

# In which are bishops

MR. Peter Howard's Pro-  
tean inventiveness has  
added another to his long  
record of productions at the  
Westminster Theatre. His  
newest play, *Mr. Brown  
Comes Down the Hill*, is the  
most enigmatic of them all.

In a lengthy preface printed  
on the programme, he has cun-  
ningly forestalled all likely  
criticisms and drawn the fangs  
of potential critics. Here he  
revives a device popularised by  
George Bernard Shaw—a prose  
supplement to ensure that the  
audience will not miss the point  
of the play, nor mistake the  
author's purpose.

The theme is fantastic, but  
the preface absolves it from  
censure on that score. The  
author disclaims all pretensions  
to realism or lifelikeness; and  
the drama resolves itself into  
the eternal dichotomy between  
inspiration, integrity, and the  
voice of prophecy, and, on the  
other hand, conventional re-  
spectability and the bumbling  
platitudes of the Establishment.  
After all, we do not denigrate  
"Everyman" because the char-  
acters are so formalised, so in-  
volved in situations which could  
not happen here. The MRA  
movement and its distinctive  
principles are nowhere cited.

Mr. Howard embodies the  
Establishment in the persons of  
four bishops, whose casting in-  
troduces for Anglicans a note  
of sheer joy. Clergy in the  
audience agreed with me that  
the producer, whether or not  
intentionally has brought to life  
two well-known prelates of our  
own day. If the sentiments of  
the four bishops would have  
been more life-like a decade  
ago than today, yet the men-  
tality rings true, and the scene  
in which the prelates discuss  
the sensation which is the crisis  
of the drama, filled me, and, I  
gather, other Anglican clergy  
with rapture and elation.

W. J. BOLT

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