

GOSSIP OF THE THEATER

THE erudite librettist who contributed "The Fortune Teller" to the American stage a few years ago unconsciously foreshadowed the theatrical situation that confronts Washington's amusement seekers this week. It may be recalled that one of the many successful quips in that tuneful operetta described an adventure with the open door policy. The hero of the incident, if memory serves, was an energetic bird known to fame as "Enza." Its owner, with unpardonable carelessness, let down the barriers—"and in flew Enza." A similar consequence of recklessness is anticipated by the powers-that-be, who entertain the theory that the flight of the festive germ of like name may be most effectively handicapped by placing seals on the various playhouses and picture shrines in this city.

This curtailment of relaxation for war workers undoubtedly will be regarded as a serious deprivation by the thoughtless. It is regretted even by the liberty loan campaign conductors. And there can be no doubt about the attitude of the theatrical producers who know that the National Capital is the most profitable field of activity in the United States at the present time. Nevertheless, there are numerous advantages that attach to the closed door policy. Primarily, it simplifies the duties of this department. The physicians of the city seem unanimous in the belief that it will help put a swift end to the present annoying epidemic. There is a third, and very important, advantage in the campaign of precaution against the spread of Spanish influenza which deserves recognition.

All bulletins issued by the Health Department lay special stress on the importance of muffling the cough and smothering the sneeze. If this advice is carefully followed out and the inhabitants of this community can be thoroughly taught to stifle coughs and sneezes the lives of persistent playgoers will be made happier hereafter. A careful record, covering a period of a dozen or more years, will show that exactly 37 per cent of every audience have schooled themselves to sneeze or cough at precisely the psychologically wrong moment. These public pests hold back their paroxysms until the exact moment selected by the playwright for a phrase or a sentence of paramount importance. Since the Spanish-American war no Washington audience has been permitted to hear all the lines of an important play. If the existing, temporary ban on amusements will bring about a reform of the coughing and sneezing portion of the audience addicted to respiratory demonstration, then, indeed, may it be said that "sweet are the uses of adversity."

Julie Opp's Giant Task

Miss Collinge Moves Up

ALTHOUGH "Pollyanna," which she helped to make famous, still continues on its way, Patricia Collinge is all set to do her bit for another play which Klaw & Erlanger and George C. Tyler have in hand.

The piece which will enlist her services is a dramatization of a novel entitled "Tillie, a Menonite Maid." It will have its first performance in Wheeling, W. Va.

This new important venture which befalls Miss Collinge calls to mind the rapidity with which she has mounted the ladder of success. It doesn't seem so long ago that she was

playing the minor role of the flower girl in Thomas W. Ryley's hectic production of "The Queen of the Moulin Rouge."

Marguerite Lealle has been engaged by Charles Emerson Cook for a role in his production of the play, "Remnant," in which Florence Nash is to star. Miss Lealle will have the part acted in London by Hilda Moore.

The "Doughgirls," a unit made up of Rita Gould, Mignon McGligney and Dora Ronca, have called to entertain our soldiers in France under the auspices of America's Over There Theater League.

The Inspired Censor

SERGEANT DAVID PROCTOR'S hymn, entitled "The Kingdom of God," written for the soldiers, has just been passed by the English censor, and now the title page reads: "The Kingdom of God, Censored by Second Lieut. Joseph Probert, O. D."

A new A. H. Woods production to go into rehearsal immediately is that of a farce, called "Go Easy, Mabel," written by Wilson Collison. Walter Jones, John Cumberland and Hazel Dawn are already engaged for it. Miss Dawn's presence in "Go Easy, Mabel" is made possible by the interment of "Dolly of the Follies," in which she played the title roll.

Belwyn and Co., in conjunction with Arthur Byron, propose that a complimentary performance of "Tea for Three" will be given to the person making the largest single subscrip-

tion. The performance will be given at any time and place the winner may designate, providing it will not interfere with the regular performance of the play.

Guy Bates Post, accompanied by Thain Lawton, his leading woman, arrived in New York last week, after a summer spent in Australia, where, under the direction of J. and N. Tall, and Richard Walton Tully, his American manager, he appeared in "The Masquerader" and "The Nigger." Both pieces were so popular in the Antipodes that Mr. Post found it unnecessary to play in any cities but Melbourne and Sydney.

A letter from Malcolm G. Wilson, who has succeeded Louis Nethersole as Doris Keane's manager in London, brings word that at the Lyric Theater she is appearing now in "Roxanne," a play produced here by David Belasco under the title of "Nobody's