

"Jacob's Ladder"

No doubt many people are puzzled at the connotation of the title of the coming Repertory play, "Jacob's Ladder." The title is taken from Francis Thompson's delicate poem, "The Kingdom of God," with its poignantly local and personal allusions.

"But (when so sad thou canst not sadder)

Cry:—and upon thy so sore loss
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder
Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing
Cross."

David Maxton, "one of the three leading prose writers of England, and a poet of distinction," sentenced to death by medical specialists, has yet three months to live. He receives by medium of an old soldier in his company during the war a "message from the grave"—a message from the "spirit" of a man who was killed in action eight years previously. This supernatural communication has an extraordinary effect on his actions during the three months of grace, relieves him of anxiety about the future security of his wife and family, and enables him to complete an epic, a brilliant narrative poem of the war. Reference to the supernatural is made throughout the four acts, especially to an incident when Maxton stands in Whitehall on Armistice Day shoulder to shoulder through the silence with his friend, Captain Peter Blaseby, who has captured the affections of his wife.

"Great idea, you know—the two minutes silence," he says shortly before his death. "As a means of communication it is a big advance on Jacob's Ladder."

The cast includes Clem Christesen as David Maxton, Mary Gibson as Alethea, his wife, Olga Moore as Esther, his daughter, Robert Kelly as Peter Blaseby, Ludo Gordon as Mr. Dorrington, Shand Finlay as Lord Nevern, Tom McMinn as Tommy Whistler, and Sally Nicholson as Barnes the parlour-maid.

"Jacob's Ladder" will be produced by Miss Barbara Sisley for the Brisbane Repertory Theatre Society, at the Princess Theatre, on April 7 and 8.