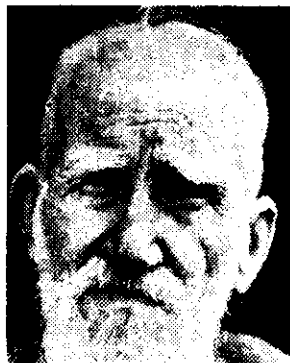


the cross-examination scene from Henry Arthur Jones's *Mrs. Dane's Defence*.

The play of ideas in the late 19th Century can be traced back to Ibsen, who was a great master of dramatic construction and used all the devices of the dramatist, not for entertainment but for the discussion of fundamental human problems. George Bernard Shaw carried the Ibsen tradition into the English theatre, putting his own highly individual stamp upon it. Describing his own plays, Shaw said: "In *Candida* you have action producing discussion. In *The Doctor's Dilemma* you have discussion producing action and that action being finally discussed. In other plays you have discussion all over the place. Sometimes, as in *Getting Married* and *Misalliance*, the whole play, though full of incident, is a discussion and nothing else." Professor Isaacs introduces two extracts from Shaw's plays to illustrate his theme in this talk: the big scene between mother and daughter in *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, and the scene between Captain Shotover and his daughter in *Heartbreak House*.

A new streamlined tempo was introduced into the theatre in the 1920s, when, according to Professor Isaacs, English dramatists responded to the need of a people seeking relief from the 1914-18 war. It was the art of comedy which flourished particularly at this time, but no period, he believes, was



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so rich in its theatrical variety. Somerset Maugham, Frederick Lonsdale and Noel Coward were outstanding dramatists of the 'twenties, and this talk is illustrated by scenes from Maugham's *Our Betters* and Coward's *Hay Fever*.

In his talk on "The Actor's Theatre and the Producer's Theatre," Professor Isaacs describes the days when actor-managers like Henry Irving, Beerbohm Tree and George Alexander owned theatres in which they reigned like petty monarchs, putting on plays that were deliberately built around themselves. Then a new figure rose above the theatrical horizon: the producer, who

moulded actors and every other element of a play into a harmonious whole. Men like Granville Barker and Gordon Craig began a tradition that is represented today by such producers as Tyrone Guthrie and Peter Brook. The famous "Titanic" scene from *Cavalcade* is presented to illustrate the points made in this programme.

In his talk on the experimental plays of the 'thirties, Professor Isaacs shows what sort of impact was made on the theatre by plays like Elmer Rice's *The Adding Machine*, Georg Kaiser's *From Morn to Midnight*, and Ernst Toller's *Masses and Man*. Such experimental

plays were put on not so much in the West End of London as "in the attic of a warehouse in Covent Garden, under the railway arches at Charing Cross, in big-game museums and drill halls, in disused chapels and cinemas and doss houses." One was even performed on the base of Nelson's Monument in Trafalgar Square.

Finally there is a detailed analysis of the work of England's two leading writers of poetic drama, T. S. Eliot and Christopher Fry, illustrated with scenes from *The Firstborn* and *The Family Reunion*.

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