



SETTING BY NORMAN MAC-  
DERMOTT FOR "PRUNELLA"

THE ART OF THE THEATRE.—MR.  
NORMAN MACDERMOTT'S SET-  
TINGS.   ♦   ♦   ♦   ♦   ♦

THE signs that the æsthetic appetite of the people is slowly improving are manifold. Nowhere, perhaps, is this better seen than in its attitude towards the theatre. In spite of assertions to the contrary the public possesses a real, inborn instinct for drama, and it manifests this instinct in an unmistakable manner whenever given an opportunity.   ♦   ♦

Unfortunately, a great deal of the play-purveying has fallen into the hands of financial magnates and speculators to whom the theatre means nothing more than dividends. To them the matter of gate-money is the omnipotent factor, and the assertion by one of these gentlemen that he was out for "pure commercial gain" is as frank and simple a statement of his own attitude as it is expressive of the aims of quite a number of his confrères.   ♦   ♦

To combat the ordinary commercial interests where the balance-sheet plays the most important part, a company has been formed recently—The Everyman Theatre, Ltd.—which sets out to cure the theatre of

its present malady. It hopes to achieve its object by disregarding profit-making considerations and by establishing a theatre where the production of plays is to be regarded as a "communal effort to which every artist concerned contributes his talent and every member of the audience vitality." Such a theatre, the promoters contend, would not cost the immense sums that are continuously lavished upon the palatial playhouses, and could be run without financial loss. Whether this optimistic view is justified the future will tell, but æsthetically an organization with absolute faith in the works which it produces, and guided by the ideal to give expression to colour, vitality, and imagination in a form acceptable to modern minds should not fail to develop a character of its own and to have a fructifying influence upon the commercial theatre.   ♦   ♦   ♦   ♦

Ever since Gordon Craig began his struggles with the conventions of stage decoration the small group of his disciples has grown restless with higher impulses, eager to carry on his mission. Admitting their dependence on him for the creative life-blood he infused into the new movement, this little band of workers has steadily