

BEAUTY AND FORCE IN 'DRAGON'S CLAW'

**Stirring Dramatization of the
Defense Against the
Boxer Uprising.**

DONE WITH GREAT SKILL

**As Producer, Mr. Miller Has Given
Fine Expression to an Interesting
Play by Austin Strong.**

THE DRAGON'S CLAW. A play by Austin Strong, in three acts. New Amsterdam Theatre.

Wang.....Paul Everton
Paul Chanavas.....Frederic de Belleville
Katie.....Mabel Mortimer
Tung.....Robert Peyton Gibbs
Capt. Richard Deering.....Charles D. Waldron
Mrs. Richard Deering.....Gladys Hanson
Edward Barkley.....Lowell Sherman
Mrs. Anna Lambert.....Ida Waterman
Rev. F. D. Digwell.....Robert Conville
Col. Yakushima.....Robert Hudson
Sir Charles McPherson.....S. J. Warmington
Lady McPherson.....Madge Corcoran
Poole.....Harry Power
Dr. Velde.....Bertram Marburgh
Mrs. Ness.....Emmy Oswald

"The Dragon's Claw," the new play which came to the New Amsterdam Theatre last evening, is a dramatization of the defense against the Boxer uprising, which drew the eyes of the world to the Far East fourteen years ago. It is a dramatization of those hours of peril when the yellow men of the red sashes were rising throughout China, and the men and women from Europe and America were fighting for their lives from the walls of the bombarded legations. It converts to the uses of the theatre something of the suspense of those hours when the fate of the white folk within the walled city hung in the balance as the rescuing forces of the allies came marching from the coast.

The play is from the pen of Austin Strong, and to the many fine qualities of the manuscript, Henry Miller, as director, has brought a high intelligence to bear. A deal of thought and unreckoned hours of patient labor with the least of the details must be part of the history of a production so exceptionally satisfying. "The Dragon's Claw" is an interesting play, expertly presented.

There is a thrill in the thing, a continuous undercurrent of suspense that gives really remarkable force to the thrust of the scene which is reserved to bring down the final curtain of the play. The defense of the British legation has been stubborn and bitter, but it is dawn of the last day that the defenses can possibly hold. Many of the men are wounded. An exploded mine has torn an ugly hole in the wall of the compound, and the approaching daylight will show the Boxers without the weakness of the legation's position. None know what new peril is to be read into the sound of distant firing which has come at intervals since the first red of sunrise.

The women and children have been ordered to the cellars and what is left of the men is lined up before the hole in the wall with guns leveled for the last stand. They are a strange collection of Russians, Germans, English, and Japanese. An old Alsatian Army cook is in the forefront and a young West Pointer is leading them. It is under his command that the last stand is to be made. He has told them briefly what is before them, the positions are taken and then, over the indistinguishable hum of the advancing forces, sounds a bugle note. The oncoming host is no enemy, but the forces of relief. It is the message of the allies, the news of relief come in the nick of time. The effect is as old as the theatre, but it is and always will be electrical. And the curtain goes down with the beleaguered folk swarming cheering to the wall and over their heads and over that wall you see the tip of the American flag jogging along as the banners of the army of the allies are carried past the legation.

In its tug at those heart strings that are wont to respond to what is martial on the stage, anything more potent than this final scene does not come often in a theatrical year.

And "The Dragon's Claw" is largely martial. It is, in chief, a dramatization of the Boxer uprising. Here the horror of the ancient dragon aroused is protagonistic. Its thread of romance, its story of the Captain, the Captain's wife, and the other man is just a sub-plot—a sub-plot that reaches its climax at the close of the first act.

It runs a most tenuous thread through the events of the second act, and yet while it has the stage it possesses that heightened interest which it draws from the concentration of life in a legation. It gains that peculiar intensification which is gained by any story of Western folk told with the mystery and immensity of an alien people as its background as he knew best who staged so many of his romances under the deodars.

But the story of the Captain and the Captain's wife is made subordinate to the story of the siege. The second act is slow-paced, yet its measure suggests successfully the intolerable waiting which is the rôle of the besieged. It seems to have been the aim of both Mr. Strong and Mr. Miller to see that this act should picture faithfully the little, unremembered things of such an ordeal. It is as though the act recorded such observations as a sensitive witness might have recalled and told about long afterward. It is reportorial in its quality, almost entirely without dramatic force, and yet deeply interesting to watch.

That it is deeply interesting is in no small measure attributable to the infinite pains that have been taken in the staging. It has clearly been the producer's belief that no part was too small to be well played. The beauty of the settings is considerable, but it is in the entire and unusual adequacy of the cast that the production is remarkable. The very entrance of the guests gathering for the dance at the Captain's in the first act is an example of expert staging. It is worth studying as the achievement of something that must be difficult because it is usually so badly done.

There should be acknowledgments not only for the effective playing by Gladys Hanson and Charles D. Waldron, but for the exceptionally finished work done in lesser rôles by Frederic de Belleville and Ida Waterman. For doing just the right thing in still smaller parts, there must be appreciation for Robert Hudson, Bertram Marburgh, and Emmy Oswald—particularly Emmy Oswald. But the heartiest applause of all should be, and doubtless will be, reserved for Henry Miller.

MANAGER HELD FOR THEFT.

**Bundle He Said Was Soiled Linen
Found to Contain Furs.**

Joseph H. Roth of 60 West 117th Street, manager for Harry Berger & Co., dealers in furs at 48 West Thirty-eighth Street, was held in \$2,500 bail yesterday by Magistrate Marsh in the Yorkville Court on the charge of stealing furs worth \$5,000 from his employer.

Police Detective Phelan stopped Roth as he was leaving the shop with a bundle which Roth said was soiled linen. Detective Phelan examined the package and found furs.

Couldn't Remember Her Address.

A woman who gave her name as Mary Grogan, but who appeared unable to remember her address, was found wandering in South Ozone Park, Queens Borough, last night. She was sent to the Kings County Hospital, as both her memory and speech seemed to be impaired. The woman is 30 years old, 5 feet 4 inches in height, and weighs 130 pounds. She has auburn hair and blue eyes. There was a gold ring on her left hand in which was inscribed "J. M. G. to M. S. 7-1-14."