

# DRAMATIC AND MUSICAL

## Mr. Hammerstein's New Theatre Republic Opened Last Night.

James A. Herne's New Rustic Drama, "Sag Harbor"—"A Million Dollars" the New Spectacular Piece at the New York.

The most notable theatrical incident last night was the opening of Oscar Hammerstein's new playhouse, the Theatre Republic, on West Forty-second Street, adjoining the Victoria Music Hall. There was a great assemblage, including, as it seemed, nearly all the habitual first-nighters, and the unique, beautiful, and comfortable auditorium was greatly admired. The entrance from the street into a low-ceiled vestibule, and through narrow doors, is somewhat cramped, but there are plenty of large doors to throw open for the outgoing audiences.

The decoration of the interior, in which greens and reds are combined with much gilding, is exceedingly rich, while the chairs are wide and easy to sit in. The acoustics are good, and the ornamental dome is very handsome. The ventilating appliances were at fault last night, but this, doubtless, will be rectified.

The music pavilion, over the stage, in the proscenium arch, is a reminder of the early days of the Madison Square Theatre. The music of the small band, under the direction of J. S. Hiller, last night was of an exceptionally good quality.

Besides this music the evening's entertainment comprised the first performance in New York of a long and conversational rural piece by James A. Herne, called "Sag Harbor," and two speeches in its third entr'acte, a long, conversational, and rural one by Mr. Herne and a short, pertinent, and telling one by Mr. Hammerstein.

Mr. Herne devoted himself chiefly to expressing his fears, which were not altogether ill-founded, that his new play might not draw very well in New York, in spite of the polite first-night applause; he also praised Mr. Hammerstein and the dome and advised the spectators to become actors, so they might get the best view of it, from the stage.

Mr. Hammerstein said, simply, and no doubt truthfully, that he wished to devote the new house to pure and noble things. The Parisian, he declared, spoke proudly of "our Comédie Française"; the Berliner called the Imperial Opera House "ours," and he wished the New Yorker to learn to say "our Theatre Republic."

Mr. Herne's play is in four acts and involves sixteen speaking personages, and most of these talk entirely too much. The story, as Mr. Herne remarked before the curtain, is simple and old. That does not matter so much, though, and something more than half of the new piece is exceedingly good of its simple and ancient kind.

The love of two brothers for the same girl, her choice of the elder from a sense of duty, a subsequent quick quarrel, and a happy reconciliation make the serious burden. So far as the talk and action directly concern that posture of events and its development, the play is interesting and even edifying.

The courtship of an elderly, meddlesome, prodigiously warm-hearted and slow-speaking scollop fisherman and a spinster, who fears to get married because she has read the Book of Genesis and found the "begats" alarming, is less edifying and is sometimes tiresome. The spinster does get married, and in Act III. is discovered making baby clothes and talking blithely of the future.

The famous nursery episode of Mr. Herne's "Margaret Fleming" is here quite outdone. Miss Evelyn Millard, the London actress, whose refusal to speak on the stage a line alluding to a babe unborn was recently cabled to this country, might find Mr. Herne's play very distasteful.

Some of the humor, however, is spontaneous and diverting, and the clam pie supper in Act III. is an amusing episode. The aged jokes, the cheap slang phrases, the employment of ancient devices, such as the reading of imaginary paragraphs from a country newspaper, the prolonged tipsy scene, are not the less deplorable.

Pictorially, the production is admirable in every detail, and the performance is smooth. Mr. Herne acts the scollop fisherman in his accustomed and approved manner. Miss Julie Herne is sadly overweighted in a rôle requiring intelligible emotional expression, but she is pretty and has been diligently trained. A substantial triumph was secured by W. T. Hodge, a new actor, as a loquacious and self-satisfied bumpkin, but his part is the best in the piece.

William Turner.....	Frank Monroe
Ben Turner.....	Forrest Robinson
Frank Turner.....	Lionel Barrymore
Capt. Dan Marble.....	James A. Herne
Freeman Whitmarsh.....	W. T. Hodge
George Salter.....	C. D. Pitt
Hosea Stevens.....	John D. Garrick
Mrs. John Russell.....	Mrs. Sol Smith
Elizabeth Ann Turner.....	Marion Abbott
Martha Reese.....	Julie A. Herne
Jane Cauldwell.....	Chrystal Herne
Frances Towd.....	Mollie Revel
Miss Bally.....	Harriet McDonald
Susan Murphy.....	Margaret Pitt