

**THE COURIER**

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*Behind the Footlights*

The many people who sit in front of the footlights, enchanted by the drama, with its music, lights, gowns and flowers, do not realize that there is an aftermath to it all. Unless one has been behind the scenes, they can scarcely imagine what transpires there. In the first place, there are several dressing rooms to the side or rear of the stage. If the company is a small one, each actor or actress, as the case may be, has one exclusively, but if the company is made up of many people one is apt to have all sorts of company.

The dimensions of dressing rooms vary in a marked degree, but the one the Courier representative had the pleasure of visiting was about seven feet square. One side was as a low shelf running the entire length of the room. In the middle was a looking glass, hung so that the bottom edge would rest on the shelf. It had a long, conspicuous crack in it, and for some reason or other, worked a transformation scene every time one looked into it. Then there was a wash stand in one corner with wash bowl and pitcher, and plenty of Turkish towels. This dressing room was visited at the close of a play given in Lincoln a few nights ago. The occupant, a leading lady, opened the door and asked, "Who is there?" and admitted the visitor, Miss — and a lady friend, at once. The actress had a maid with her, who, she explained, had just finished rubbing her with alcohol. "That is to prevent me from taking cold," she said. "That cream," and she pointed to a large tin box, that contained a white substance, "is what I rub on my face. I do not wash my make-up off, but simply rub this cream on, and then wipe it off on a towel. It is called theatrical cream. Did you ever notice that an actress usually has good skin? I think it is because they use so much cold cream."

Meanwhile the visitors had installed themselves on a small steamer trunk, and the actress was whisking into her clothes. The maid was folding up her gowns, and laying them on a chair.

"You see this is our last night and we have to pack everything. Isn't this dressing room awful? It is not half as bad as the one I once had in Evansville, Ind. We were to open an engagement there on Sunday night, but the theatre we had engaged didn't play on Sundays, so we had to take the

other opera house. The dressing rooms were all down cellar. That is, in the basement, and oh! but it was musty and damp. It gave me the creeps every time I went down there. We had a lovely room in Denver, didn't we, Nellie?"

Nellie, the maid, nodded her head, and went on packing.

"This is my robe I wore in the last act," she remarked, picking up a once white cashmere gown. "It's horribly dirty now," and she certainly told the truth, for it was quite soiled, although seen from the box, it had looked almost spotless.

By this time she had donned a shirt waist and a golf skirt, and was putting her collar on.

"I won't mind my belt, because I will have my jacket on, and it is only a little way to the hotel."

She was picking up pins, rings, and other little bits of jewelry, and dropping them into her little chatelaine bag.

"I carry a little bit of everything in here, and besides I need the pins when I dress in the morning. Don't you think I dress quickly? I learned that at boarding school. I was always too fond of my breakfast to miss

it. My pocketbook—where is it?" she asked, fumbling around in her grip. "Nellie sometimes forgets and packs it in the bottom of my trunk."

Search failed to reveal it, so she sat down on the floor, and unstrapped the little trunk that we had been sitting on.

"Yes, I have it," she said, laughing icterically, as she pulled it from a remote corner of the till. Then we started.

The stage hands were rolling up scenery, a few chorus girls sat around on boxes, laughing and talking, and the man who had distinguished himself as a hero in the play a few minutes ago, leaned against the wall, and puffed lazily at a cigarette.


One little chorus girl came out from a smaller dressing room than we had been in and said:

"Yes, I've just finished dressing and don't I look charming? There were only sixteen to dress in our room."

The theatre was dark except for the lights on the stage, and the air was chilly. The girls of the chorus or ballet were strolling off in pairs to their hotels, and the more prominent characters were jesting by themselves, as if this or that one had never been the character who had fainted so gracefully a few moments ago. The man

who was supposed to be dead, in the drama, was here and was very much alive. And thus they come from the make believe, back to the real life, and the play that charms and oftentimes deludes us, is only a myth, but the people, after all, are real and have their little trials and tribulations as well as the best of us.

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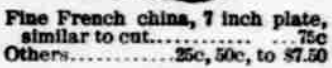
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