

## THE PASSING SHOW

WILLA CATHER

Every now and then a pretty incident occurs that quite surpasses the story teller's art. Such a one happened here a few weeks ago. Lizzie Hudson Collier is the leading woman of the Grand opera house stock company here. A mighty handsome leading woman she is, by the way, and an actress of most unusual talent and versatility. You can count on the fingers of one hand the other leading women of this country who are a match for her in all around work. She has been here now for three seasons and her life has been even more beautiful than her work. I think those of us who know her intimately sometimes fail to do complete justice to the actress, so much do we admire the woman. She is probably the most influential woman in this city of half-a-million souls. She has entered completely into our lives "and the deaths we died she has watched beside." I think nothing illustrates the power of her personality more forcibly than the attitude of young men toward her. Take the boys in our office, for instance. They are all good fellows and gentlemen but they all saw the black side of life too early and they have the reporter's cynical attitude toward actresses. Yet they always speak of this woman in the language of chivalry, as the knights of old spoke of women. They believe in her. And the god of such a belief cannot be estimated or measured. I could weary the most patient listener with instances of her goodness and tact and charm, and of course she is unconscious of it, she doesn't know that she is good. She simply has the high talent for living beautifully, and lives so. Such virtues, in so fair a setting, are a source of perpetual fragrance in the heart of this great, gloomy, jostling town, breathing perfume into the lives of thousands.

But now for the story: They were playing "Jane" at the Grand some weeks ago, and, as you remember, there is a baby in "Jane" that plays no inconspicuous part. Well on this occasion it was a wonderful baby, positively the best I ever saw on any stage. It was just a poor little waif from the slums with a stupid, half starved mother, who had a whole troupe of children and a husband out of work. Why such an attractive child should have been born into such misery and poverty is one of the ugly problems. It happens so every day. Well, she could act, this little thing of fourteen months. She didn't just lie blinking in Mrs. Collier's arms as the babies who have played in "Jane" aforetime. She sat up looking delightedly about her and kissed the leading man and shook hands with the comedian and flirted with the leader of the orchestra, and wanted to get over the footlights to examine his bald head. The louder the applause, the more interested she became. She demanded the center of the stage, and the brightest glare of the calcium, she was touchy about her cues and refused to have her "business" cut. The louder the applause, the more animated this infant became. She shook hands with the leading man, and kissed the leading juvenile, and made eyes at the conductor of the orchestra. Well, on one of those fearful cold nights when the weather man hung sinkers on the thermometer and the mercury dipped way below zero, Mrs. Collier discovered that this poor little waif lived somewhere down in the tenement district, and that its mother proposed to take her home, thinly clad as it was, through the biting cold. Mrs. Collier didn't do a thing but bundle the baby up and take it over to her room at the Hotel Duquesne and keep it all night. When

she arrived at 11:30, all dressed in black and carrying this unaccustomed burden through the snowy winter night, she looked for all the world like the betrayed and deserted heroine of a bluggy melodrama who returns to receive the paternal curse. The elevator boy naturally had a spasm when she entered, and the chambermaids stood aghast. As for the baby, it had a milk toddy and a hot bath and was wrapped in soft, silky things and tucked into the leading lady's bed, and was warmer and happier than it had ever been in its life before, and perhaps than it will ever be again. She has done many a pretty thing in her time, our leading lady, but she never did a prettier one than that.

Rosenthal has been with me again, that lion of the north, and Edward MacDowell in a concert of his own compositions, among them some of his wonderful "Ocean Studies," the result of his summer by the sea. He was here several days, but he and Ethelbert Nevin were together so constantly that one had small opportunity to see anything of either of them. It is an experience to see them together, those two men so absurdly young, so world famous, who stand for about all there is of American music. Two young emperors they are, a Caracalla and a Get who share an empire without strife. I made some such remark to Nevin the day after MacDowell left, but he threw out his hand with one of those quick, nervous gestures of his and answered: "No, he is the king of France, while I, I am only the king of Navarre."

