



A Community Masque

Miss K. A. Fisher, B.S., N.B.

Caliban by the Yellow Sands

"Come unto these yellow sands
And then take hands!"

—*The Tempest*

ON the evening of the twenty-third of May last, a group of Canadians found themselves in the very heart of a New York crowd, struggling to reach their seats in the Stadium of City College. "Step lively" and "watch your step" are two requests which one very quickly learns to respond to, in that great city of elevated railways, of subways and of cliff dwellers, but in doing so the difficulty of getting through a crowd is greatly simplified. So it was this evening, and we soon managed to find our seats, which were really stone benches arranged in the amphitheatre style. Certainly the weather had been kind to us that May evening and it was indeed a unique and a thrilling experience to see and be one of over twenty thousand people seated in that beautiful open air amphitheatre with the stars shining overhead and the softly colored lights playing on the stages and the "Yellow Sands."

For months before this, hundreds, yes, thousands of New York's citizens had been busy preparing to take their

part in paying a fitting tribute to the memory of William Shakespeare, three hundred years alive on the twenty-third of April, nineteen hundred and sixteen. War clouds hung too heavily over his own native isle to permit of extensive or elaborate arrangements being carried out there, for commemorating the tercentenary of his death. On a particularly large and elaborate scale was this celebration planned in New York, when Mr. Percy MacKaye, the American author and playwright, devised and wrote his Community Masque, *Caliban by the Yellow Sands*. Apart from the preparation of a Memorial Masque to Shakespeare, the fundamental idea of the celebration was to create a desire for the future development of a Community Drama, a drama not only for the people, but presented by the people, that the community spirit might be developed through the art of the theatre.

In order that the Masque might be in accord with the art and spirit of Shakespeare, the principal characters were taken from "The Tempest," although their development was worked out along lines entirely different to those in Shakespeare's play. The theme of the Masque was the gradual educa-