

AT THE SIGN OF THE MAPLE

A News Department Mainly for Women



"Shrill important notes in the music of joy."

Interviews in Fairyland

By KATHERINE HALE

TO the outside world the stage door is a symbol of mystery. To the interviewer it means often disillusion. But lately a little story-book play has toured America, taking us so far back into childhood that some of us returned to see it more than once, and perhaps actually stormed the citadel of dreams, so that for once a stage door opened on Actuality.

You remember the story of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Snow White, who was "just naturally" good and lovely, and Queen Brangomar, who was quite as naturally wicked and jealous, and, true to her colours, wished to dispose of Snow White, whom she sent into the woods to be murdered by a henchman. How her plight so stirred his pity that he left her unharmed in the forest, and a little bird led her to the tiny house of the Seven Dwarfs, who fell in love with her on the spot. The story has been set to enticing music and Snow White is renewed in a lovely child—no less than that promising young actress of our picture.

Frankly, I did not want to stir the spell by opening the little stage door—but the Seven Dwarfs lured me and I did try the door.

Inside there was the usual semi-silence that prevails after the scenery has been set up and before the first curtain call. But away upstairs, in what is usually relegated to the chorus for dressing-rooms, I heard an echo of the shrill laughter that belonged to those stage dwarfs.

As I climbed the stairs an unaccustomed thrill ran up my hardened spine. There was something very queer and "other-world" about that laughter.

I tapped recklessly on the nearest door.

"Who's that?" called out a thin, sharp voice, like that of a little old, old child.

"A friend of seven dwarfs!" I replied. "May I come?"

"We're changing!" came the response. "You wait a minute."

I did. And heard the gnomes chuckling and talking incessantly as they worked.

Presently the door opened and a tiny man stood before me. In the dim twilight his long, grey stage beard seemed a very part of him, and his whole appearance in those prosaic surroundings intensified the scene of mystery.

"How do you do?" he asked, promptly; "do you want to see any of us in particular, or all of us?"

The quiet assurance of the perpetually "featured" was in his tone—but something more—a bit of childish expectancy. There seemed a mile of memory between his eyes and mine. As he looked wisely up, and I looked eagerly down, something flashed the distance through, and—we understood.

"I want to see you all," was the quick demand, and his "Here—Brothers!" brought the whole troop out into the passage.

They were just old-remembered friends crowding around one again—and from the first we seemed to get the fairy tale and the present hopelessly mixed, for I wanted to ask the littlest one, "who hadn't been washed for fifty years," whether he liked the tub, and at the same time to inquire of the most patriarchal of the party how the lovely idea of staging that play ever came into being, and where the Seven Dwarfs really lived and all about it. Not one, but all the seven answered.



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They can remember."

Oh, little Dwarfs! Just can't we "remember" though! "All the same," we suggested, "this is a splendid play for you. You don't know how fine you all look creeping up through the trap door with the orchestra playing those stealthy little drum notes—tap! tap! tap!"

"Oh, yes," said the Patriarch, solemnly, "this is



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"And so did the ladies-in-waiting—though not in bare feet."

a very good play for Dwarfs. It is nicer than being featured in a circus. We have our own work to do."

That sentence carried one very far away. One thought of the centuries long past, when kings were dreamers as well as rulers, and giants were used as the emblems of triumph—"set up," as it were, along the highways of the great roads and cities as conquering legions came home. And the little midgets of the earth—the tiny people—symbolized the spirit of play, and lived at the feet of Royalty as jesters—shrill, important notes in the music of joy. And the fortune-tellers and the troubadours and the story-makers used them, so that they became a part of the very texture of romance.

Why has the world forgotten them of late, these notes so shrilly sweet?

"We can do our own work." There was in it a call for recognition. "You've always done it!" I told them. "Dwarfs are fairy people, you know, they only need to 'appear' to make people happy."

The man in this case had a kodak and was anxious to use it. Outside the street on which the stage door opened was gleaming in the afternoon sun. "Could you come and be snapped?" he asked.

"Couldn't we though!" they shouted.

Then came a curtain call.

But after the next act they were ready and waiting for us, all seven. They seemed to be suddenly let loose, and "fey," as the Scotch call it, with happiness—the happiness that only the "little people" of the earth know. They ran up and down while the kodak was being adjusted, and they called the stage hands by names of their own invention, and one of them shrilled in his eerie little voice to a tall policeman on the other side of the street: "Officer! I arrest you!"

And Snow White was lured thither, and posed prettily, her bare feet on the chill autumn pavement, and so did some of her ladies in waiting—though not in bare feet—and the whole set fairy-land stirring for a moment in that dingy alley.

For once a stage door had opened in Actuality.

Halifax Notes

By ALICE HOUSTON

THERE has just been given at the Halifax Hotel a brilliant dance under the auspices of the Princess Louise and Chebucto Chapters of the Daughters of the Empire, which proved a success beyond the "wildest dreams" of those who gave it. The proceeds were given to charity, the Anti-Tuberculosis League, the Children's Hospital and the milk station. The soldiers did the decorating. (Soldiers ARE decorative!—The Editor.)

The wedding last week of Betty, youngest daughter of W. B. Graveley, of the Bank of Montreal, and grand-daughter of the late Senator Almon, to Captain Langford, R.C.R., was "the" smart wedding of the season. Miss Alice O'Brien attended as bridesmaid; the pretty little daughters of Major Elliott, of Ottawa, as flower girls; and Captain Heming, R.C.R., as groomsmen.

The visit of the Martin Harvey Company to Halifax, beginning their Canadian tour, was "triumphal." Social attentions were showered on them, and Mr. and Mrs. Harvey (Miss De Silva) "captured" the public.

Mrs. Carleton Jones, of Ottawa, daughter-in-law