Maude Adams and her production of "The Little Minister" are the talk of the town. Certainly Mr. Barrie's little play is a delightful one, full of quiet, poetic situations, quaint, natural comedy, and with a delightfully literary flavor about it. It is not at all a great play, but it is a mighty pretty one, well constructed, though it is so light, logically developed and perfectly sustained and abounding in deft, clean cut characterization. As for Miss Maude Adams, I wish I could admire her, people do seem to get so much pleasure out of it. There is no middle ground in the case of Miss Adams. Either she carries you all the way or she moves you not at all, and I have the misfortune to be without the charmed circle. To me, she is merely a clever ingenue, very unattractive to look at. Her perpetual "girlishness" bores me to extinction, and the nasal twang in her voice is unpardonable. In her self conscious primness, her artful artlessness, there is a fake note. There is something very cheap about her startled-fawn glances and her affectations of shyness when she is called before the curtain. She has been coming before the curtain for some ten years now, and it is quite absurd to assume this shrinking timidity. She knows well enough that the audience will not eat her. She is the only player in her excellent company who fails to contribute anything to the atmosphere of the piece. She does or says nothing to indicate that "Babbie" is Scotch at all, yet in the play she is not a gypsy, but Lord Rintoul's daughter masquerading. In the comedy scenes Miss Adams was unctuous and kittenish, but quite without humor. In the more serious scenes she was jerky and hysterical and insincere. Her winning ways do not compensate for her lack of imagination. In short, her work seems to me quite without finish, repose, distinction, flavor, charm. And as for temperament, Miss Adams has no more than a sucking dove, but offers in place of it a presumptuous artlessness. Girlishness and greatness are alliterative, but that is the only thing they have in common. The graces which charm in the drawing room are seldom effective either in

## SEND NO MONEY

WITH YOUR ORDER, cut this Ad. out and send to us, and we will send you OUR HIGH-GRADE BURDICK SEWING MACHINE by freight C. O. D., subject to examination. You can examine it at your nearest freight depot and if found perfectly satisfactory, exactly as represented, equal to machines others sell as high as \$250.00, and THE GREATEST BARGAIN YOU EVER HEARD OF, pay your freight agent Our Special Offer Price \$15.50 and freight charges. The machine weighs 130 pounds and the freight will average 75 cents for each 500 miles. GIVE IT THREE MONTHS TRIAL in your own home, and we will return your \$15.50 any day you are not satisfied. We sell different makes and grades of Sewing Machines at \$25.00, \$100.00, \$11.00, \$12.00 and up, all of which are fully described in Our Free Sewing Machine Catalogue, but \$15.50 for this 7-DRAWER BURDICK is the greatest value ever offered by any house. THE BURDICK has every modern improvement, every good point of every high-grade machine made, with the defects of none. Made by the best maker in America. SOLID OAK CABINET, BEST COVER. Latest 1898 Skeleton frame, piano polish, finest nickel drawer pulls, rests on 4 casters, ball bearing adjustable treadle, genuine Smyth iron stand, finest large high arm head made, positive four-motion feet, self threading vibrating shuttle, automatic bobbin winder, adjustable bearings, patent tension liberator, improved loose wheel, adjustable presser foot, improved shuttle carrier, patent needle bar, patent presser guard. GUARANTEED the lightest running, most durable and nearest noiseless machine made. Every known attachment is furnished and our Free Instruction Book tells just how anyone can run it and do either plain or any kind of fancy work. A 30-YEAR GUARANTEE is sent with every machine. IT COSTS YOU NOTHING \$40.00 to \$50.00, and then if convinced you are saving \$20.00 to \$35.00, pay your freight agent the \$15.50, WE TO RETURN YOUR \$15.50 if at any time within three months you say you are not satisfied. ORDER TO-DAY. DON'T DELAY. (Sears, Roebuck & Co. are thoroughly reliable.—Editor.) WRITE FOR FREE CATALOGUE. SEARS, ROEBUCK & CO., CHICAGO, ILL.



