

many a Western maiden has suffered torture at her first large ball, just because she *would* insist on white satin slippers two sizes too small.

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A RUSSIAN ACTRESS

AN English writer who has travelled in many lands declares that the Russian women are the most clever and also the most charming women in the world. Cleverness and charm are by no means always associated. So far as man is concerned, it has often been said that he dislikes a clever woman. "Pedantic" would perhaps be a better word for the unlikable sort of woman, for a really clever dame never lets a man think that she knows quite as much as he does. But to return to the Russian woman, who has a better claim than the Canadian to be called "Our Lady of the Snows!" If one may judge from the artists who come across to many-dollar America, to reap the reward of their toil and endeavour, the Russian has that mysterious possession called "temperament" to a degree which bewilders and delights the more prosaic people who have more freedom than poetry.

Madame Nazimova who comes to Canada this winter has won a high place and lovers of drama are affected deeply by this unbeautiful yet wonderful artist. No one would dream of calling her "pretty" but her appeal to the intellect and imagination made the girlish attractiveness of Miss Ethel Barrymore and the easy vivacity of Miss Hilda Spong seem an ordinary affair. Madame Nazimova has the mental alertness of the Slavonic genius and the dramatic fire which is seldom lighted in a happy country. Her acting of the rôles of the Ibsen heroines is the most intelligent Canada has seen. Where Miss Nance O'Neil ranted and Mrs. Fiske declaimed, the Russian woman lived the parts of restless womanhood. Her *Hedda Gabler* comes nearer being a conceivable woman

than any other interpretation of that tempestuous lady, whose demise is so eminently satisfactory. Amidst the commonplaceness of modern musical comedy, with which Canadian audiences are provided, the genius of the Russian woman shines like a rare jewel.

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A PECULIAR CRITICISM

WHEN a woman writes a book, paints a picture or sings an aria, there is no necessity for the critic of the performance to interpolate a reference to the sex of the performer. This is generally recognised in journalistic circles to-day, but it will probably be the twenty-first century before "good, for a woman" or "a remarkable achievement considering the sex of the artist" disappears from the critical column.

Miss Agnes Laut is a Canadian writer whose half-dozen books, beginning with "Lords of the North," have provided both instruction and entertainment for all who are interested in fiction with historic flavour or history with a dash of picturesque colour. In "Pathfinders of the West," Miss Laut told us many things of Radisson which we had not learned from the school-book called history, by courtesy. Her latest work, "The Conquest of the Great Northwest," I have not read and, therefore, I am not going to rush in where archivists might fear to tread.

However, whether one has read Miss Laut's book or not, there is a protest to be made against the "preamble" to Mr. Arthur Hawkes' criticism, entitled: "The Strange Case of Miss Agnes Laut and David Thompson," which was published in *The Canadian Courier*. This critical article, of more than three thousand words in length, concerns itself chiefly with Miss Laut's chapter headed "David Thompson." Of Mr. Hawkes' criticism, no one unacquainted with Western exploration can have a word to say. The unsophisticated reader