

**Music and
The Drama**

TALK OF THE THEATRE.

Lily Langtry has rejected Cecil Raleigh's Queen of Society.

The attempt of Catherine A. Hudleston to secure some of the fortune left by the late Alvin Joslyn has failed.

Actor (Who has been seeking an engagement)—Well, I've got to live.

Manager—Not necessarily.

Bram Stoker, who is Sir Henry Irving's personal representative, positively denies that Miss Terry is to retire from the stage at the end of this American tour.

Thirteen year old Marjorie Murray has now played Cissie, in an English production of the Silver King, close upon 700 nights, without being out of the bill once.

Mathilde Cottrelly and Mrs. M. Kee Rankin have been engaged by Charles Frohman for Annie Russell's company for the production of Mr. Clyde Fitch's play, The Girl and the Judge.

Lulu Glaser and Strange and Edwards opera, Dilly Varden, have found a New York date, though it is not until after the holidays. This attraction is reported to follow Mansfield at the Herald Square.

It is observed by critics that the subject matter of The Bonnie Brier Bush is similar to the material used in Hazel Kirke, and it is significant, when the success of the earlier play is recalled, that the same writers generally concede that The Bonnie Brier Bush is much the stronger play of the two—stronger in heart interest and stronger in comedy.

Frank Daniels in Kirke L. Shelle's latest musical production, Miss Simplicity, took \$11,108 at the Grand Opera House, Chicago, on its opening week, and the critics agreed that no musical piece that had been known there in years had so completely captured the town. The three weeks engagement bids fair to be the record for the house during the entire season as the advance sale is enormous.

New York Times: Mme. Nordica has little patience with persons who are too easily discouraged. During a recent stay in America she kindly offered to give an hour each day to a young kinswoman who had a promising voice. Eleven o'clock was the hour set for the lesson. One day the young singer failed to appear. Mme. Nordica met her later and asked her why she had not come to take the lesson. The kinswoman replied that it was too hot for her to work. 'Hot!' exclaimed the singer. 'my dear if you expect to rise to the top you'll find it hot all the way up.'

New York Times: The other day a friend was telling Miss Ethel Barrymore that Joseph Jefferson had expressed himself as delighted with the success which she had made as a star and that he had said it seemed only a few months ago that she had been running about his place by the sea, a madcap little girl. 'Did he say that I used to sit on his knee?' 'No, I don't think that he did.' 'I'm glad of that,' said Miss Barrymore. Almost every one of the distinguished old actors has told me that. It ever I get old enough and important enough to write my memoirs, I'm going to name the book, 'Knees I Have Sat Upon.'

Reginald de Koven and Harry B. Smith seem to be as prolific in producing operas as were Gilbert and Sullivan. Their latest effort is the rather daring experiment of a sequel to their most popular work, 'Robin Hood.' It obtained a very favourable reception at its premiere the other day in Philadelphia. The story runs that Robin Hood has joined the Crusaders on the eve of his marriage to Maid Marian. The Sheriff of Nottingham leads her to believe that her betrothed is unfaithful, and tries to seize his estates. But Robin Hood's friends, disbelieving the story of his perfidy, agree to seek him out, and Maid Marian accompanies them on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where she is captured by a Saracen band led by the sheriff, who has followed her to Palestine. An amusing incident of the second act is the sheriff's attempt to establish a barem. In one lot that he buys for this purpose is Friar Tuck, who has been going about disguised as a houri. Through the scheming of the sheriff Robin Hood's loyalty is questioned and his estates are forfeited to the Crown. In the third act the sheriff and Guy of Gisbourne are making merry over Robin Hood's downfall in the banquet hall of Huntingden Castle when the doughty forestier himself bursts in upon them with his comrades, and, in the end, the sheriff is banished, while Robin Hood is wedded to Maid Marian in the old baronial hall on Christmas Day. The

Continued on page seven.

Continued From Page Two.

farmer's figure could be seen upon the floor wrestling with a younger and more agile one—that of a bearded ruffian, revealed by the moonlight which flooded this side of the house.

