914, vii, p. 5; Cleveland Plain Dealer, October 19, 1918; "The Author of The Lure," Theatre, XXIII (October, 1913), pp. 124-25.

[2]New York Times, September 17, 1913, p. 9; Cleveland Leader, November 30, 1913; "Dramatizing Vice," Lit. Dig., XLVII (October 4, 1913), p. 577.

society. Its suggestion that women's suffrage would bring about reform legislation and an end to white slavery was greeted enthusiastically by most audiences. Not until a second white slave play appeared on Broadway four weeks later did the police institute action to halt production of Scarborough's play.[1]

Bayard Veiller's The Fight involved a woman reform candidate for mayor, and a United States Senator who had a financial interest in a house of prostitution. Its plot described the methods by which those engaged in the white slave trade trapped innocent young girls. Following the production of The Fight, police sent representatives to witness both Veiller's play and The Lure. Soon afterward Prosecutor McAdoo announced the city would seek court action against the producers of both plays. Among the strongest supporters of this decision was the New York Times. Before a legal decision was reached The Lure and The Fight were revised and approved by the police.[2]

Veiller maintained the police suppression was the result of his earlier play, Within the Law, which had added little to the prestige of New York's police. It had described the corruption Veiller had seen when Theodore Roosevelt was trying to reform New York's "finest." Veiller had

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[1]New York Times, September 21, 1913, v, p. 4.

[2]New York Times, September 12, 1913, p. 11.

been a police reporter on the New York Mail and Express at the same time that Jacob Riis and Lincoln Steffens held similar positions on the Evening Sun and Herald, respectively.[1]

In Within the Law, Veiller had charged that the police treated members of the upper class much better than members of the lower class, when similar crimes were involved. Veiller believed the police had objected to this argument, but they were unable to take any action because Within the Law had been endorsed by such notables as his old friend Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. The police, Veiller thought, were unimpressed by the fact that Within the Law had received world wide acclaim, that it had brought about wage increases for women employees of six New York department stores, and that it had brought about investigations into working conditions for women in twelve states. They were, he believed, simply anxious to get even, and The Fight offered an opportunity for such revenge.[2]

Veiller could cite considerable evidence to support his claim. In addition to The Lure, which had run for four weeks unmolested by the police, Brieux's Damaged Goods, which dealt with the social disease, was running in New York,

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[1]Bayard Veiller, The Fun I've Had (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1941), p. 176.

[2]New York Times, September 21, 1913, v, p. 4.

sponsored by the Medical Review of Reviews, at the same time without police interference. During the previous season Any Night had sustained a long run, despite the fact that the play dealt with street walkers and prostitutes. The police had merely forced the play's producers to delete all references to the fact that the police might share in the profits of these "ladies."[1] In an interview with Police Commissioner Waldo, who had not seen The Fight, Veiller was told: "'You've got to throw the whole filthy thing away.'"[2] Numerous reform groups supported Veiller's play, but they carried little weight with the police. Women's clubs and suffragettes supported both The Lure and The Fight.[3] Frederic C. Howe, director of People's Institute, wrote a letter of approval to Veiller. Part of the letter, which was later published, stated:

> From a moral and political viewpoint, it seems to me The Fight is a three-hours' sermon as well as a remarkable searchlight on the social basis of present day ethics, and I believe that public opinion should arise in approval of such plays as The Fight.[4]

Both plays were rewritten and allowed to continue. Veiller claimed credit for some reform. Production of The

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[1] New York Times, September 21, 1913, v, p. 4.

[2] New York Times, September 21, 1913, v, p. 4.

[3] New York Times, October 13, 1913, p. 9; New York Times, October 15, 1913, p. 11; New York Times, October 23, 1913, p. 11.

[4] Cleveland Leader, November 16, 1913.

Fight, he argued, in the Hudson Theatre had forced the police to close two houses of ill fame in that neighborhood; one of them was only two doors from the theatre.[1]

Numerous other melodramas appeared during this era about white slavery, but none attracted the wide spread controversy which surrounded The Lure and The Fight. The most significant novel on this subject, David Graham Phillips' Susan Lenox: Her Fall and Rise, was not published until 1915 and did not reach the stage until 1920. Several earlier novels by David Graham Phillips were dramatized, but with little success. Critics attributed the failure of The Worth of a Woman, which was produced in 1908, to Phillips' frank approach to the topic of sex.[2]

The frank approach to sex proved increasingly popular after 1910. It was visible in the plays about women's rights, which were influenced more by the concept of the "new woman" than the older spirit of "uplift." Later the off-Broadway stage attacked all Puritanism as vestiges of the past.

Prior to 1910, women's suffrage plays did reflect the attitudes of the reformers. In Votes For Women,

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[1]Boston Herald, November 16, 1913.

[2]New York Times, February 16, 1908, vi, p. 1; Isaac Marcosson, David Graham Phillips and His Times (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1932), p. 243.

