

MAKES PROFOUND IMPRESSION

"Everyman," the Morality Play, Charms All Its Hearers.

From End to End It Is Filled With Unusual Features.

"Everyman" was a treat for the good-sized audience which braved the miserable weather and the doubtful car service and occupied seats in Deany Hall at the state university last evening. This was the first production of the famous morality play in the city, and it is not truly stating the case to say that it made a profound impression upon all its hearers. It charmed, entertained and instructed, in the best senses of those words.

"Everyman" would be remarkable even in an age less barren of serious and lofty stage presentations than is the dramatic world of today. Indeed, so different in every aspect is this moral play from the acted compositions to which the playgoers of the day are accustomed that it is difficult to associate it with any element of the theatre, even though it be given after the usual manner of dialogue and action. It is in nature an acted sermon, and it is distinctly novel in theme and treatment. Only E. H. Sothern's late morality play, "The Proud Princess," being in any way comparable with this.

Its Unusual Features.

One noteworthy unaccustomed feature from the beginning to the end of the performance. The stage devices are the simplest. There is no orchestra, no curtain, no illumination or change of scene. Many of the actors pass to and fro in the aisles, and often lines are spoken, not only in the midst of the audience, but far into the rear of the entire auditorium. Applause of any sort is expressly put under a ban.

"Everyman" is beautiful in its simplicity. Though there are seventeen characters, the bulk of the dialogue falls upon one, Everyman. The possibility of the presentation of this piece would lie within the grasp of every church or religious society in the land were it not that the highest degree of education and the most extraordinary acting ability are required of every character in the play. The solemnity of the play may be gathered from the fact that the voice of God himself is heard at the very opening. It would be a sacrilege and a desecration to put this play on without years of the most patient and thoughtful preparation by a cast of superb attainments to do it justice. Such attainments all who saw the play last night will admit that Ben Greet and his London company possess.

An Ideal Performance.

The performance at the university last night was ideal. The stage, though not so large as that at Christensen's Hall, was ample for its purpose. The audience was made up entirely of university students and professors and their families, and of a sprinkling of educators and professional men from the city. An audience of such general culture gave the performance the most reverent attention. Not a sound was heard save the voice of the actors during the entire presentation. The meaning of the great forest trees around the building seemed to heighten the impressiveness of the occasion.

At 8:30 o'clock there came the sounds of the introductory overture behind the scenes. Five minutes later the music of the organ became subordinate to the chanting of a concealed choir. Then Ben Greet, in the character of God's Messenger, came through the audience to the steps before the stage and besought for the master of the play reverent attention to the general reckoning to which every man is called.

The Setting.

Upon the stage a hooded monk sat at either end of the proscenium arch. In the center of the stage to be surmounted by a short flight of steps in front, was a raised platform of circular form, overhung by a canopy. On either side of the stage were long and curtained booths. The setting represented the cloister of

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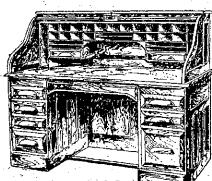
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an old monastery. Lilies bloomed at the sides of the raised dais.

Following the announcement by the Messenger, the voice of the Deity was heard, declaring the general sin of mankind and his purpose to do justice by calling upon every man for a reckoning. He bade Death, His mighty messenger, to tell Everyman to prepare for his last pilgrimage. This the latter, in a solemn speech, does, and to all of Everyman's entreaties for further time he turns a deaf ear, but grants him the liberty of taking any of his companions who are willing to go with him on his death journey.

The Elements Personified.

Then comes the personification of such elements in human life as good fellowship, worldly goods, good deeds, knowledge, beauty, strength, discretion and the five wits, as well as the kindred of Everyman. In turn he beseeches them to go with him, but one by one they refuse him. Each mock at his sorrow. Only Knowledge, Conscience and Good Deeds are his friends. Knowledge remains with him to the end, and Good Deeds accompanies him to the open grave. Into which, as the close of the allegory, he descends.

Throughout the play the dialogue is clothed in the beautiful phraseology of the Old English. It is well for auditors to provide themselves with the books of the play offered at the door, both as souvenirs of this unique presentation and as an aid in discovering the full meaning of its many quaint phrases. The costumes of the players are, Mr. Greet explains, taken from old Flemish tapestries.

The Epilogue.

The roles are splendidly taken. Mr. Greet assumes the character of the Messenger; Constance Crawley that of Everyman; Agnes Scott that of Knowledge; and John Sawyer Crawley that of Death. The end of the play comes at 10:15 with the following beautiful epilogue by the Doctor:

This mortal men may have in mynde; Ye herers take it of worth, olde and yonge. And forsake Pryde, for he deceyveth you in the ende. And remembre Beaute, Fyve-wyttes, Strength, and Discrecyon. They all at the last do Everyman forsake. Save his Good-deedes, there doth he take: But be ware, and theye be kinde. Before God he hath us helpe at all; None excuse may be thure for Everyman!

Alas! how shall he do than?
For after delbe amendes may no man make.
For then mercy and pyte doth hym forsake:
If his reckenynge be not clere when he doth come.
God wyl saye—Itz, maledicti, in ingem acernum:
And he that hath his accounts holw and soude.
Hye in heven he shall be crownde; Unto whiche place God bringe us all thyng.
Thereto helpe the Trynyte! Amen, say ye, for saynt Charyte!

MME. GADSKI TONIGHT.

Mme. Gadski, dramatic soprano, will appear in concert at the Grand tonight. Some of the big arias that have brought fame both to Nordica and to Gadski will be heard during the program, and an opportunity will be given to compare the rendition of Wagnerian roles by these two singers.

"PATNETT PEGGY."

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