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#### JULIA ARTHUR'S OWN STORY OF HER CAREER (Continued from page 35)

poured in from every side, with the result that on the sixth of November we gave the Boston public a great bill, lasting from two in the afternoon until six o'clock at night. Incidentally we packed the Boston Theatre and cleared between four and five thousand dollars for the war victims.

I confess that my first two minutes on the stage as *Mercedes* during that revival found me the victim of the worst case of stage fright I have ever known. The thousands of eyes fixed on me caused The thousands of eyes fixed on me caused me a sick foreboding. I had been away from the stage so long! Would these people care for me now? Had I perhaps for gotten how to act? I had a tremendous reception, but it did not calm me. It merely brought a great lump into my throat—which was especially unfortunate, as my scene opened with a lullaby! I could not sing it. For the moment I was helpless, speechless—as sorry a victim of panic as the worst amateur could be. But the friendly reception continued, giving me time to pull myself together, and in that interval I actually prayed.

"Let me forget myself," I inwardly begged. "Let me think only of Mercedes, the part I love so well!"

In the next instant I felt as though the soul of Mercedes had entered my body.

Instead of the shivering Julia Arthur, there was now before the audience the tragic Spanish girl whose great hour of life and death had struck.

Six weeks later, on December fifteenth, I repeated "Mercedes" with the same cast at the Shubert Theatre in New York, at a at the Shubert Theatre in New York, at a War Benefit arranged by James Gordon Bennett, William Vanderbilt and Mrs. Whitney Warren, in behalf of the Secours National and the Actors' Relief Fund. This, too, was an all-star bill, with John Barrymore, Douglas Fairbanks, Holbrook Blinn and others on the splendid programme. The performance netted about seven thousand dollars. Then Daniel Frohman asked me to help him out by giving the Balcony Scene from "Romeo and Juliet" at the Actors' Fund Benefit, and I did so.

THE result of all this, as Mr. Cheney had foreseen, was inevitable. I was back in the world of footlights and grease paint, taut nerves and tense emotions, big ambitions and fine friendships—and I was like a traveller who after many wanderings had found his way home. That I was back "for good" was taken for granted by my associates. Every one said: "Of course you'll remain on the stage, now that you are well again." And though my tongue did not always reply, something else in me invariably made the same answer: "Of course I shall!"

Managers and playwrights were flooding

Managers and playwrights were flooding me with telegrams and letters. My old theatrical friends were telling me of plays theatrical friends were telling me of plays that would fit me like a glove. The newspapers had elaborate reports of what I was going to do long before I knew myself, and when the excitement was at its height, Daniel Frohman wrote that Charles Frohman wanted me and would find a big play for me while he was abroad. I accepted this as the solution of my problem. When Charles Frohman went down with the Lusitania, I felt for a time that he had carried my future with him.

the Lusilania, I felt for a time that he had carried my future with him.

Daniel Frohman, however, continued to keep in close touch with me. He had no play himself, but he persuaded me to come to New York and be on the ground to consider the opportunities that were opening on every side. I had great to consider the opportunities that were opening on every side. I had great confidence in his judgment, so I came on at once and took an apartment on the East Side, "putting-up" at the Biltmore until the flat was arranged. The very day I reached New York, and before the packing cases in the hall were opened, Mr. Frohman telephoned me that the Selwyns had a play and wanted to see me. It was a big play, they thought, and just the thing for me. As I dressed for my interview with them, I smiled to myself, recalling the old years when I had thanked God for rain, because I could cover my God for rain, because I could cover my clothes with a mackintosh. At least, in my new adventure, I was free from such anxieties as these.

I read the Selwyns' play and liked it.

The heroine appealed to me—the Eternal Magdalen. So did the situations and the opportunities. Mr. Frohman, however, who read the play at my request, was not enthusiastic. He did not like problem plays, and he did not consider this particular play strong enough for me. But the Selwyns were urging a prompt decision. They wanted to begin rehearsals at once, and to put on the play in three weeks. The result of it all was that within forty-eight hours I had signed the contract and was discussing the production.

THE Selwyns gave me an admirable company—not only one of the best, but but without exception the most harmonious with whom I have ever worked. From the first its members were most courteous and considerate in their relations with me, but they were also very reserved. It seemed impossible to get close to them, and I wondered why. At rehearsals they



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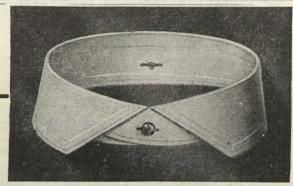
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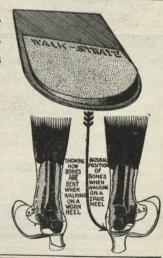
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