Elizabeth Robins argued that there would be no more ruined women, if they were given the right to vote. Miss Robins later wrote My Little Sister, which some critics thought was the Uncle Tom's Cabin of the white slave movement.[1]

Elizabeth Robins' career illustrated the close ties between Britain and America in the suffrage movement. Miss Robins was born in Louisville, Kentucky, but her Votes For Women was first produced in England, where she maintained a summer home in 1908. The play was first read to a New York audience on January 10, 1909. The reading was planned to celebrate the release of Mrs. Pankhurst from an English prison, but the British government refused to cooperate; they released the suffrage leader nine days ahead of schedule.[2]

While most critics thought that Elizabeth Robins had oversimplified the social problems which she predicted the vote would solve, no similar charge could be leveled at the women's suffrage plays after 1912. These plays reflected the "New Spirit" which Floyd Dell had described. They advocated the vote for women not because it would reform society

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[1] New York Times, March 16, 1909; New York Telegraph, March 1, 1913.

[2] New York Times, January 10, 1909, p. 13; W. J. Roberts, "Elizabeth Robins: the Novelist, Actress and Suffragist at Home," Book News Monthly, October, 1910, pp. 238-40.

but because it was a part of a revolution which would grant a "New Freedom" to women. This involved not moral uplift, but a breakdown of the traditional moral and Puritanical restrictions on the freedom of women

An unmarried girl of twenty-four was declared to be in danger of becoming an old maid by an old-fashion father in Before the Dawn.[1] In Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Three Women a young kindergarten teacher argued for the right to continue teaching after marriage. The drama also defended a woman's right to smoke in public. Mrs. Gilman's play was part of a "Pageant of Protest" in which Miss Fola La Follette, the daughter of the Wisconsin Senator, played a leading role.

Additional "freedom" for women was also the issue in George Broadhurst's Bought and Paid For and in William Hurlbut's The Strange Women. Broadhurst's play dealt with the wife of a rich self-made man. Formerly she had been a mere telephone operator, but she rebelled against her rich husband, because he frequently became brutal after drinking too much.[2] Hurlbut's play which had a difficult time with the censors in Chicago, described a beautiful and intellectual divorcée's efforts to advocate free love in a small, conservative Iowa town. Eventually she yielded to custom,

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[1]New York Times, April 1, 1910, p. 11; New York Times, March 29, 1911, p. 13.

[2]New York Times, September 27, 1911, p. 13.

but not until after she had exposed the hypocrisy of small town religion.[1]

Leaders of the Little Theatre Movement sought additional freedom not only for women but for the entire American theatre. It meant the freedom to experiment with new ideas about the theatre like those demonstrated by the Irish plays on the tour of America in 1912, or new techniques of artistic rather than realistic setting as Gordon Craig was advocating and Max Reinhardt was using at the Deutscher Theatre. Above all the little theatre movement sought freedom from the commercialism of Broadway.

While many of the leaders of the Little Theatre were political as well as dramatic rebels, and some of them were reformers, their protest plays have a more European spirit than the radical melodramas of the past. Ironic helplessness instead of uplift dominated the protest plays of these radicals, who hoped for reform but were convinced that it was impossible. Nevertheless, their plays depicted with stark realism the tragedy of life in the slums.

Only in the first successful little theatre group, the Hull House Players in Chicago, was social purpose more important than artistic aims. This organization was established to provide recreation for the working people in the

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[1]New York Times, November 18, 1913, p. 11.

community. One leading performer made cigars during the day. Rehearsals were held two nights a week. The Hull House Players emphasized social themes in their productions.[1] Frequently they produced social dramas by Shaw, Galsworthy, and other European dramatists, but they did produce Charles Kenyon's Kindling and Joseph Patterson's By-Products. Later the Henry Street Playhouse was to follow a similar pattern in utilizing talent in the community to dramatize social theme on New York's Lower East Side.

Thomas H. Dickinson was keenly aware that a battle was taking place with the little theatre movement between social reformers and artists. He believed that both groups sought the same end--a theatre which represented the people.[2] Dickinson's Wisconsin Dramatic Society, founded in 1910, marked the beginning of a period of widespread local theatre activity all over the United States. His organization, although located in Madison, drew from the resources of the entire state.[3] The Society's most notable original production was Zona Gale's The Neighbors. This realistic

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[1]Elsie F. Weil, "Hull House Players," Theatre, XIII (September, 1913), pp. xix-xxii; Thomas Dickinson, The Insurgent Theatre (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1917), p. 61.

[2]Dickinson, Insurgent Theatre, p. 98.

[3]Dickinson, Insurgent Theatre, p. 71; William E. Leonard, "The Wisconsin Dramatic Society; An Appreciation," Drama, II (May, 1912), p. 222.

portrait of the drab life on a Midwestern farm was similar to those found in Hamlin Garland's short stories of the middle border.

New York's Little Theatre movement could be described in terms of the famous masthead of The Masses: "Revolutionary and not Reform. . . ." The founders of the Washington Square Players, however, had previously produced plays through the Socialist Press Club. The Socialist Press Club was a reform organization which sought to bring socialist intellectuals and the press closer together.[1] The club's president was muckraker Charles Edward Russell.

