

## The Princess of the Violin

By C. COURTENAY SAVAGE.



which everyone said was seasonable considering that Christmas was only three weeks off, there were a score of people waiting before the ticket window of the Thompsonville motion picture house. John Higgins, the proprietor, saw the crowd and smiled. He knew why they were there, twenty minutes before show time, and, with the air of a man regarding a great possession, glanced proudly at the showy billboard:

MARY JENNINGS THE PRINCESS OF THE VIOLIN He read the sign a second and a

third time. Then he went quickly into engagement in the summer—that is the box office and opening the window, began to sell tickets.

It was half-past seven when Mary Jennings made her first appearance that night, sandwiched between a comedy picture and the big feature of the evening. She was a small woman, with dark hair and eyes, no longer really young, and in appearance, for-eign to the stage. In her simply cut dress, she could hardly be called goodlooking but she had a radiant smile that was all-enveloping. When the spotlight caught her as she entered from one side of the stage, there was a heavy roar of applause, which the lifting of her violin checked abruptly. Those out front did not wish to miss a single note.

Mary Jennings had played the violin since childhood and she could make the instrument laugh and sigh, weep and sing and dream. As she swayed the bow over the vibrating strings, so she swayed the hearts of those who listen-She was not a great artist. She played with the divine temperament.

To-night she played three semiclassical melodies and then, with friendly smile and words, asked her audience to tell her what they would The first two "request" pieces came quickly and then with a joyous clamor they called for Home, Sweet Home-old-fashioned, forever beloved Home, Sweet Home. Just as a certain great singer has always sung that ballad best, so it was the choicest number in Mary Jenning's repertoire.

After she had bowed acknowledgement to their sincere applause, they settled back for the feature picture and Mary Jennings' work was over until it was time for the second per-

scrupulously clean dressing-room to await the second call, she found John Higgins there, and with him a stranger whom he introduced as Mr. Helm.

"I'm pleased to meet up Mr. Helm.

"I'm pleased to meet you, Miss Jen-Helm said cordially. He was a large man and by his general appearance, a man of success.

"Yes, he's been waiting to see you "Yes, he's been waiting to see you—says that he has something very important to say." Higgins spoke almost eagerly. Then—"I guess you folks can get on without me. You played wonderfully to-night, Miss played wonderfully to-night, Miss Mary, better than ever!"

smiling, and the stranger, noting the front of the theatre to-night and saw that billing. The Princess of the Violin. violinist and the theatre proprietor

"I understand that there are always

"Yes, they seem to like my playing."

The woman motioned her visitor to a chair and seated herself on the top of her trunk. She was very curious and slightly awed.

"That's what I came about—your trunk to find the following Monday that she had never been more alm. And she

noon."

"Yes-?" she asked uneasily. play."

place me?" No, she did not place him.

"I'm Carlos Helm, the concert manager. I'm getting ready a big world tour for one of the bands that I sent We're looking for soloists. think you'd do for one of them-"

"I? For a world tour?"
"Maybe. I'd like to try you out." He was abruptly business-like.

"I don't know—" she said softly.
"No, neither do I. But I could soon find out. Suppose into Ottawa next Monday. We're having a big concert there in connection favorite in the rural districts that with a drive they are holding. I'm hailed her as a princess. The audience,



In spite of the light whirl of snow, numbers and they're providing the speakers. There's sure to be a crowd and if you get across with that crowd -well, you'll be able to go with any crowd."

The woman's eyes sparkled but she did not speak.

"Now about money. I'm not going to drag you before the public and then have some rival manager grab you up if you make a big hit. How much do you make playing around at these small town theatres? Not much, I'll wager."

"I average a hundred dollars a week though, of course, I seldom get an July and August."
"A hundred a week. And you're

paying your own expenses," the man smiled. He had an easy task before him.

"I'll give you fifty dollars and expenses to play in Ottawa. You'll only have to do four pieces. If you go over right, I'll give you a hundred and fifty a week and travelling expenses to be-Afterwards you'll have gin with. more.

"I'll have to think about it," she said softly. "I-it sounds won lerful!" "Yes, that's right-think a out it. Show up at the Auditorium in Ottawa about three o'clock on the twelfth. That will give us time for a rehearsal. I've got to run now for my train. Good-bye!"

He was gone from the room before he could really answer him. She sat there on the trunk, wide-eyed, but lind to the things about her, until the call for her second performance roused he was suddenly enthusiastic.

