

ENORMOUS AUDIENCES

"FORGOTTEN FACTOR" MORE THAN A PLAY

"THE FORGOTTEN FACTOR" is more than a play — it is an idea — an "ideal". The play is just a vehicle used to put this ideal into a practical form that can be understood and followed.

The Town Hall has been packed each night the play has shown, crowds have waited patiently and many have eventually been found chairs at the sides. It is obvious that here in Springs, as in every part of the world in which this play has been shown, much interest has been aroused. Most people feel that there is much that is wrong with the world and would like to know how they can help to improve it—the message behind this play tries to show what each one can do.

One of the first things to be noticed is the general air of happiness amongst the cast. They open with a Choir singing and the obvious happiness on their faces is striking. All the singers cannot be "putting on an act"—they actually are happy. Why? Because obviously they have something in which they believe. They are practical idealists—putting into action their beliefs and revelling in the feeling that they are actually helping to solve some of the problems of this world. Sincerity is stamped on their faces and their actions and this cannot fail but impress any audience. No matter what views are held, sincerity is always respected.

OBVIOUS SINCERITY.

The play is a simple one and although only one member of the cast has ever had any professional experience, is very well acted. In

the programme, the cast is anonymous and no good purpose could be served singling out individuals for praise. It is amazing, however, how extremely "natural" were the different members of the cast, particularly where the younger generation were concerned. The boy—who is 'changed' and has the difficult and terrifying task of tackling his father's known enemy—was extraordinarily good and seemed completely unembarrassed or self-conscious, even when talking about God, never a very easy task in front of an audience who might prove unsympathetic. The fact that the audience is rarely out of sympathy with the players is another instance of what obvious sincerity can do. It is plain that the players believe in what they are saying and this puts it beyond the reach of sceptical laughter.

THE PLOT.

In the play, there are two families—rich and poor—the stubborn intolerant manager of a factory and the equally stubborn fanatical Labour leader. Their daughters are friends at school. The fathers are enemies and negotiations are about to break down because they have no common meeting-ground on which to start discussions. Things look ugly. A trouble-maker tries to overthrow the Labour leader and get the men to strike. The Mana-

ger announces that 'he will not budge an inch'. The Labour leader does the same. The Manager's son, an eighteen-year old irresponsible college boy, has met some people who are 'different'—as a family, they do not quarrel, they have ideals which make the boy 'think'. In his own family, there is constant friction; his mother is too busy worrying about her own activities to look after her family, she is only concerned with spending money; his father is desperately worried about the factory and the threatened strike, but is determined not to "weaken"; the sister is only concerned with her part in the school play. The boy realises he must 'do' something and he takes the courageous and, to his father's way of thinking, outrageous step of making friends with his father's enemy. The play shows what happens when the boy makes the Labour leader understand the 'new idea' how in turn, the Labour leader makes the first move towards conciliation and how eventually, their mutual problem is solved.

TRUE TO LIFE.

A brief synopsis is inadequate to show the impact of this ideal on these two men, with their completely different ways of living. It might be felt that they 'changed' too rapidly to be true to life but it has been the experience of the players as they travelled with this play that this is true to life. Every incident in the play is based on fact.

What is the forgotten factor? It is the human element so often forgotten. People are too prone to see only their own side of the problem—this idea is to see the other fellow's side as well—to attempt to understand his point of view. Compromise, with a difference. Not weakness but a genuine effort to see everyone's side of the problem. If only problems could be tackled on a mutual basis of tolerance and a desire to reach a mutually agreeable solution, half the difficulties encountered in conferences, small or large, would be eliminated.

What is this but a continuation of the doctrine of "Love your neighbour"?

There have been over 500 performances of this play in the chief industrial cities of the United States and Canada. It had a wonderful response in the coal and textile areas of Northern France. In the "red" area of the Rhonda (Wales) mining districts, many miners felt the impact of the play and some of them flew to France where they met their French comrades and discussed the message they had received through the play. This play is being shown throughout the world. Even the East are interested in it—Japan has sent a notable representative to the big conference of the Moral Re-Armament force in Switzerland—so has Burma.

It was obvious from the response of the audiences in Springs, that many people in this town have been left with something very important to 'think about'.