In the spring of 1914, Edward Goodman, who was later the director of the Washington Square Players, staged four one act plays for the Socialist Press Club. One of them was The Saving of Martin Greer, which was Rose Pastor Stokes' first attempt at writing drama. Both The Saving of Martin Greer and Philip Moeller's Charity, which was on the same bill, were realistic studies of poverty, but neither author advocated or expected reform.

The Saving of Martin Greer was a grim and ironic drama about an old man who could no longer find work. Because he was two months behind on the rent his landlady and her daughter decided the old man must leave. After he was

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[1]Letter from the Socialist Press Club, Thomas Seltzer, Sec., to Edward Goodman, Edward Goodman Collection, N.Y.P.L.

informed of this decision, the old man locked the kitchen door and turned on the gas. The landlady and her daughter managed to break down the door, and a young doctor provided a drink of whisky to revive the old man. After drinking the whisky, the old man exclaimed, "'saved'" and fell back into bed.[1]

Rose Pastor Stokes was well qualified to describe poverty. Born in Russia, she was working in London at the age of three. At eleven, she rolled cigars in a Cleveland sweatshop. In 1905 she met and later married Phelps Graham Stokes a philanthropist who had joined the Socialist Party. During World War I, he returned to what Rose called the "imperialist class"; she joined the communist party.[2]

Philip Moeller's Charity described a level of poverty seldom seen on the American stage even in protest plays. An invalid, starving mother watched the erection of a building from a tenement window. Once she had known the rich man who had donated the building, but that was in better days. Now, she had only a plain daughter to support her, and the daughter was a failure, even at prostitution.[3]

It was Moeller who helped Ralph Roeder and Josephine

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[1]New York Times, March 29, 1914, iv, p. 6.

[2]Daily Worker, June 20, 1939.

[3]Clipping in the Philip Moeller Collection, N.Y.P.L.

Meyer to persuade Edward Goodman to abandon a trip to Europe and work on a scheme which led to the formation of the Washington Square Players. Plays for the group were discussed at the Liberal Club and downstairs at "Polly's." Next door was the Washington Square Bookshop, where they first tried out their ideas in impromptu fashion.[1]

During the 1914 season the Washington Square Players began producing one act plays at the Bandbox Theatre. Among the American authors whose plays were produced by the group were Edward Goodman, Floyd Dell, Susan Glaspell, Rose Pastor Stokes, Philip Moeller, and John Reed.

Moeller's Two Blind Beggars and One Less Blind depicted two beggars who came upon a dollar while sorting rags in their cellar. Both were incapacitated in a fight over the dollar. While they were still unable to move, a third beggar entered the cellar with a girl. He found the dollar, and believing it was a scrap of paper, lit it so they could see.[2]

John Reed's first experience in the theatre had been as stage manager for the Paterson Pageant. Madison Square Garden was hardly a little theatre, but it was here that

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[1]Zoe Beckley, "Dentists, Lawyers, Clerks, by day, They're Actors and good ones at Night," Philip Moeller Collection, N.Y.P.L.

[2]"The Washington Square Players," Theatre, XXI (May, 1915), p. 259.

William Haywood had arranged to dramatize the Paterson, New Jersey, silk mill strike of 1913. The pageant, which involved a cast of 1,200 strikers, depicted the major incidents of the strike; the beginning of the strike, the battle between strikers and police, the sending away of the children, and the union meetings at Turn Hall were all staged.[1]

Reed's Moondown was written primarily for The Masses, but it was also produced at the Bandbox Theatre by the Washington Square Players. Two shopgirls were shown in a tenement room. One was cynical; the other clung to a romantic view of life.[2] In the end, however, both chose what Eugene Walter had called "The Easiest Way."

New York's most famous little theatre was started when the Washington Square Players rejected Suppressed Desires. The play's authors George Cook and Susan Glaspell became convinced that New York needed a more radical and experimental theatre. For several years they had been spending the summer at Provincetown, Massachusetts, with a group which included some of the participants of the Washington Square Theatre. During the summer of 1915 at the Wharf Theatre in Provincetown, the group began to

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[1]Daniel Aaron, Writers on the Left: Episodes in American Literary Communism (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961), pp. 16-17.

[2]New York Times, March 27, 1915.

experiment.[1] The organization included John Reed, Hutch Hapgood, and Floyd Dell; but the revolutionary dramatist who set this group apart was Eugene O'Neill. O'Neill rejected the star system and the well made play. He had little interest in reform, but his plays which emphasized lower class types and Negroes brought to the American theatre a protest against middle class commercialism on a new plane of dramatic insight.[2]

World War I brought the "new" revolutionary, but not reform drama to Broadway. In comparison to the American theatre's reaction to the Spanish-American War the theatre's reaction to World War I was revolutionary. While in part this can be attributed to the lack of public unanimity for the latter war, it was also due to the "New Spirit" of a generation impatient because of the failure of reform and not at all convinced that war would benefit the people. This generation had also seen the American theatre become an established medium of protest. Then too, the anti-war plays were written by women, who were determined to express freely their opinions.

Almost as soon as the War broke out in Europe,

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[1]Arthur Gelb and Barbara Gelb, O'Neill (New York: Dell, 1964), pp. 301-34.