The applause was as generous as usual, but it had lost flavor. Ottawa! I'll put you on at the Christmas festival. That'll make every paper in the When she went back to her dressing country mention your name.

asked quickly. "He said that he was a concert manager. Does he want you to work for him?"

before her. To play at the Christmas festival in Montreal was a dream that few ever realized. Her eyes were wide as a child's seeing its first Christ-She nodded.

"Yes, he said that I was a good play at a concert for him next Mon- name. day, the twelfth—to try me out."

For a minute the man did not anser. From out of doors came the faint "How wonderful!" she breathed. wer. From out of doors came the faint sound of sleighbells as some of the

"I know," she answered him quickly. "Still it's my chance, and after all, had been her day of days!
I'd never get any more money than
When she went back to he these small towns."

a paying proposition but, John!" a "Thank you," Mary Jennings said, sudden tenderness came into her voice, niling, and the stranger, noting the "I love to play. When I came past the that billing, The Princess of the Violin. must be more than mere business it seemed to have made up for all the rough places I have travelled. I've been very happy playing here in the "I understand that there are always great houses when you play," Helm to be great. We can always be wonder-"Yes, they seem to like my playing." ful friends, can't we, John?"

"That's what I came about—your had never been more calm. And she "That's what I came about—your playing. One of my advance men heard you in Pembroke last week. He sent word to me and I followed you this after—dress she had ever owned. On the seat beside her was her violin, a valuable instrument, bought after years of sav-"And I'll hand it to you—you can allies she was going to face her first "Thank you," she smiled again. metropolitan audience.

There was a long pause. Each was thinking.

The orchestra had concluded its first number and a member of parliament was speaking when she came from her dressing-room, violin in hand, to stand you?" he asked presently. "You don't dressing-room, violin in hand, to stand near the wings. It was almost time for her to play. Helm, seeing her standing there, cam forward, smiling. "Play like a million dollars to-night and that contract will be ready in the

morning. And don't be afraid. She nodded. She was not afraid. If anything, she was too unafraid!

She went slowly forward. There was a sprinkling of applause and she lifted her bow to play. She went through the four numbers, two programmed you plan to come numbers and their encores, playing with all the skill that had made her a going to have four or five big musical used to greater violinists, perhaps, but unable to resist the emotion of her music, gave her a more than hearty

welcome and a most hearty recall. She had only been in her dressing room a minute before Helm knocked.
"I was out front," he said quickly.

'You made good." "Do you really think so?" 'Sure-you'll do. I'm not going to hand you any bunk that you're great

## Christinas Carol

Hovering o'er with their snowy wings unfurled,
When all the earth seemed sleeping, Their voices drift to the weary world, Where shepherds their watch were keeping, And the shepherds heard those bright angels sing, The song that proclaimed a Babe a King.

See the great star shining, so wondrous bright, So pure in its radiant glory,
Go follow its journey and mark its flight,
(So the angels told the story), To you glad tidings of peace we bring, Go hasten now to your Christ and King.

So they left their flocks and they went their way, As told by those angel voices:—
The manger they reached where the man child lay, (Hark! the wise men now rejoice), Then their precious gifts at His feet they fling, They knew that the Babe was their Christ and King.

It was long, long ago, in Bethlehem, In a manger He was lying, But He died for us, as He died for them, His atonement satisfying, And His voice now bids all His angels sing, Come, hasten now to your Christ and King.

—Christina W. Partridge.

them and that's what counts.

"Then you really think that I could play for big audiences—in big cities?"

He nodded emphatically.

"I have always wondered," she said quietly, "and now—" her eyes spark-"Well, you've had your answer. You

ace Hotel, aren't you? I'll call you up telephone, she told him of Higgins' in the morning and we'll talk contracts."

He turned and started from the room but suddenly stopped.

"Say, by the way, I've a couple of open concert dates that I've got to have someone to fill. There's one in Kingston next week, another in Belle-ville and—" he stopped, looking at her keenly as if weighing his own wisdom. "Then there's the big Christmas festival in Montreal on the 24th. Say!' can play the kind of stuff that the mob likes to hear and you play it well.

room, John Higgins was waiting.
"What did he want, Mary?" he before her. To play at the Christmas wide as a child's seeing its first Christmas tree. A tear of happiness glisten-ed on her lashes. Yes! She would player. He said that I might have an play to them the "kind of stuff" that engagement with one of his bands they liked to hear. She would make making a world tour. I'm going to every newspaper man mention her This meant success, the will of-the-wisp that she had been blindly

"I guess you can do it!" Helm said

the glory that had befallen her. This

When she went back to her hotel she I'm earning now as long as I play in sent half a dozen telegrams, each one a small town. Mary Jennings told

but you've got something that gets from a fitful slumber her telephone rudely aroused her. It was a telegram from John Higgins.

