

MORAL REARMAMENT PLAY'S TRANSVAAL PREMIERE

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"THE FORGOTTEN FACTOR," described by its producers as an industrial drama for national teamwork, was given its Transvaal premiere in the Library Theatre last night. The moral of the play was carefully outlined to the audience before the curtain rose, and it was again re-emphasised at the close of the play.

Briefly it is a demand that individuals should start putting the world right by putting themselves right by allowing God (The Forgotten Factor) to work through them. "If man listens, God will speak." The theme is exemplified in the play's story of the clash of a trade union leader and an industrialist who finally, in a new spirit of trust and sympathy get together to solve their mutual yet seeming conflicting interests. The final act, on which no curtain falls, is played out by an inspired audience when they take their place in the rough and tumble of ordinary living; as they change themselves and others and so change the nations and the world.

The play had a long London run, has had 500 performances in the chief industrial cities of the United States, and is now playing in many European countries. A cast drawn from many parts of the world presents it here.

In 1944, Mr. Truman, in what must have been one of his classic blunders, hailed it as one of the best plays produced during the war. It is wrong to imagine that because a play has a pietistic and moral purpose that it must be judged by some specially kindly criteria. The power of God and the reaction of man have formed a legitimate subject of theatrical performances since the time of Aeschylus.

To present such profound things on the stage in terms that are relevant to ordinary experience and not merely in conformity with the convictions of a particular sect, demands that the audience should be caught by the power and passion of the story, and imaginatively suffer and grow in spirit with the protagonists. But this story was superficial, out-moded, and its basic situation was much better handled by John Galsworthy years ago. The comment which came before and after was more effective than the play itself.

The settings were serviceable, the acting moderate, production smooth, and the casting good throughout.

There is only one more comment to make. It is probable that some members of the audience were moved and stimulated. That may have derived from the impressive build-up or the persuasive comment to the play; and it is to be hoped that all such will retain and spread that worthy inspiration.