[2]Thomas H. Dickinson, Playwrights of the New American Theater (New York: Macmillan Co., 1925), pp. 64-68.

interest in the theatre declined in America. A number of anti-war plays did attract public attention. Peace Societies from various parts of America sent representatives to Northampton, Massachusetts, to witness In the Vanguard. The drama demonstrated how quickly war fever disappears once a battle has taken place.[1] In War Brides, which was first published in Century Magazine, Marion Craig Wentworth argued that loveless marriages were frequently made in order to provide men for future wars. Thus, she maintained, the patriotic war bride was expected to provide "food for the enemy's cannons."[2]

The most popular anti-war play was Beulah Marie Dix's Moloch. Miss Dix was a graduate of Radcliffe College. Earlier she had written Across the Border, an anti-war drama, and Lay Down Your Arms, which The Independent called "the greatest of all peace novels."[3]

Moloch began with girls throwing roses as soldiers marched to the front. The horror of war was shown in the next scene; former friends were tortured and neighbors were killed. However, the supreme irony was left for the play's conclusion after the war had ended. It was announced that

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[1] New York Times, October 5, 1914; New York Times, October 13, 1914.

[2] Century Magazine, LXXXIX (February, 1915), pp. 527-44.

[3] Theatre, XXII (November, 1915), pp. 230-31.

another war had already been declared. This time the enemy was their recent ally.[1]

George Tyler was reluctant to produce the drama, because of its anti-war arguments. He wrote to Theodore Roosevelt about the play, but the former President's reply was delayed. Tyler's partners had already completed plans to produce the drama, when Roosevelt's criticism was received.[2] Roosevelt's worst fears about the drama did not materialize. Critics noted the play's argument for "preparedness" as well as its anti-war theme.[3]

The anti-war plays and the little theatre plays of 1914-1915 reflected the change in outlook brought about by what Floyd Dell had called the "New Spirit," and what Henry May later called "the end of American innocence." It marked the end of the protest play as it had existed during the Progressive Era. The optimism of this age was lost; just as the melodrama with a happy ending was lost to the theatre.

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[1]New York Times, September 21, 1915; New York Evening World, September 21, 1915; New York American, September 21, 1915.

[2]Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Tyler, October 1, 1915; Letter from Tyler to Mrs. Roosevelt, October 14, 1933, in the George Tyler Collection, Princeton University.

[3]New York Evening Journal, September 21, 1915; New York Journal of Commerce, September 21, 1915; Walter Prichard Eaton, Indianapolis News, October 2, 1915.

The transition to the modern theatre which began with the plays of Bronson Howard was completed with the dramas of Eugene O'Neill. During this period the American theatre developed into a medium of protest against existing political, social, and economic conditions. The protest began as satire during the eighteen-nineties, developed into outright propaganda after the turn of the century, and after 1910 rejected completely middle class values. The modern dramatist, whom H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan applauded, continued to protest against the existing order; however, he now also rejected the concept of "progress."

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DOCUMENTS, NEWSPAPERS, AND PERIODICALS

Few plays of this era were published. Many remain unavailable; however, typescripts of numerous important plays of this era may be found in the New York Public Library's Theatre Collection at Lincoln Center. The Library's clipping files provide an excellent cross section of critical opinion about almost every play produced during this period. Of particular value after 1900 are the Grey Locke collection of press clippings and the Robinson Locke Collection of Dramatic Scrapbooks. Both include a wealth of biographical material about the dramatists of this age, reviews of plays, and general comments on the American theatre.

The Philip Moeller Collection and the Edward Goodman Papers, also in the New York Public Library's Theatre Collection, contain letters, programs, and reviews which relate to the Washington Square Players. George Tyler's papers at Princeton University includes some useful information, particularly in connection with the New York production of Israel Zangwill's Children of the Ghetto and an exchange of letters between Tyler and Theodore Roosevelt regarding Beulah Maria Dix's Moloch.

The extent to which social reformers influenced the American theatre 1890-1915 may be determined by a reading of the daily theatre pages in the New York Times. While the audiences of Progressive Era may not have always agreed with

the opinions expressed by the Times' reviewers, the plot summaries in the reviews are generally accurate, and they reflect the influence of the social protest movement. Furthermore, besides its reviews of all Broadway productions, the Times contains comments on the plays in the smaller theatres and on amateur productions. Occasionally the Times even reviews a melodrama from one of the lower class theatres.

The New York Dramatic Mirror was the best of the weekly trade papers. It was especially useful on the theatre of the eighteen-nineties when other sources were limited. Theatre Magazine, beginning in 1900, contained interviews with dramatists. These provided more insight than Theatre's reviews. The Green Book Album, first published in 1910, features analytic studies of American drama.

Several magazines published monthly reviews. Although both Channing Pollock's column in The Smart Set and Clayton Hamilton's reviews in The Forum contain somewhat reactionary ideas, they are readable and informative. Pollock's successor, the iconoclastic George Jean Nathan, on The Smart Set attacked the commercial theatre with a vigor seldom seen during this era; however, his reviews do not reflect the Progressive mind, and they have lost something with the passage of time. Reviews in Hampton's and The American Magazine best represent muckraking opinion of the

theatre. Louis Post's Single Tax journal, The Public, and B. O. Flower's The Arena also contain numerous articles and reviews of value.

