

A Critic's Musings On "The Forgotten Factor"

TO be sent to a play such as Alan Thornhill's "The Forgotten Factor" offers a dramatic critic a really unique opportunity of making a fool of himself. I do not propose to take advantage of it. It is not always necessary for a critic to be critical, just as it is not always expedient to be wise. I feel rather, on this occasion, that I should indulge in one or two inward and outward musings—and those of you who have discovered the origin of my nom-de-plume in the Book of Tobit will realise that the situation is not without humour.

I suppose I am in duty bound to mention the play, and indicate what it was about. Well, for the sticklers, let us say that "The Forgotten Factor" is the story of a Labour dispute, its reaction in the homes of the Boss and the Labour Leader who is the conventional thorn in his side. The Boss is the type who Will Not Budge, and the Labour Leader is the type who Wants What He Wants—or Else. It is as simple as that.

Explosive

THE situation is explosive, and it explodes in two homes and in the factory, yet eventually all is well because "The Forgotten Factor"—God—is brought into the Capital-Labour equation. All very simple? Agreed, but all so devastatingly true; all so irritatingly, annoyingly true that it worries you into thinking. I said "annoyingly true" because it makes you think not so much about the mote in the other fellow's eye as about the beam in your own; a deucedly inconvenient handicap to anybody who wants to emulate the standard-recipe "Success Story" and step out 'way ahead.

The same cruel enemy, Pride, gripped both the Boss and the Labour Leader in the play. The Boss, anxious to show that

*"Hearts just as pure and fair
May beat in Belgrave Square
As in the lowly air
Of Seven Dials!"*

was nevertheless determined not to yield and so give the appearance of weakness. The Labour Leader was resolved to exact

Another when we walk along the Road to Emmaus. The greatest miracle of all, open to all, and operating ceaselessly every hour of every day, is that which occurs when a man casts out pride and takes one step towards the Forgotten Factor . . . True, the Churchman has known it all along.

"Everything"

FOUR amateur writers, 'way back, wrote a story which pointed a way of life. Their yarn (you can read it in the New Testament) has never been licked by any other writer, and you can take it from me that even in these demanding days the story has what the editors call "Everything".

But, as those at the back of the play emphasise in their little brochure, it is high time for everyone, men and nations, not only to listen but to act and to do something about it. If it is the world's only hope against materialism, it is at least a safe and shining hope.

Who were the players? I don't know. Their names are not given on the programme. The cast consists of men and women of many nationalities who give their services without salary. Let them rest content that they have done a good job.

I liked their choral singing, especially the theme song "The Good Road".

This hasn't been a conventional critique, I know, but I think the occasion is an unusual one, and I feel that it is fitting that the men and women who are so selflessly taking round the message of Moral Rearmament should be wished Godspeed on their journey by

AZARIAS.