

*A survey and  
study of the  
modern drama.*

Dr. Ludwig Lewisohn's "The Modern Drama" (Huebsch) is the logical successor of, though

it does not supersede, Dr. Archibald Henderson's "The Changing Drama." Dr. Lewisohn has paid less attention to the social, scientific, moral, and æsthetic causes underlying contemporary drama, and has shown us the change accomplished, so far as that is possible, rather than the process. It is the drama as literature with which he is chiefly concerned. His first chapter, on "The Foundations," begins with Ibsen, and is a rapid historical and critical treatment of the Scandinavian and French movements, including mention of the Théâtre Libre, the Freie Bühne, and the Independent Theatre. The succeeding chapters are entitled "The Realistic Drama in France," "The Naturalistic Drama in Germany," "The Renaissance of the English Drama," and "The Neo-Romantic Movement in the European Drama." At the end, for the convenience both of those who wish to make a serious study of drama and of those who wish merely to read profitably in a fascinating field, are a number of study lists, which group representative plays according to character (realism, etc.), subject

matter (social justice, sex, etc.), and structure (unities). The book concludes with a valuable critical bibliography. Dr. Lewisohn writes from the fulness of exact knowledge that might be expected, has the rare faculty of knowing what to leave out, possesses a rapid and easy style, and has the poetic gift of communicating delicate critical appreciations in the happy phrase. He covers the vast field (vast even without Italy, Spain, and Russia, which the reader will miss) without a heavy or uninteresting page. His criticism is exacting without being unsympathetic. If the reader sometimes feels that full justice has not been rendered the individual dramatist, he will probably detect the cause in the fact that Dr. Lewisohn sees all drama against the background of Hauptmann and naturalism. A certain liability to injustice must inhere in a book that includes such opposites as German naturalism and Irish neo-romanticism. Surely we may like both Hauptmann and Synge; but we can hardly like, as well as he deserves, either one in the presence of the other. Yet no one could ask for greater judicial temper in a critic than Dr. Lewisohn displays. Especial note should be taken of Dr. Lewisohn's opinion that under present conditions it is more important for American universities to train audiences than to attempt the production of dramatists. The student and general reader could do nothing more profitable than to use this book and Dr. Henderson's in connection with the twenty representative plays reprinted in Mr. Dickinson's "Chief Contemporary Dramatists." All of these books reflect the greatest credit upon American critical scholarship.