THEATRE HISTORIES

The most useful history of the theatre, which relates to the period, remains Arthur Hobson Quinn's A History of the Theatre from the Civil War to the Present Day (2 vols.; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1927). See also, Quinn's "The Significance of Recent American Drama," Scribner's Magazine, LXXII (1922), pp. 97-108. Caspar Nannes' Politics in the American Drama (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1951) contains a readable chapter on the muckraking era; however, he is primarily interested in musical comedy. As a result he ignores some of the best examples of protest drama. Glen Hughes' A History of the American Theatre: 1700-1950 argues convincingly that the authors of protest plays during the Progressive Era were insincere and that they were content with hack work. Barrett Clark argued similarly in A Study of Modern Drama (New York: Appleton & Co., 1925). See also, Montrose Moses' The American Dramatist (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1927).

Martha Fletcher Bellinger's A Short History of the Drama (New York: H. Holt, 1927) is a useful volume to the student of the Progressive era stage. Sheldon Cheney's The Theatre: Three Thousand Years of Drama, Acting, and Stagecraft (New York: Chautauqua Press, 1931) clearly defines

artistic and European criticism of the American theatre, and differentiates between realism and naturalism as they apply to the theatre. See also, Cheney's "American Playwrites and the Drama of Sincerity," The Forum, LI (April, 1914), pp. 498-512.

Mordecai Gorelik's useful New Theatres for Old (New York: Samuel French, 1940) compares the realistic foreign protest theatre to the melodramatic American stage. Edmund M. Gagey, Revolution in the American Drama (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947) begins with a chapter on the American theatre 1912-1917, but his account adds little to older histories of this era.

Chapter I
Social Protest and Satire in the Eighteen-Nineties

English playwright Alfred Hennequin's "Characteristics of the American Drama," Arena, I (May, 1890), pp. 700-09, is a critical and useful study of the American drama of this era. Dion Boucicault, "The Future of American Drama," Arena, I (November, 1890), pp. 641-52, predicted the rise of the social protest play.

Bronson Howard's The Henrietta is in Allan Gates Halline's American Plays (New York: American Book Co., 1935). Several of Howard's other plays are in Barrett Clark's (ed.) America's Lost Plays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941). For biographical information on Howard, see, In Memorium, Bronson Howard (New York: Marion Press, 1910), which contains addresses given at a memorial meeting held at the Lyceum Theatre, by the American Dramatist Club, October 18, 1908. This volume includes "A Brief Biography," by Harry P. Mawson; "An Appreciation," by Brander Matthews; and a letter from Theodore Roosevelt. See also, Dorothy A. Barrett, "A Critical Study of Bronson Howard" (unpublished Master's dissertation, Theatre Dept., Michigan State University, 1952).

Augustus Thomas describes his career and comments on his society in The Print of My Remembrance (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922). Arthur and Barbara Gelb

compared O'Neill's ideas of the drama with the well made play of Thomas in O'Neill (New York: Dell, 1964).

Douglas Hunt's "The Life and Work of Charles Hoyt," Bulletin of Birmingham-Southern College, XXXIX (January, 1946), and his introduction to Five Plays by Charles Hoyt, Barrett Clark (ed.) America's Lost Plays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941) evaluated Hoyt's career as a dramatist and described his cynical estimation of his audiences.

The most recent and the most complete study of Herne is Herbert J. Edwards and Julie A. Herne, James A. Herne (Orono, Maine: University of Maine Press, 1962). A volume of Herne's plays is included in Barrett Clark (ed.), America's Lost Plays. See also, Shore Acres and Other Plays, Mrs. James Herne (ed.), (New York: Samuel French, 1928), with an introduction by Julie A. Herne. Herne's ideas about the drama are in "Art for Truth's Sake in the Drama," Arena XVII (1897), pp. 361-70. See also, Herne's letters to George Tyler, George Tyler Collection, Princeton University.

The production of Margaret Fleming was described in Hamlin Garland, A Son of the Middle Border (New York: Macmillan, 1910) and in Jean Holloway, Hamlin Garland, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961). William Dean Howells reviews the play in "Editor's Study," Harper's,

LXXXIII (August, 1891), pp. 478-79. A contrary view of Herne and Margaret Fleming is in Thomas Beer, The Mauve Decade: American Life at the end of the Nineteenth Century (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1926). Lars Ahnebrink, The Beginning of Naturalism in American Fiction (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), treats the influences of Ibsen and naturalism on Herne. See also, Dorothy S. Buck and Arthur H. Nethersot, "Ibsen and Herne's Movement," American Literature, XVI (January, 1946), pp. 311-33.

Chapter II
Post War Romanticism and Social Protest: The American Theatre at the Turn of the Century

Brander Matthews, "The Question of the Theatre," North American, CLXXIV (1902), notes the changes in the American theatre away from European influences in the past decade. The reformers' criticisms of the stage, and their aspirations are stated in Helen Potter, "The Drama of the Twentieth Century," Arena, XXIII (February, 1900), pp. 157-66. Norman Hapgood's The American Stage 1898-1900 (New York: Macmillan, 1901), emphasizes foreign influences on the stage.