The girl rushed upon the scene without a thought of her own danger, and her entry was greeted by the old farmer with a gasp of relief.

'Hi, Kitty, girl, get the stick from the corner!' he exclaimed, hanging on to his assailant's throat with hands which his life's work had rendered muscular and sinewy.

His noise dashed to a corner by the fire-place and seized hold of a heavy blackthorn walking-stick which was almost a bludgeon and had a loaded handle, that, when well-managed in a strong countryman's grip, could work havoc.

The farmer sneered at defences such as pistols or revolvers; in his lonely walks, rides, or drives, he carried nothing but this blackthorn stick, and swore by it, and when Kitty, with the swiftness of lightning, pushed it between him and the burglar, the old fellow took a sharp grasp of it, and prepared to bring it down upon his assailant's head.

But he had a tough customer to deal with, and a desperate, hardened ruffian to boot.

The man was struggling violently. Kitty, anxious to assist her uncle, and reckless of anything else, threw himself down by them and seized the intruder's right arm, hanging upon it with all her strength and weight.

He turned his head to her with a brutal imprecation, and it seemed to Kitty somehow, as she saw his face close to her, and clearly revealed by the moonlight, that it was familiar in some way.

She felt she knew how things stood. The window, which looked upon the back, was wide open.

The man had entered by this means, first, perhaps, cutting an opening for his fingers, and then proceeding to draw up the sash.

The money was kept in a cupboard by the fire place; he had probably been on his way to this cupboard, when the farmer had awakened and sprung upon him, for there was no sign of the bag or its contents to be seen, and they were still doubtless reposing in their hiding-place.

The man was becoming exhausted with his fierce efforts, when the room was darkened by a sudden shadow from the window, and Kitty turned, to see, with despair, a second form upon the sill.

The burglar in her grasp had perceived the darkening of the chamber also, and guessing its meaning, called out in a voice of hoarse elation to his comrade—

'Ay, blaze away, Joe!—this side first!' In instinctive terror at the words, Kitty twisted round sharply, and then her lips parted, her face blanched, and her fingers relaxed their clasp.

What was it she saw.

Whose features were those that were looking in upon her from the window? Great heavens, who was it?

Not Reggie?—in mercy, not Reggie Caloney, her lover?

Yes—it was Caloney!

He was half in and half out of the casement, with a revolver levelled directly at the writhing, wrestling group in the centre of the apartment.

Kitty sprang to her feet, and throwing out her arms, staggered towards him madly.

'Reggie, Reggie, it is I—Kitty!' she shrieked.

The miscreant at the window looked into her eyes in the moonlight, his own gleaming.

'Curse you, yes! I know it's you!' he made answer; and, altering the position of his weapon, he pointed it directly at her and pulled the trigger.

With one faint cry she fell to the floor, with the blood gushing from her breast.

The man then fired again into the room, but by this time the ruffian who had been struggling with the old man, had burst away from him, and, wasting no time upon revenge, scrambled through the open casement after his companion, who had dis appeared.

All was done with the ease, agility, and despatch of practised performers.

In less than two minutes the coast was clear.

The quiet lone yards, and outbuildings lay sleeping peacefully beneath the moon; and all would have been very much as it had been, had not the farmer's cupboard been empty, and Kitty lying unconscious on the floor.

Kitty came back to herself four hours later, when the hands of the clock in the room where she lay were pointing to seven.

She was bandaged and muffled and swathed very firmly and inconveniently, and she felt very dazed and weak and

queer.

Jenny, a stout maid, was sitting by her bed with an intent and watchful look, and when Kitty's eyes alighted upon her, after a wandering glance round the familiar chamber, the girl, who had been left as nurse, produced some reviving mixture, and held it to her lips in silence, shook her head when her young mistress attempted to question her, and continued this treatment faithfully during the morning—

for most of it was spent by Kitty in dozing fitfully, and she was too weak to attempt to set up her will against Jenny's when she awoke for a moment or two at a time, not being quite strong enough to recall the dreadful incidents of the night with any clearness.

