

FIRST AID TO THE DRAMA

By W. E. Hill

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Here's a hint from the past (circa 1917), when chorus girls in a revue number were wont to come out and throw tennis balls at the audience. Audiences still love to have things thrown at them; so, wake up, producers! This might not be a bad idea for China-ware Night.



The flesh and blood drama, in a bad way due to competition with pictures, floor shows and public broadcasts, could easily be put on its feet with infusions of new life. Here, for instance, is a swell idea for Lady Macbeth's sleep-walking stunt, and the cost would not be prohibitive.



"Father, try to realize that 28,000 men in your safety pin factory are on a sit-down strike with chairs for only half that number. This means that 14,000 men must stand—or sit in their comrades' laps, which would be too humiliating to them. And you call yourself a just employer!" (A good, strong play on timely events will always draw.)



If child stars are a riot in pictures, why not on the legitimate stage? A really youthful Juliet for a change! Perhaps all the child actresses are in Hollywood trying to be second Shirley Temples, but there are always a few mid-gets out of work.



Now to gain the attention of public broadcast fans and double feature movie patrons. The actors in a stage play might, in the big scene, stop acting for a few minutes and let a couple of commercial broadcasters come in with a mike:

"Honey, this is marvelous rice pudding! All the guests have commented on it."

"Bob, dear, that is because it is Goldberg's tossed rice!"

"But isn't all rice the same?"

"No. Goldberg's tossed rice is tossed till it is made buoyant and light as a feather," etc. . . .

It's our guess that this stunt would bring both publics into the theatre.

And as a novelty, why not let the detectives in the mystery thriller step down from the stage and accuse an unsuspecting member of the audience, subjecting him, or her, to a good third degree musing up? It would be a sell-out.



Vaudeville needs freshening up, too. A ventriloquist, say, should use a glorified dummy instead of the old comic red-head. And in place of the old patter, he might offer a news broadcast. For example: "Muncie, Indiana—During yesterday's ice storm, Mrs. Harold Simkin slipped and fell in front of a hearse, fracturing her jaw. Later she learned it was the funeral of her divorced husband. 'It was the first time we had met in twenty years,' was Mrs. Simkin's comment."