

# John Barrymore a Great "Richard"

**By BURNS MANTLE.**  
**NEW YORK.**—(Special Correspondence.)—Probably there were not 50 persons in the audience at the Plymouth theater the night John Barrymore made what he terms his "audience plunge" into the classics with "The Tragedy of Richard III," who would recognize a "great" Richard if they were to meet one. And yet all the talk the next day was of "great" Richards and "good" Richards and of the younger Barrymore's place among them.

The answer is simple. He is a great Richard, else he could not have held 1,800 persons in their seats until a quarter before 1 o'clock in the morning to see him play Richard. Not in this day of weekly blizzards, uncertain commutation and little interest in Shakespeare. He is a great Richard, too, in being a new Richard. He probably never saw the part played, and I doubt if he had much coaching from those who offered to help him. He is of a mind these days to do things in his own way. Thus he is unshackled by convention or tradition. He reads the text naturally and not unmusically, as it appeals to him, stressing with the enthusiasm of a boy who has discovered a new

ghost story the fiendish imaginings of hell's famous conspirator. He plays Richard with the same zest that, as a young cartoonist, he drew weirdly grotesque and fascinatingly misshapen humans. He extracts a certain joy from dragging the shortened leg, weighted with armor, in favoring the withered arm, and in bending forward, when the situation is right, so the crooked back may add its bulge to the picture. Occasionally, when the scene and the speech appeal to him he is apt to forget his deformities and to stand erect, defying all and sundry, not as the envenomed Pantagruel, but as himself, John Barrymore, Richard's most understanding friend. He fairly dotes on the scraggly black wig that changes completely his expression and the lines of his finely chiseled features.

He is not a strong Richard, in a physical sense. He could not have been a terror in the field, nor slain reasonably whole groups of his armored enemies. He is crafty, sinister, deceitful, subtle, and is careful to make it plain that from his quarrel with the fate that sent him into the world an ugly and a crippled thing is sprung his passion for power and the satisfaction of being

even with God by doing Satan's bidding. In humor he is not lacking and yet in his wooing of the widowed Ann, following close upon his murder of her husband and her father, which many Richards have played with obvious smirks at the audience, he is so earnest and so gentle in his pleading, the success of his suit becomes the more understandable, though the scene is made theatrically less effective. He is, not to use more space in saying so, a great Richard in being a fascinating Richard who by daring to be himself gives new life to an old tragedy that only such treatment could successfully revive for this particular generation of playgoers.

In the version of the tragedy that has been patched together for Mr. Barrymore's use, five scenes are taken from the preceding play of "King Henry VI." They are used as a sort of sketchy prologue, with the hope, no doubt, of clarifying for a modern audience the situation as it affected the houses of Lancaster and York at the moment of Richard's determination to cleave his way to the throne. Thus a couple of slightly murders (those of Henry and Edward) are added to the entertainment, Edward being slain on the field of Tewkesbury and Henry in an iron cage in the tower. This version also permits the use of the little known but informative soliloquy beginning, "Would he (Edward IV) were wasted, marrow bones and all, that from his loins no hopeful branch may spring to cross me from the golden time I hope for."

In general, however, the added scenes complicate with new characters and obscuring speeches as much as they clear up the story, and add little that the older acting versions, which employed but one, or at most two, of the scenes from "Henry VI," did not contain. After the first act the tragedy proper is played, the action around Richard exclusively. Let the classicists quarrel as to whether or not they were wisely made.

The cast is mostly English and thoroughly competent. It includes Leslie Palmer as Buckingham, E. J. Ballantine as Clarence, Arthur Row as King Henry, Reginald Denry as Edward, Mrs. Thomas Wise as the Duchess of York, Evelyn Hall as Elizabeth, Helen Robbins as Anne, and Stanley Warrington as Catesby. Robert Edmund Jones' settings are impressive in both the simplicity of the inner scenes and the massiveness of the tower. At the end of the second act Ethel and Lionel Barrymore and John Drew took their places in an upper box and the happy audience applauded them.

In Percy Mackaye's "George Washington" we first meet "the man who made us," which is the author's subtitle, when he was a farmer lad at Mount Vernon and just after he had completed a particularly good job of surveying Lord Fairfax's acres. He is then a busy boy of 23 and much interested in scientific farming. More interested in farming, in fact, than he is in the girls, who already are beginning to irritate him. To avoid them he slips off and marries the widow Custis and brings her home as Martha Washington. And that is the first act.

Next we discover the "Liberty Boys" becoming active. A group of them surround King's (now Colum-

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**PATHE WEEKLY**

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## It's the Cook That Has the Heart Appeal

**FRANCES STARR** who plays the part of Sally, the engaging cook, in Capt. Edward Knoblock's remarkable sex drama, "Tiger! Tiger!" which will be seen at the Brandeis this week, has opinions quite as convincing as Meredith who long ago avowed "civilized man can't live without cooks."

"In choosing a cook as the hero of his piece," the star of the play said recently, "the playwright chose the primitive woman, and the kitchen of today comes nearer being the background of such a type than any place in the modern home. In fact it seems to me that the kitchen is now the one and only place in the home where woman is absolutely and always her true self. There she reverts to type and one sees her as she is without any of the externals that mean so much to a woman—only because she thinks they mean so much to a man."

"The kitchen in a house it seems to me, is somehow its heart—its throbbing, beating center of activity. We can live without drawing rooms and libraries, without boudoirs and dressing rooms, even at a pinch we can make-shift somehow for a bedroom, but there must be a kitchen if it is to be a home."

"There never was a real woman," Frances Starr continued, "who wasn't at heart a cook. It is the woman nature to wish to minister to man, and food in this life is the first necessity to man's happiness and well being."

"Again if Sally had been a stenographer, or say a bookkeeper, the play could never have happened. Knoblock knew his types. He knew the appeal that the healthy and splendid vitality of the country girl made to the blasé man of the town. He was sick of mentality. Fed up on theories, and consequently a victim marked for the first all-female primitive woman who crossed his path—and of course the affair was all the more inevitable when the man in the case met her in the spring moonlight, near where lilacs were in bloom."

"I worked longest on my make-up for the part," Miss Starr said. "The blonde hair is not my own 'touched up' as many seem to think. It is a golden yell. It makes me rounder, more mature. And that is my idea of Sally. She is nearest like 'Jess' and she comes from that part of the country. I have tried to create the illusion of a woman fashioned of Devonshire-clotted cream and strawberries, warm with do so with pride, 3,000 of the faithful troops are left 'naked and starving' the winter through."

But here the light begins to shine with the arrival of Lafayette and the promise of aid from overseas, and next scene we are at the edge of Yorktown with Washington, Knox and Colonel Nicola describing the bombardment that finally flashes, white and blue to indicate a victory won. And lastly we are taken back to Mount Vernon, where the fighter who would be fighting returns, to Martha and the sycamores.

It is not on the whole, an impressive spectacle. The poet Mackaye has labored earnestly and brought forth a masque for children and patriotic holidays that misses the holding quality of drama. It serves to humanize and creditably to visualize the father of his country and there are moments when it flares with the inspiration of great historical moments. But generally it is crude and choppy and does not compare with John Drinkwater's drama of "Abraham Lincoln."

Walter Hampden is a human and at times an eloquent Washington and the supporting cast is competent without being distinguished. George Marion reads the interludes sensibly, but his effort singing the folk songs is a little painful.

**Aviator Smith Plans Flight Around World**  
 London, March 13.—Sir Ross Smith, who was knighted for his flight around the world, says a Melbourne cable. He thinks the trip can be made in 70 days.

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