In the afternoon she was conscious that her aunt, who looked a tottering shadow of herself, had taken Jenny's place; but in evening and during the night she was in a fever, with her temperature at an abnormal height, and knew nothing. And so a week passed, and her condition was causing great anxiety in the quiet old house, the affairs of which were always conducted with the regularity of clockwork, but were now utterly deranged by the startling event that had happened.

When Kitty first awoke with a clear remembrance of all that had taken place her aunt was beside her, and at the sound of her faint, conscious cry was on her feet and bending over her in a moment.

Kitty looked up into the kindly old face, with tears in her eyes.

She could see in a moment that the old lady had passed through a most anxious and trying time, and the realization that she herself had been the cause of it all was very bitter to her sensitive nature.

'Thank Heaven, darling!' her aunt fervently ejaculated. 'You are yourself again.'

Kitty felt a sob rise in her throat and tried to stifle it.

She knew she was anything but herself again, and that never more would she be the gay, light-hearted Kitty of other days.

Mrs. Wood gently stroked the hair back from her niece's forehead.

'You must cheer up, my dear,' she said soothingly. 'All's well that ends well, and things might have been a great deal worse than they are. You are still very weak, of course, but we shall soon have you up and about once more.'

'Yes—yes,' said Kitty, with tremulous lips and eyes that were still tear-filled; 'but—'

She stopped.

She felt she could not utter the words that were on her tongue.

And yet there was so much she wanted to know.

'What is it, darling?' her aunt gently queried. 'You remember all about that dreadful night, do you not?'

Kitty shuddered, and again her lips quivered pitifully.

She strove to speak, but the old lady broke in upon her.

'Yes, my dear, I see you know all about it. Well, you're all right, and we've all come out of it safely now, thank Heaven! Your wound was not in a dangerous place—just up near the shoulder; but it was loss of blood that made it so bad for you. There you were, lying there, and the doctor not coming till I don't know what time, with the servants frightened to stir out of the house.'

'But uncle—what became of uncle?' interrupted Kitty.

There was a dark horror in her eyes, as if she saw visions that froze the blood in her veins.

'Oh! he is quite unhurt, love—quite well. He was only bruised and sore; it was I who got the shaking and the shock. Yes, I've been far from well myself all this time; but, thank goodness, they're got the villains! Captured them the other night in Liverpool, and now we know the whole truth about them. One of them left his false beard behind him, and your uncle and the police got it out of the japonica bush that climbs up the wall so it was a sort of clue.'

Kitty lay with her hands pressed over her eyes.

'Perhaps I'm talking too much to you,' exclaimed her aunt dubiously; 'but the doctor said you'd be able to talk about it as soon as you remembered anything clearly, and I suppose you do now?'

'I remember everything—only too clearly,' murmured the girl.

'You look very bad,' exclaimed Mrs. Wood. 'I won't speak another word until you've had this to eat and drink,' and she began to feed her industriously, while Kitty thought, and her meditations were bitter.

'Yes, the rogues were caught, and they are committed for trial; and they're old hands at the business,' continued Mrs. Wood, in a tone of placid, gossipy enjoyment. 'But, oh! my poor dear child, how hard it was for that Joseph Thomas to

have pretended to be a friend of yours and Julia's, how wicked of him, the villain! He—'

'Aunt Milly don't!' cried Kitty, in a low, sharp tone of pain.

'After a moment or two she reached out her hand, and whispered—'

'You don't know the truth of the matter. You are pitying me when I don't need it—I mean I don't deserve pity. I have deceived you all. I have kept a long story from you, who were my best friends. It is through me that all this shock and trouble has come upon us all.'

And then in a voice trembling with grief and shame, the whole tale was poured into the amazed and shocked, but sympathetic old aunt, who forbore to utter any reproaches, but digested the history with bitter comments.