"Cannot release you from engage ment Christmas Eve. Have made all arrangements for gala performance. Will release you all the rest of the week."

The message angered her. How dare got across. You're staying at the Pal- he! When Helm later called her on the

"Did you sign any kind of contract with him?"

"Yes, a little slip of paper." "H-m! That probably constitutes contract. Perhaps I can buy him off." Mary Jennings said that she hoped

that it would be possible. "Well, don't worry about it," Helm assured her. "I've got a lot of work for you to do. I've just had word that Albrie, who's been playing in a concert town with a pianist and Madame Shavet, the soprano, has been taken sick. I want you to fill in his dates for a few days. Can you start this afternoon?"

Could she start? She could have been ready in twenty minutes! It was ten days before she returned to Ottawa and Carl Helm's office. She

had not heard from him for several days and was anxious as to whether she was to start for Montreal at once or if by any chance, she would be forced to play the Christmas date at Thompsonville. Thompsonville! Suddenly she almost

hated the name. For ten days she had travelled in luxury and lived at the best hotels. She had been playing before audiences who wore evening clothes, who applieded correctly, who understood her music. Of course, the small town folk had been fond of her, and John Higgins loved her. But everything was changed now and surely it was a right change.

She found that Helm had gone West but had left an order for her. As she feared, he had not been able to break cancelling an engagement to play in the Thompsonville engagement. She was to keep it and then report back herself that these telegrams were the knives that cut her free for a wonder- after Christmas and then the contract ful world-wide experience.

It was hours before she slept and

for the long tour could be signed.

She was 'disappointed, so much so

-Arthur Stringer.

Northern Pines

I pass where the pines for Christmas

Are paced by feverish feet.

And I see the looming pine-lands,

Where the sunset falls in silence

Stand thick in the crowded street,

And far through the rain and the street cries

Where the groves of Dream and Silence

My homesick heart goes forth

To the dark and tender North.

To the pine-clad hills of childhood,

And I thrill to the Northland cold,

On the hills of gloom and gold!

And the still dusk woods close round me,

As a sorrowing mother's, wise!

And I know the waiting eyes

Of my North, as a child's, are tender,

We are so constituted, so truly "members one of another," that it is impossible to injure another willingly without injury to ourselves. If we would be good to ourselves we must be good to possibly strike our neighbor without receiving the blow ourselves. This is the new philosophy which Christ taught. Before his day it was "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, blood for blood." That was the philosophy of Hatred. The new philosophy is the philosophy of Love.

## A Christmas Prayer.

Lord! Grant to us perceiving

That, through the gross material bar, Through earthly mists that ever

We glimpse to-day in clearer The Guiding Star!

How much pleasure we could give and how much unhappiness many of us would be spared if instead of struggling and straining to give silly, useless Christmas presents which we really cannot afford to buy we would give freely of what Christ gave -love!

shivered at her smallness but argued with herself that she was right. For a whole day she moped about her ho- stage and bowed, as if to end her tel, one minute deciding that she program. might as well go, the next determin-

plus a queer little feeling of resent-ment. She would go down to Thomp-smiled at them and touched the low sonville! She would play as she had never played before! She would wear the gorgeous gown that she had bought with the thought of her Montmissing in the years that were com-

It was after noon when she arrived. found the lobby trimmed with evergreen and in a frame of holly was the Violin heading. The stage, too, was gayly decorated. A piano was on Methodist Church, the best local muaccompaniments. her surprise, that there was to be no his sister's but would be back at seven. were real people, her own folk.

There seemed to be nothing else to men and women who had driven miles do but go back to her hotel room and through frosty air to hear her. After put in the long afternoon. Last year, all, hearts were more than money, she, too, had been invited to John Hig- friendship more than fame. gin's sister's for over Christmas. But now a change had come. She had be- was John Higgins She smiled at him gun that change herself.