Clyde Fitch's influence on the stage at the turn of the century is described in Lloyd Morris, Postscripts to Yesterday: American Life and Thought 1896-1946 (New York: Harper & Row, 1965). Fitch was described in an interview with W. L. Phelps by Wesley S. Griswold in the Hartford Courant, September 16, 1934, and more critically by Van Wyck Brooks, The Confident Years: 1885-1915 (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1952). Fitch's difficulties with theatre managers because of the opening scene of The Climber are discussed in Richard Cordell's introduction to the play in Representative Modern Plays (New York: T. Nelson & Son, 1929). See also, Montrose J. Moses and Virginia Gerson, Clyde Fitch and His Letters (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1924). Howells review of The Climbers is in "The Recent

Dramatic Season," North American, CLXXII (1901), pp. 468-80.

Many of George Ade's plays have been published; The Sultan of Sulu (New York: R. H. Russell, 1903) and The County Chairman, Burns Mantle and Garrison P. Sherwood (ed.), Best Plays of 1899-1909 (Philadelphia: Blakiston Co., 1944) relate to this chapter. Ade comments on the writing of The Sultan of Sulu in an article in a program for a revival of The County Chairman: "Recalling the Early Tremors of a Timerous Playwright," The Players, The County Chairman. Ade's views on the theatre are in "George Ade Talks of His Stage Ideals," Theatre, IV (November, 1904), pp. 287-88. George Jean Nathan interprets Ade as a realistic playwright in Another Book on the Theatre (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1915).

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Chapter III
The Rise of the Muckraking Melodrama: 1904-1906

The best general work on this period is Walter Prichard Eaton's The American Stage To-Day (Boston: Small, Maynard & Co.). William Mailley's "The Season's Social Drama," Arena, XXXVII, pp. 35-36, is also useful.

Charles Klein's ideas are stated in "Religion, Politics, and the Drama," Arena, XXXVII (May, 1907), pp. 492-97, "Charles Klein Tells his Dramatic Purpose and Convictions," New York Times, December 2, 1906, iv, p. 2, "What the Playwright is Up Against," and in an interview in the New York World Magazine, January 1, 1911, p. 8. See also, Klein's plays: The Lion and the Mouse (New York: Samuel French, 1917) and The Daughters of Men, Philip Klein, ed. (rev.; New York: Samuel French, 1917). Favorable reviews of Klein's plays include: Benjamin O. Flower, "The Theatre as a Potential Factor for Higher Civilization, and a Typical Play Illustrating its Power," Arena, XXXVII (May, 1907), pp. 498-509, and George Bronson-Howard, "What's Wrong With our Playwrights," Green Book Album. For more critical opinions of Klein's plays see, Montrose Moses, "The Regeneration of the Theatre," The Forum, XLV, pp. 584-88, and Walter Prichard Eaton, At the New Theatre and Others (Boston: Small, Maynard & Co., 1910).

The Grey Locke Collection, New York Public Library,

contains the only useful material on George Broadhurst. His plays, however, are available: The Man of the Hour (rev. ed.; New York: Samuel French, 1916).

The aims of the Progressive Stage Society are stated in the Progressive Stage Society Bulletin. Julius Hopp states his belief in revolutionary socialism, and his convictions about social drama in "The Social Drama, and its Purpose," Eclectic Magazine, CXLVI (1905), p. 4. Only two of Hopp's plays were published and no available record shows that either was ever produced: Tears (Boston: Poet-Lore Co., 1904) and The Brotherhood of Men in Eclectic Magazine.

Zona Gale's "The Dramatic Season," The Critic, XLIV (May, 1904), pp. 412-28, is a clear explanation of The Pit's popularity. Channing Pollock defended his dramatization of the novel in an interesting but unconvincing manner in Harvest of My Years (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1943). The New York Public Library's clipping file contains extensive reviews of The Jungle. Sinclair's problems getting capitalist theatre managers to produce his plays are described in the introduction to his Plays of Protest (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1912).

Chapter IV
Socialism Comes to Broadway: 1907-1910

The American drama of social thought is described in Sheldon Cheney, The New Movement in the Theatre (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1914); William Archer, "The New Drama and the New Theatre," McClure's, XXXIV (November, 1909), pp. 3-16; Thomas Dickinson, The Case of American Drama (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1915); and in Elsie May's preceptive article, "Contemporary Drama as a Reflection of Modern Life," Sewanee Review, XIX (April, 1911), pp. 161-71. Artistic European influences on the American theatre are suggested in Sheldon Cheney, The Art Theatre (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925). The objectives of the New Theatre are discussed in Walter Prichard Eaton, At the New Theatre and Others and in Thomas Dickinson, The Case of American Drama. Jane Addams notes the frequent use of sociological purposes in the dramas of this era in "The Theatrical Muck-Raker Answered," Current Literature, XLVI, pp. 699-71. For the impact of socialism on the popular stage, see Charles Collins, "Socialism on the Stage," Green Book Album, II (August, 1909), pp. 283-87.

