

# The Passing Show.

WILLA CATHER.

The New York papers are still rejoicing over Olive May's return to the stage in "The White Heather." Now as Miss May, or, to use her married name, Mrs. Henry Guy Carleton, hails from Beatrice, Nebr., Lincoln people ought to be proud of her success. She is an exceedingly popular woman in this part of the country. Even the sedate and conservative critic of *Harper's Weekly* expresses his pleasure in seeing her again behind the footlights. The New York *Sun* remarks:

"Miss Olive May had a part that might have been written for her as saucy Lady Molly Fanshaw, who is a little bit stage struck and who thinks she looks nice in bloomers, and does."

While "Alan Dale," that captious critic, says:

"Battersea Park makes its debut in the third act, with bicycles supplied by—well, why should I advertise the firm? In this act Mr. Francis Carlye, the dapper yet portly villain, introduces a real novelty by entering upon a bicycle, and dismounting with considerable difficulty. Miss Olive May is also enabled to desport a cunning suit of blouche Parisian bloomers, cut rather saucy, and to deliberately pedal herself into the view of the audience. Miss Rose Coghlan—star of the evening, beautiful star—is also pushed on a tandem, with a lordly looking gentleman at the back. Miss Olive May, in the bloomer costume, was almost aggressively "cute," but she is a clever little woman, and it is good to welcome her back."

I can well imagine Mrs. Carleton in a bicycle play, and I can well imagine her gaily dismounting and ringing her bell in the presence of a large and appreciative audience. You see Alan doesn't say she rings her bell, but I know well enough that she does. How Beatrice people used to listen for the tinkle of that bell a few summers ago! And now "Greater New York" listens for it with the same eagerness. Well, no one can be more sincerely glad of Mrs. Carleton's renewed success than I, and I hope "The White Heather" will deign to blossom in Pittsburg before the winter is old. My wheel has met Mrs. Carleton's before and will be glad to renew the acquaintance. With the consent of Mrs. Carleton's wheel they shall take a good long spin out over the Schenley Park hills and maybe try a scorch or two, and if Mrs. Carleton is as pretty as ever it may be wise to take one of the bicycle police along to clear the way.

Well, William Gillette is in town with "Secret Service," which is called the great American war play. I am sorry that I cannot agree to that, but it does not seem a great play to me. It is, however, an almost preter-naturally clever one. Dumas said only one thing was necessary to a great play—a great passion. I think Ibsen has extended that definition to a great passion or a great truth. Pinero, on the other hand, claims that only a great problem is essential. One thing is certain, if a play is truly great, if it appeals to those higher sensibilities which are only roused by the *fortissimo* passages of life, if it is to move one like poetry or music, it must have at least one character who is submerged, absorbed by and identified with some great emotion or purpose. This is exactly what "Secret Service" lacks. While you are seated in the theatre the play carries you with it every moment. You feel just as William Gillette wants you to feel and have no chance of escape. But you carry very little away with you. When you get home you

wonder how you were "worked" so completely. You realize that the hero was a spy, the heroine little better than a traitor, the situations as impossible as they were effective. In carrying such a play through successfully Gillette evinces marvellous skill, but scarcely art. Art vanquishes by means of the truth, skill seduces without it. The greatness of a great artist is his mastery of truth, which is like the great Bow of Odysseus, responsive only to the touch of giants.

...  
Ceasing to lay the burdens and requirements of a masterpiece upon "Secret Service," one may regard it in its proper place, as a wonderfully clever and interesting production. One singular feature of the play is that the entire four acts are supposed to occur in a single evening, which is almost getting back to the dramatic unities again. The whole thing is an evening in the life of a member of the Union secret service.

The most unusual feature of the play is that it makes no appeal to the gallery through cheap patriotic sentiment. The stars and stripes do not appear and there are but two Union soldiers on the stage, and they wear gray uniforms. It is the fairest and most impartial war drama that has yet been written. I can say that gladly. The scene is laid in Richmond during the siege, and half the charm of the piece is the attempt to incidentally paint the life in that royal capitol of the Old South. When you see those fiery gentlemen, with hair cut like Edgar Allen Poe's and crush collars and Byronic neckties and frock coats of other days, it seems as though all the family portraits had come to life. Then, when the bands begin playing "Dixie," you feel in the atmosphere, so to speak.

