

## STAGELAND

When it comes to capturing hearts, the tall and stately woman hasn't a chance beside the little one—that is generally acknowledged. The little woman—merry, tender, capricious, imperative, inconsequent, wise, timid, brave—everything by turns—yet nothing long—yet always winsome and infinitely womanly; she it is who has her way with men and women alike. Given equal chances, either on or off the stage, and the little woman will win against her big sister every time, and in all probability the latter will be found quite willing that she should, since no one is more indulgent to la petite than la grande dame.

Miss Gladys Wallis, who has been charming her audiences at the Princess theatre during the last November week, is one of those dear little women whose mission 'tis to please. She is as pretty as a picture; with big brown eyes, a sunny smile, a plump little figure, and the most winsome ways—a real little beauty; and so girlish and sweet that we lose our hearts to her on the instant, and are quite content that she should keep them.

In Miss Wallace, our old favorite Lotta returns to us again, but Lotta in all the grace of a young twenty years, with less of art and more of nature; possibly with a higher histrionic ability also, since here and there amid her naive simulations and child-like caprice, we catch flashes of depths that the little "Cricket" has no opportunity of sounding.

As *Fanchon*, this winsome bit of womanliness makes the most of the pretty character, and is just the cheeriest cricket one could desire in any household.

The little lady has a future before her—that is evident. This is her first season as a star, and since her debut in Chicago three months ago she has captured her audiences everywhere.

She has a mission in the world also, and a very happy one—that of inspiring wholesome laughter, and stirring in her audiences sympathy with all that is bright and pretty and womanly.

It is rather a pity that this winsome little cricket could not have come to us for Christmas season, when our theatres are inclined to give us *Camille* and *Faust* as holiday fare. Who wants to have anything to do with devils or adventuresses, or who wants to agonize in unwholesome love at Christmas time?

Talking about little women; I had a cosy chat with a very charming one, a week or two ago, in one of the cosy dressing rooms of the Princess Theatre.

The majority of our Toronto readers will remember that particularly fine rendering of Ibsen's "A Doll's House" given at this theater early in November. Nothing could make Ibsen other than psychological and morbid; but "A Doll's House" as presented by Miss Julia Stuart was Ibsen stripped of unpleas-

antness and made, not only presentable, but attractive, while the leading truth—which is, after all, a very every-day one, taught quite as effectually by Dickens in his portrait of *Dora*—remained clear.

Miss Stuart, who is really Mrs. Curtis, made a delightful *Nora*. Her conception of the part left nothing to be desired. As the thoughtless, indulged child passed from father to husband, as the merry young mother, as the happy little wife, as the puzzled woman, and finally as the slowly developing soul, she gave a realistic, yet poetic, representation. Indeed, she gave the impression, which I found afterwards to be correct, of one losing for the time her own identity and becoming the character she portrayed.



Gladys Wallis

As we chatted together in the dressing room, I found her to be a really pretty little woman, and a pleasant, easy talker. She is fond of *Nora*, and her face brightens as she speaks of the character.

"I have only been playing it a little while," she said; "we celebrated the twenty-fifth performance of it in Toronto. It was quite by chance that I adopted the part. I am very fond of attending the German Theater; there is one in Buffalo. One day I dropped in by chance, and saw 'A Doll's House' played. I was convinced that the rôle would suit me, and studied it, O, for a long, long time. When we produced it in Buffalo, I never supposed it would take for more than one performance, but it made an instant success, and we ran it a week."

"Yes," in response to a question, "it is very exhausting. You see I am hardly off the stage during the entire play; and then, I completely lose myself in the rôle. I simply am *Nora* for the time being."

Seeing Miss Stuart as the charming little girl-wife, it is difficult to realize that she has had a varied stage experience. She has been connected with the stage all her life, she says, and has essayed many of the Shakesperian comedy rôles.

"I am anxious to return to the legitimate drama," she said, "and prefer light comedy. I hope to play *Isabel*, in 'Measure for Measure,' at no distant date."

She seemed such an attractive little woman as we sat chatting together, while she waited her "call." The tossy hair, hazel eyes, and pretty mouth with its arch *moue*; the plump, white, satiny skin with its touch of powder and rouge, and the low-toned voice—better still, she was sensible and clever.

The pity is that she is not surrounded by a better company, and that she should, even for her husband's sake, appear in such a pretence of a play as *Sam'l of Posen*, which they returned to Toronto to produce a week or two later. Such a *Nora* is worthy of higher things.

Miss Ada Rehan delighted us all. When next she returns she will be greeted with full houses. Perhaps among her many rôles none showed her art more perfectly than that of *Kate*, in "The Taming of the Shrew," although it were hard to surpass her *Lady Teuzi*. But of a truth she was a most shrewish *Kate*—an arrant virago, yet by the magic of her art she managed to divest the part of all vulgarity, and even win our sympathy in the process of *Kate's* taming.

The play is rarely an acceptable one to women, since they resent the process of the taming as well as the unreasonable test and triumph of *Petrucchio*.

I overheard a fragment of comment concerning it, as we came up in the car.

"She shouldn't have come when she was commanded by her husband, just to show her subjugation. I wouldn't," said the young girl decidedly, yet with half a pout.

"You see, my dear, the play was written in the sixteenth century, when physical force was the only known way of asserting supremacy. Queen Elizabeth was a good deal of a shrew, you know," answered the elder lady.

"Well, I'm glad I didn't live in the sixteenth century, and I wouldn't have come, anyway," said the young girl, inconsequently. "Miss Rehan shouldn't revive such a play, just putting men in mind—" The car stopped here, and I lost the remainder of the sentence.

AUDREY.

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