'A poor innocent country girl just taken in by one of those swell mob-men,' she ejaculated. 'Could he not be satisfied without bringing trouble into a quiet, well conducted house, and finished his rascally work by attempted murder! Yes, he will get it hot, my dear! Don't you think any more about him, now,' as Kitty shrank back hastily at the words, and grew paler than she had been before.

'We were all deceived in him, as well as you. Mrs. Symes, over at Greatover, who lives in that row of cottages near the church, had him for a lodger for the week, and she was taken in completely by his grand tales, and took him for somebody above everybody else, common thief as he is!'

'What your uncle's state of mind is about it, I leave you to guess! The money had been taken through the window before he was awakened and jumped up to fight with the wretch who left his beard behind him, and who goes by the name of Percival Spley, but except for the loss of the money, and the loss of his temper ever since, he's none the worse, thank goodness; and now we shall soon have you about again, my dear, and then everything will be all right.'

But Kitty, as she lay and listened, felt that it would never be all right with her again, for she had had a lesson that had embittered her life.

CHAPTER VI.

'You are very down, Kitty. I wish I could do something to cheer you up a little,' said Jim Delamere to her when she was convalescent, and sitting out in the garden among the bees and the flowers.

'You can't Jim. I've made a muddle of my life just at the beginning, and I don't believe I shall ever be the same girl again,' replied Kitty.

'Now, don't tell me you're fretting about that scoundrel,' he exclaimed, a little out of patience with what struck him as such a palpable want of common-sense.

'It isn't only that—it's everything!' she returned. 'I know I'm a laughing-stock in the place after all this coming out at the trial, and—and I know, although he doesn't say much about it, that Uncle John has very little opinion of me now. He thinks me a sort of credulous, sentimental fool, Jim, and that I'm not to be trusted, and—and it's all a miserable business.'

Kitty looked very depressed, as she sat facing the young man.

Her old spirits had quite deserted her. It was a month since Joe Thomas, the man who had so deceived her, had been sentenced to five years penal servitude, but the nine days wonder had continued in Northford, and had not died away yet.

It was such an interesting case for the gossips—how pretty Kitty Wood had taken a low, rascally thief for a polished gentleman, had been quite deceived into thinking the thin veneer that he had managed to spread over his manners and appearance the true hull-mark, and had imagined she would make a grand match with a burglar, who turned and shot at her when she discovered him breaking into her uncle's house.

Kitty was a sensitive, refined girl, and had grown to dread the idea of facing the neighbourhood.

And then what weighed upon her also was her conduct to her natural guardians, which she now saw in its true lights—her ingratitude and want of confidence in them which she could see, in spite of their efforts to hide it, had wounded and surprised them exceedingly.

She felt miserably ashamed and downcast, and her heart ached also that she had been deceived in her lover, whom she had credited with every good quality, and whose behaviour she had excused, as well as her own, under the plea of 'exceptional circumstances'—a plea which, at heart, she had known all along ought not to have excused her deceit or the young man's conduct.

She knew people felt she had behaved very badly, and she was not surprised; but she felt very lonely and very sad, and as Jim looked at her pale, little, downcast countenance a wave of tenderness swept over him.

'Kitty,' he said, 'I'm sure you've really got over your feeling for that fellow, and are only cherishing a sentimental regret. Forget it. Say to yourself, determinedly, that you'll think no more about it, and turn to me—yes—firmly, as he caught her astonished glance—if you try hard to think of somebody else you'll overcome all this, Kitty, and whom should you turn to if not to me, who have loved you so long?'

'What nonsense!' she exclaimed, rising from her chair, with a vexed face. 'And it is very bad taste on your part to talk to

me so, Jim; you know that.'

'I don't know it,' he returned. 'Why should it be bad taste? If you engaged yourself to me, it would give you something fresh to think about, and it would carry off the awkwardness you feel about meeting people, so that you could defy their pity or their harsh strictures, or whatever it is you fear. Yes, I am only talking plain, downright sense, so you needn't stare at me so scornfully.'

'I wonder you bother to talk to me like this, when you know perfectly well my heart was given to—to—' began Kitty indignantly.