Charles Klein's contention in The Third Degree (New York: Samuel French, 1908) that members of the lower class were not treated as well as members of the upper class when charged with similar crimes is substantiated in two articles

in The Public: see, The Public, XIII (February 4, 1910), pp. 99-100; and The Public, XII (July 2, 1909), pp. 625-27. B. O. Flower praised the melodrama in "The Third Degree: A Modern Play Illustrating the Educational Value of the Drama," Arena, XLI (February, 1909), pp. 139-52.

Material on Joseph Medill Patterson is voluminous, but little pertains directly to Patterson's career as a socialist and still less to Patterson as a playwright. A typescript of the "happy ending" revision of The Fourth Estate (New York: 1909) is in the New York Public Library's Theatre Collection, as are copies of A Little Brother of the Rich and Rebellion. Patterson's socialist writings include "Confessions of a Drone," Independent, LXI (August 30, 1906), pp. 493-95, and "The Socialist Machine," Saturday Evening Post, September 29, 1906, p. 5. For Patterson's support of Judge Dunne in the Chicago mayoralty campaign of 1905, see The Public, April, 1905, pp. 825-26. On his decision to become a socialist, see "The Resignation of Joseph Patterson," (Chicago: National Committee of the Socialist Party, 1906). Wayne Andrews, The Battle for Chicago (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1946) and John Chapman, Tell it to Sweeney: the Informal History of the New York Daily News (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1961) contain brief biographical sketches of Patterson; however, neither offers much insight into Patterson's status within

the Socialist Party. Recent works on Patterson's family: Alice Albright Hoge, Cissy Patterson (New York: Random House, 1966); Paul F. Healy, Cissy: A Biography of Eleanor M. "Cissy" Patterson (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1966); and Frank C. Waldrop, McCormick of Chicago: An Unconventional Portrait of a Controversial Figure (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966) have contributed little new information of Joseph Patterson. Burton Rascoe, Before I Forget (New York: Literary Guild of America, 1937) maintains that Joseph Patterson was never completely converted to socialism, and Simon Michael Bessie, Jazz Journalism (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1938) agrees with this view. For further biographical information on Patterson, see Jack Alexander, "The Duke of Chicago," John E. Drewry (ed.), Post Biographies of Famous Journalists (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1942), and his "Vox Populi," The New Yorker, 3 parts, August 6, 1938-August 20, 1938. See also, John Tebbel's An American Dynasty (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1947). Political and social conditions in Chicago in the first decade on the twentieth century are described in G. W. Turner, "The City of Chicago," McClure's, XXVIII (April, 1907), pp. 575-92, Charles Edward Russell, "Chaos and Bomb Throwing in Chicago," Hampton's XXIV (March, 1910), pp. 317-19, and Ray Ginger, Altgeld's America.

Typescripts of Eugene Walter's The Undertow (1902),

The Wolf (1908), The Easiest Way (n.d.) are in the New York Public Library. Paid in Full is available only in novelized form by John W. Harding (New York: G. W. Willingham Co., 1908). In How I Write a Play: A Practical Handbook for Students (New York: Eugene Walter Corp., 1925), Walter explains his philosophy of playwriting. Francis Lamont Peirce, "Eugene Walter: An American Dramatic Realist," Drama, VI (February, 1916), is a useful commentary on Walter's work. Lynde Denig, "Vissitudes of a Playwright," Theatre, XXI (May, 1915), pp. 235-37, describes Walter's writing technique. Walter Prichard Eaton, "Our New Generation of Dramatists," American Magazine, LXXI (November, 1910), pp. 120-29, notes recent contributions to the American drama by Eugene Walter and Joseph Patterson.

William J. Hurlbut's The Writing on the Wall is available only in a novelized version by Edward Marshall (New York: G. W. Dillingham, 1909). A typescript of The Fighting Hope (1908) is in the New York Public Library. The Robinson Locke Collection contains several volumes on Olga Nethersole; these contain invaluable information on The Writing on the Wall.

There is a wealth of material on the tenements of Trinity Church. The most useful includes: Ray Stannard Baker, "The Case Against Trinity," American Magazine, LXVIII (May, 1909), pp. 2-16; Charles Edward Russell, "The Tenements

of Trinity Church," Everybody's Magazine, XIX (July, 1908), pp. 3-16; Report as to the Sanitary Condition of the Tenements of Trinity Church, and other Documents (New York: Evening Post Job Printing House, 1895); John P. Peters, "The Tale of Trinity," The Independent, LXVI (February, 1909), pp. 355-63; and Samuel Hopkins Adams, "Tuberculosis: The Race Suicide," McClure's, XXIV (January, 1905), pp. 234-49.

A typescript of The Battle is in the New York Public Library. The debate which surrounded the play is recorded in the daily newspaper of the era, especially the New York Times.

