

**LITTLE THEATER
CLASSICS, VOL. II**

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Little Theater Classics, Vol. II by Samuel A. Eliot

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SAMUEL A. ELIOT

**LITTLE THEATER
CLASSICS, VOL. II**



SCENE FROM *ABRAHAM AND ISAAC* AS PRODUCED BY SAM HUME IN
HIS "PERMANENT SETTING" AT THE ARTS AND CRAFTS THEATER,
DETROIT, IN JANUARY, 1917

The appearance of the Angel

Frontispiece



LITTLE THEATER CLASSICS

VOLUME TWO

ADAPTED AND EDITED BY
SAMUEL A. ^{TKIN}ELIOT, JR.

ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS



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1920

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PREFACE

WITH the return of peace and resumption of normal activities, the Little Theater Movement visibly revives and flourishes. It is less esoteric, more communal than it used to be. The Community Houses which will probably be erected everywhere in fitting memorial for those who died for democracy will normally include a stage: the theater has attained that degree of recognition in America. The art of the theater, though it still cannot be fostered and enjoyed on a profitable basis save when by a stroke of luck a play like Ervine's *John Ferguson* produced by the New York Theater Guild in May, 1919, meets unexpected, widespread public favor, yet finds ever-increasing interest and support. Not even in War's darkest days was its growth wholly checked; the Detroit Arts and Crafts Theater, the Provincetown Players in New York and Copeau's Théâtre du Vieux Colombier, now lost to us once more in Paris, continued to pioneer and unfold new possibilities of drama and stagecraft. A yet more fervent discipleship among all who care for Art itself may be expected now, and consequently a more rapid, venturesome, and financially sustained progress should mark the next few years than signalized the movement's infancy in 1911-1918.

Three of the plays in this second volume of our series were produced before the eclipse of 1918, — two of them in a good many Little Theaters. The

fourth, which came near to production at the former Toy Theater in Boston in the season of 1913-1914 and is likely to attract individual actors of ambition everywhere, demands for its adequate presentation a more mature, complete Art-theater than, as yet, existed in America: *The Loathed Lover* undeniably needs some acting of the highest quality and an audience not squeamish but trained in appreciation of the best. The first need is now, it seems, in sight of fulfilment through such organizations as the New York Theater Guild and such producers as Maurice Browne. The second is complicated by the well-known fact that women, not men, are the arbiters of the legitimate drama, especially of the artistic drama, here to-day: thence the prevalence of sweet, spineless, unmomentous plays among so many artistic amateur groups. *The Loathed Lover* is stressfully masculine in spirit and appeal. The natural man feels pleasure when an unattractive specimen of his sex wins an ideal woman on the stage; he feels he might have had a chance with her himself. The normal woman, on the other hand, is displeased, even repelled. And while the sensationalism of the play may attract experimenters in view of the success of Benelli's *The Jest*, which is quite of the same order, the Little Theater public outside sophisticated New York City still needs some preparation for such strong fare. This the clubs and study-groups and colleges may give. It is a fact that all classic drama, except in certain not very brilliant epochs like the Precious period in the seventeenth century and the Sentimental in the eighteenth, was developed and written with exceedingly little regard for feminine feelings. As