

# The Matinee Girl

By Margaret Bell

## Runaway Billie.

**B**ILLIE BURKE came back to us this season, to give us a taste of delicacy and breeziness as a finale to the theatrical year. That is about all that Billie will ever do. Petite, youthful, breezy she will always be, and as such will always put it over the public. She runs and romps across the forty or fifty feet of rickety boards which constitute the whole mimic land, pouts her pretty lips a bit, and lo! the audience sits enthralled, finally bursting into a glove-splitting applause, which makes blase Billie smile and dimple and say that that audience is the dearest in the world. Then she makes a graceful little speech, and says it is with



MISS AILEEN BARR.  
(See June Supplement.)

extreme regret that she must depart from their midst at the end of the week, and the curtain goes down on a thousand people who fill the stuffy atmosphere with the most extravagant of all admiration epithets. And all the time pretty Billie is longing for the gay Whiteness of Broadway, and smiling little smiles of mockery at the humanity of all audiences.

Billie appeared, this season, in "The Runaway." She came on the stage bearing two huge telescopes, and a head of fuzzy, red-brown curls. Before the drop of the final curtain, Billie had performed all her little Billiburkinnesses, which consisted of a display of temper, with plenty of stamping of her not too diminutive feet, a few tears, much unconscious flirting, and the final conquest of the man she had set her heart upon.

Back in her dressing-room, Billie was very dignified, all her mannerisms had vanished, and she was just the tired girl, longing for her summer vacation. For she had just finished the purchase of a farm on the Hudson and was anxious to spend her summer there.

"It's so good to be in Toronto again." Which was a perfectly legitimate remark for a Thespian who happens to be talking to someone who is likely to chronicle her sayings in black and white. But I really felt like telling her that a blase demeanor might very easily be dropped in the dressing-room.

I suppose Billie is now on her farm. Here's hoping a quiet communing with Nature will restore any fragmentary bits of sincerity which may

have been swept away by too much association with the mimic.

## A Disappointing Marlowe.

**W**E had put on our best evening gowns, had carefully ordered the taxi in good time, and sat waiting for the curtain. The house was packed, as is usual when such a team as Sothern and Marlowe are billed to appear.

But there was a slight rustle, the large, red curtains shivered a little, then parted, and the company manager stepped out before them. We thought that something had happened to cause a delay, but were prepared to wait. It would be worth while. But he had begun to speak. What was he saying? Miss Marlowe could not appear! Surely not. It was Marlowe we had come to see most particularly. "The part of Katharine will be played by Miss Lenore Chippendale, her understudy, who has played the part with much success."


And then we sat back and groaned. Positively groaned. It could be heard all over the big parquette. It was the first time Julia Marlowe had ever disappointed us. But she was ill, so the manager said, and we must feel sympathetic. And anyhow, understudies must have a chance SOMETIME. A gloom seemed to fall over the audience, and it is putting it mildly to say that I should not have liked to be Miss Lenore Chippendale, that night. She acquitted herself very well, however, displaying, to the best of her ability, all of our beloved Marlowe's mannerisms, and reading her lines very well. But it was not Marlowe with her beautiful voice, her subtle naivete, her wit and brilliance. We went home, hoping for better luck, at the matinee performance. For we could never endure to see another Portia with E. H. Sothern. Juliet was to be played by Percy Haswell.

Still Miss Marlowe did not appear. We saw Miss Chippendale as Portia, and our hearts ached. The Marlowe mannerisms were visible again, without the Marlowe. And all the time, the real Marlowe whom we had saved all our pin money to see, reclined in her suite at the hotel and read the history of the antediluvian theatre. She had had a difficult season, and was simply tired out. But it seemed just a little harsh on Toronto, who had looked for her for two whole seasons—a bit unjust of Marlowe.

Mr. Sothern gave us a rare treat on the closing night. Hamlet was the bill, and a great Hamlet he was, with all the weaknesses and strength, the melancholy and humour, the struggles, the despair and hope of the Prince of Denmark, which makes this the most dramatic, the most human of all Shakespeare's plays.

We still live in hopes. Perhaps Marlowe will prove considerate and will visit us in the fall, and not remain in her hotel, while her would-be audience is weeping out pints over the snares of a niggardly Hebrew.

**T**HE director of the Hambourg Conservatory of Music, which is rapidly extending its fame as an institution of culture, has just concluded a contract with Miss Aileen Barr, who will act as professor of dramatic art, elocution, deportment and diction. The clever actress is Canadian-born, though her studies have been pursued—and with marked success—abroad.



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