the study or the portrayal of human problems and passion; yet I know women of genius, splendidly gifted, the props and main-stays of our stage, who consider Miss Adams irresistible. Ah well, it is so in every girl's boarding school; you will always find some unattractive, putty-faced, back-achy, head-achy little minx, who never can get her lessons unaided, and about her you inevitably find a dozen fine, sound, clever girls who ask no greater bliss than to be her handmaidens and get her lessons for her and "do" her hair and clean her gloves and offer her violets and sighs. For if there is one thing strong people love better than another, it is being gullied by weak ones. In May, Miss Adams is to appear as Juliet in New York with a magnificent company, and I intend to go over and see her. A Juliet right out of the Elsie books, a Juliet well brought up and after Ruth Ashmore's own heart is not to be missed. It will be the greatest libel on William Shakespere that has ever been perpetrated in all the centuries. Yet this young woman is so popular and so idolized, that I am always half afraid it is an indication of some horrible moral depravity in me that I cannot admire her. In defense of my position I can only say that I think an actress ought to be able to act—a little.

### "CRACKED."

[HELEN C. HARWOOD.]

It's simply stifling here, my dear. Etouffant, I assure you. The rain kept up that steady drop, drop, drop, and through the rattling glass doors crept a chill breeze. "Ah, you do not think so? You Americans smother yourselves. Such an idea!" "Clemence, come poke the fire. Another briquette. L'Americaine is cold. Tenez c'est assez. That's enough. Poor old Zutro hobbled nearer the blue flicker which was making a desperate attempt to rally. He gave several approving sniffs, as with great difficulty he settled himself down once more. "Zutro is growing old, mon Dieu! I too, for that matter, but qu'est ce qu'on peut faire? What can one do?" "How is your friend that was here this afternoon?" "You mean that old thing, Madame Reblie?" "Yes, she has n't been here for a long time, has she?" "No, several weeks; but that's often enough. She is too old, my dear, frightfully old! She's not a bit interesting any more." "How old is she?" "Eighty one." "Oh!" Madame was seventy-eight. Zutro growled. "I wonder if my son is coming. I tell you, child, he is cracked; he certainly is." Monsieur Cribier, Madame's son, was a man of splendid education, extremely lazy, and one who had so drenched him-

self in pessimism that nothing in the world, be it ever so sweet and pure, but had its scar.

"Look at his head," continued Madame. "That's sufficient proof. A year ago he wore his hair long. Now, le voila. Behold him. Shaved. Preposterous! Not a spear of hair on his head! And walk, walk! He does nothing but walk all day long. I wish that he had some occupation. He might have made a journalist of himself. Dame, but I would n't object to trade."

"But, Madame, you are partly English. When he began to have these morbid ideas, why did n't you send him to a good boys' school in England, where they have athletics and healthy ideas. He's simply caught, in an extravagant form, the fashionable melancholia."

"Voyons donc, Mademoiselle. I am French, I assure you. English women have not any taste in dress. Didn't I marry a Frenchman? Wasn't my mother French?"

"Yes, but pardon, your father was English, and you were born and brought up in England. You know that you confess to have a fondness for the English tongue."

"That does not alter the case, mon enfant. I am French. My son is French. If he would only see his child again, but he simply won't. She's a pretty little thing, le petit chou. The sweetheart. You see he is fearful, if he knows her, that he may learn to care for her. And that is utterly contrary to all of his ideas."

"It's only a whim," I suggested. "O, no, no. His theory is, that every affection brings us grief sooner or later. He's cracked. He is."

Zutro arose, with a groan or two, and barked as vigorously as possible between coughs.

Monsieur entered. "I have walked since four o'clock, mother."

Jesus Maria! and it is ten now. "France is in a terrible condition—corruption—"

"Stop, Henri, stop. I won't hear a word of it."

"Well good night. O, by the way, I am going to Florence tomorrow."

"Oh, mon cher fils, to see your child?"

"No, no. Why do you continually bore me with her. I have told you time without number that I have a written certificate every week from the doctor to say that her health is good, and that she is well cared for. What more can I do? Of course I shall not see her. I am going to see my cat, Antonie."

As he disappeared, Madame tapped her head dubiously, murmuring while she lighted the candles for the night:

"Cracked, cracked, cracked. When I was a gal, men were not made so."

I hear that Spacer has given up journalism for the ministry.

Yes, he wants to get into a profession where he can libel people without being sued for it.

Subscribe for THE COURIER \$1 a year.