The first act of the play is laid in General Varney's home in Richmond. Captain Edward Thorn, a Union soldier, has, by forging papers from Jackson just after Jackson's death in the Wilderness, entered the Varney household as a wounded Confederate officer, stolen the love of General Varney's daughter and the secrets of the Confederate war department. Rather dirty business for a hero, one must admit. But Captain Thorn had a conscience if only a rudimentary one, and on this particular evening he has become disgusted with his role and is preparing to leave Richmond. Miss Varney, who naturally does not want him to go, has heard of his intention and has called on President Davis and secured for him a position at the head of the Confederate telegraph department. When he calls to say good-bye she tells him she has a commission for him which will keep him in Richmond and he refuses to accept any commission which will detain him. They quit the scene and Mrs. Varney enters in wild excitement, accompanied by Benton Arrexford, a discarded lover of Miss Varney's who has entered the Confederate secret service and who has a clue to Captain Thorn's identity. He states that he knows that Thorn is a Federal spy, that his brother is in Libby prison and has given papers to one of the Varney negroes to be delivered to Thorn. The old servant is brought in and searched and the paper is found. Perhaps it never occurred to Mr. Gillette how impossible it would have

When you Mention the Name

# SHAW,

you indicate the ACME of PIANO PERFECTION.



When other dealers offer you theirs for less money than that for which you

can buy the SHAW. Remember that they do it because they can. Why? Simply because their pianos are poorer in quality and cost less, their statements to the contrary notwithstanding.

Also remember that we have other GOOD pianos that we can sell you for less money. The very best values for the price to be had in the American market.

We also sell the Celebrated Washburn Mandolins and Guitars. Why not buy a Piano, Guitar or Mandolin for that Xmas present you are thinking about.

And then don't forget that the place to buy anything in the musical line and buy it right, is at the warerooms of



# THE MATTHEWS PIANO CO.,

Western Representatives, 130 So 13th st.

been to have seduced one of the old servants of a Richmond family to treachery. Well, after the paper is found Miss Varney is called in and she refuses to believe anything against Thorn until his brother is brought up from Libby and she has seen their recognition. She is induced to engage Thorn in a *tete-a-tete* until the prisoner is brought, in other words, to allow him, almost compel him to make love to her until the plot for his betrayal is consummated. She does so. At a given signal she leaves him alone in the parlor and watches him from behind the curtains with the rest. A corporal rushes in and tells Thorn that an escaped prisoner is in the house and to watch for him. In a few moments his brother Henry enters. Both men know they are being watched. Thorn springs upon the escaped prisoner and while they wrestle they exchange a few words. One of them must die; there is only room for one of them in the world. Henry asks his brother to shoot him. Thorn whispers, "No, me; quick!" Henry catches his pistol and shoots himself through the temple and falls. Thorn catches the weapon from his hand; at the sound of the report the family rushes in and the lights are turned up. Thorn is standing over the body of his brother, the smoking pistol in his hand; he says calmly: "Corporal, there is your prisoner." The curtain drops only to raise eight or nine times to the thundering encores. It is an atrociously impossible situation, but it gets there. I suppose it is only that stony Gillette calmness that saves it

...  
Next comes the third act, the best, as it always should be. The scene is laid in the office of the Confederate war department of telegraph in the capitol at Richmond. The stage settings are excellent. Out of the big windows you can see the lights of Richmond for miles and miles. In the office three telegraph instruments

THE  
Princess of Wales

is the name of the latest style of . . .

# UMBRELLA

A large assortment of these, as well as Gentlemen's Umbrellas and Canes, are included in our stock of Holiday Goods.

Ladies' Jackets made to order, and Gentlemen's Fine Tailoring . . .

# BUMSTEAD & TUTTLE

1141 O Street.