'Poo! your heart was never given at all, Kitty dear. The handsome villain captured your girlish fancy, and gratified your vanity by paying you attention. But I don't believe—'

'I don't care what you believe, and you are very unkind,' interrupted Kitty, walking away in a huff.

She wanted condolences and commiseration.

She did not at all like to hear what she thought her deep, intense, and passionate love for the man she had met at Tor Bay called a 'girlish fancy,' which had already melted away in a common-place manner.

She knew she had been mistaken in him, but she did not care to have all the romance snatched away from the feeling she had borne for him, and she said to herself that she would treat Jim Delamere very coldly the next time she met him, just to show him what value she attached to both his advice and his opinion.

But to her surprise, and, perhaps, rather to her displeasure, she had no opportunity afforded her for a very long time of treating the young fellow either coldly or warmly, for two months passed without her catching a glimpse of him; and then she heard one day from an acquaintance that he was staying at Torquay, and that she—the acquaintance—understood he was going to remain there for the winter.

Now, though Miss Wood had no thought to spare for Jim Delamere, it must be owned that she did not approve of this action of his, and that, in fact, she felt some resentment concerning it.

In the first place, he had not called formally at the farm to bid them 'Good-bye,' nor, in fact, had mentioned his strange—yes, strange—intention to her at all at any time.

Then she had been unhappy, and out of humour with the world, and he had not stayed to try to comfort her, and, in fact, had deserted her, that was what it came to.

Of course, it was nothing to her—she did not care in the least—but she could never think it the action of a friend, or even of a man, and she should never attempt to.

Kitty was really put out, and tossed her head whenever his name was mentioned.

But, indeed she had had a wretched and depressing autumn and her thoughts were very sad.

People said the foolish business had changed her very much.

She was quiet and thoughtful, and when her Aunt Julia sent to ask her to spend Christmas with her, she declined with a shudder.

Just before Christmas Jim Delamere suddenly returned, as suddenly as he had departed.

Kitty met him quite unexpectedly at the decorating of the schoolrooms for the winter concert, and she was more astonished at the unaccountable bounding of her heart than at the sight of his bronzed, open face, and grey, honest eyes.

She would have gone up and, burying the hatchet, greeted him as became an old friend to meet another, when, seemingly unaware of her proximity, he quietly walked off with her bosom-companion, Nelly Chambers, and remained with her for the whole of the evening.

Kitty was not at all surprised that her blood should boil at this, for was it not atrocious conduct?

But it was not worth the shedding of tears, nor was it worth a freezing coldness to Nelly on the occasion of their next meeting, yet both of these things came to pass.

It seemed that everybody was forsaking her; but from Jim Delamere she had expected very different treatment.

By Easter she was certain that he was engaged to Nelly, so she thought she would take the bull by the horns, and ask him if he were not.

He turned very quickly at her—as she imagined—carelessly-put question, and demanded to know if she would not be glad to have him happy.

Kitty, very much taken aback, grew red and then pale, but endeavored to carry off the effect of the answer by cheerful interest.

'Of course I should,' she assented, with a slight smile—that was more clever than becoming—and falling into his trap.

'Then marry me yourself, Kitty,' he returned; and after that there was much tossing of the head from indignant Miss Wood, and laughter from wily Jim, and, at last, explanations came about, and then very personal questions.

And the end of all was that they were standing together with clasped hands and smiling lips.

'And I think I could grow to like you if I had a very long time allowed me,' acknowledged Kitty. 'Of course all that other was nonsense, as you said.'

'Oh, of course!' assented Jim gravely. 'And about how long would it take for you to learn to like me, do you think?'

'Oh, I don't know—months!' said Kitty.

'Then I could be running down again to Torquay, meanwhile?' asked Jim. 'By—'

'Oh, well, I could try to be quicker,' interposed Miss Wood, with more haste than dignity.

'Yes, that would be better, perhaps,' said Mr. Delamere calmly.

And they turned in at Primrose Farm with demure and sober lips and twinkling eyes.