At four she returned to the theatre to rehearse, then back to the hotel for a lonely meal and the dragging ing engagement. She dressed herself more than carefully that night and the mirror reflected her image as a handsome woman in startling raiment. She had not seen Higgins. She wondered if he were avoiding her. She hoped not, for, after all, she liked John. He had been very, very kind to her and, with him, friendship had blossomed into She smiled when she realized that if she had wished, she might be Mrs. John Higgins of Thompsonville, instead of Mary Jennings with the don't have to be tired any more, Mary. sure prospects of a glorious career be-You don't have to fiddle for city folks You'll never have to work again, but

As she stepped on to the stage that with the thunder of applause. She ped. checked it, almost imperiously, and which showed all the fire of her art. Then, scarcely waiting for the silence, she played the ever-beloved Christmas lullaby, Silent Night, Holy Night. The hush of a great peace was over the house. A woman muffled a sob. Mary Jennings felt the spirit of her own music as if she were hearing another. It seemed to exalt her, to carry her above smallness and unrest. At their insistent demand she played the Christmas favorites they called for: Hark, the Herald Angels Sing, It Came Upon the Midnight Clear and Good King Wenceslas. A child in front started to sing familiar words. Mary Jennings nodded joyously to the little clearing his heart of all grudges, girl and called "Sing out, dear! Every-for forgiving all offenses and all one sing!" And they did. "Come All Ye Faithful!" someone called and the words were repeated from parquet and box and gallery. They sang the mel-ody, quietly at first but in growing volume as the Christmas spirit that was in their hearts overwhelmed them. "Come, All Ye Faithful!" A thought

filled the brain of the "Princess." How faithful they were, these "commor people"-in their daily lives-in their love for her. She turned suddenly weary. After all, she had had but little sleep in the past ten days. It was



The Shepherd's Song. We be silly shepherds, Men of no renown, Guarding well our sheepfolds Hard by Bethlehem town; Baby Jesus, guard us all, Cot and sheepfold, bower and

Wild the wind was blowing, Sudden all was still, Laughter soft of angels Rang from hill to hill. Baby Jesus, Thou wast born Ere that midnight paled to morn.

Seek we now Thy presence With our gifts of love; Felix brings a lambkin, I will give a dove. Baby Jesus, small and sweet, Lo, we lay them at Thy feet. -Norah Holland.

With all good wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Bappy New Year.

that she considered playing sick and hard to rest even when one travelled so cheating Higgins after all. She in luxury. She would play no more to-night.

She walked toward the side of the

"Oh, you've got to play Home. ing that she would never play in Sweet Home!" shouted a middle-aged Thompsonville again.

man down in front and the whole In the end, however, duty won, duty house echoed him. "Yes! Home, Sweet smiled at them and touched the bow to the strings.

"Mid pleasures and palacessimple strain of the music flowed from real engagement in mind. She would sweet, Sweet Home," and so on to the her violin, and then, "Home! Home! show Thompsonville what it would be finish of the melody. Obeying a warm, inward impulse she repeated the refrain, the bow wandering in soft harmonies and variations. A sob rose in and she went at once to the theatre to her heart. The old song was right! find what part she was scheduled to The old song was right! There was play in Higgins' gala program. She "no place on earth" quite like home. And to her, this little-theatre, with the people who knew her best with er name with the familiar Princess of John Higgins and his sister, was home to her. They loved her! There was not one of them that wore perfectly corand the organist of the rect evening dress; they might not understand her more difficult musical sician, engaged especially to play her themes. But they loved her. She was She found, too, to one of them. After the last high, there was to be no sweet note died she took no bows, she afternoon performance, and only one had to hide the free-running tears. that evening. Higgins, so the man at She tumbled to the little dressingthe box office told her, had gone to room and dropped to a chair. They Her accompanist would meet her at in the world beyond lay-what? Sucsuccess? Money Yes, but here were

There was a knock at her door. It through her tears.

"Crying? What's up? You were more wonderful than ever," he said.
"I don't wonder the big world calls Night piece, I almost cried-and-He stopped abruptly. "What's up

"It's nothing," she smiled wanly, "I'm just tired." "That's all? Sure?" "They all love me so, John! It's been

wonderful playing in the big cities but -there is no place like home,' " and she sobbed outright. He dropped to his kneese beside her chair. He took her hands in his. "You

just play when you will for the folks night, a chorus of "Oh's!" mingled that love you best. Why-" he stop-She knew what he meant. That the played. First, there was a lilting waltz big farm and the theatre could keep them. That he wanted to marry her. The thought was as the sweetest music that filled her soul. It soothed the

ache in her heart. "Holy Night!" she breathed softly, almost as if in prayer and leaned closer to him.

John Higgins understood. Through the silence of the little, barn-like room came to him the glorious message that Mary's heart had won home—she was giving him the best Christmas gift in his life, a true woman's love.

Everyone should regard Christmas as an occasion for "Come All enemies. It is a good time to forget and to forgive, a good time to forget self and think of others.