John Spargo's first attempt at writing drama was published as a pamphlet, Not Guilty (Westwood, Mass.: Ariel Press, n.d.). Hopp's efforts to aid the socialist defense in the Haywood Trial are described in The Worker and the New York Times. Lynde Denig, "Theatre Tickets at Cut Rates," Theatre, XXI (April, 1915) notes Hopp's role in the Wage Earners' Theatre and the Theatre Center for Schools. Thomas Dickinson compares Hopp's desire to make the theatre available to the masses to his determination to popularize socialism in The Insurgent Theatre (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1917); Julia Price, The Off-Broadway Theatre adds nothing to Dickinson's account.

Eric Wollencott Barnes, The Man Who Lived Twice (New

York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956) is a rather unsatisfactory biography of Edward Sheldon. Anne Morrow Lindberg's introductory chapter is more useful. Barrett Clark, Intimate Portraits (New York: Hildreth Press, 1951) contains a chapter on Sheldon. Some of Sheldon's experiences at Harvard are related in Van Wyck Brooks, Scenes and Portraits (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1954). Albert Cohn, "Salvation Nell: An Overlooked Milestone in American Theatre," Educational Theatre Journal, IX (1957), is an interesting interpretation of Sheldon's first play, but he equates realism with realistic set design, and there is no correlation between realistic setting and realistic drama. Walter Prichard Eaton records the audience reaction to The Nigger at the New Theatre in At the New Theatre and Others (Cincinnati: Stewart & Kidd Co., 1910).

Maud McDougall, "The White House and the Play House," Green Book Album, III (April, 1910), pp. 823-31, deals with President Theodore Roosevelt's attendance at a performance of Israel Zangwill's The Melting Pot. Roosevelt's revision of the play was publicized in the programs and press releases of the play. Owen Davis, I'd Like to Do It Again (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1931) is a colorful account of his career as an author of melodramas.

Chapter V
White Slaves, Women's Suffrage, and War

Changes in American thought prior to World War I are illustrated in brilliant fashion in Henry May, The End of American Innocence (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1959). See also, Floyd Dell, Homecoming: An Autobiography (New York: Farrar, 1933). Edmund Gagey, Revolution in the American Drama (New York, 1947) begins with a chapter on the theatre 1912-17, which notes some of the changes taking place in the American theatre during this decade. Walter Prichard Eaton, Plays and Players (Cincinnati: Stewart & Kidd, 1916) discusses the off-Broadway stage.

Oscar Cargill, Intellectual America: Ideas on the March (New York: Macmillan, 1941) contains the most complete discussion of the movement to end white slavery and its literature. See also, The Social Evil in Chicago: a Study of Existing Conditions with Recommendations by the Vice Commission of Chicago (Chicago: Gunthorpe-Warren Printing Co., 1911), Jane Addams, A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil (New York: Macmillan Co., 1912), and Brand Whitlock, "The White Slave," The Forum, LI, pp. 193-216. Bayard Veiller's autobiography, The Fun I've Had (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1941), describes his difficulties with the police. See also, an interview with Veiller in the New York Times, September 21, 1913, part v, p. 4. A typescript

of The Fight is in the New York Public Library. Endorsements of both The Lure and The Fight are on press releases and programs of the plays. "A Vicious Use of Frankness," Independent, LXXV (September 11, 1913), pp. 604-05, summarizes the arguments against The Lure and The Fight. Isaac Marcosson, David Graham Philips and His Times (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1932) remains the most useful work on Philips. Marcosson describes Philips growing interest in the theatre.

Henry May, The End of American Innocence, and Floyd Dell, Intellectual Vagabondage: An Apology for the Intelligentsia (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1926) develop the concept of the "new women." Material on the women's suffrage movement as it affected the theatre can be found in the New York Times.

The most useful study of the little theatre movement is Thomas Dickinson, The Insurgent Theatre. Dickinson's own efforts in Wisconsin are described in William Ellery Leonard, "The Wisconsin Dramatic Society," Drama, II (May, 1912), pp. 222-37. Zona Gale's The Neighbors is published in Thomas Dickinson (ed.), Wisconsin Plays (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1914). The use of the theatre as a part of the social reform program of Hull House is explained in "Hull House Players," Theatre, September, 1913, pp. xix-xxii, and "The Chicago Theatre Society," Drama, II (May, 1912),

pp. 238-59.

For the Patterson pageant see: William Haywood, Bill Haywood's Book (New York: International Publishing Co., 1929); Granville Hicks, John Reed: the Making of a Revolutionary (New York: Macmillan, 1936), Daniel Aaron, Writers on the Left: Episodes in American Literary Communism (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1961), and Susan Glaspell, The Road to the Temple (London: Ernest Berm Limited, 1926).

A brief description of the aims of the Washington Square Players is in Thomas Dickinson's introduction to Washington Square Plays (Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1916). The Edward Goodman Papers and the more useful Philip Moeller Collection provide more insight into the New York little theatre movement than any work now available. See also, Walter Prichard Eaton, Plays and Players and Arthur and Barbara Gelb's O'Neill (New York: Dell, 1960), which also deals with the Provincetown Players. Other works of value on the Provincetown Players are Helen Deutsch and Stella Hanue, The Provincetown (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1931) and Susan Glaspell, The Road to the Temple.