

## Heroes of the Matinee Girls.

When an actor looks out over the footlights at six or seven orchestra rows of eager feminine faces with wide-open, often tear-wet eyes, fixed admiringly upon him, and a frenzy of white gloves and brown hands clapping, with black velvet bows trembling upon unshaven heads, he realizes, sometimes with painful emotion, that he has become a matinee idol. To be a matinee idol is not an unmixed blessing. The term has come to suggest the self-conscious beauty-actor and hear-breaker of the stage, a type happily almost extinct. The stage masher is an unknown quantity in the high-class companies associated with popular successes. His presence would not be tolerated by his associates or managers, and the public would speedily tire of him. The modern matinee idol has his greatness thrust upon him. When the matinee girl decides that he offers the proper material for a hero she confers upon him an invisible crown and gives him the robes and ermine of state. And the box office gives evidence that the vogue is a paving one.

An actor now playing the part of a sometimes amiable but, on occasions calls, frightfully bloodthirsty young prig, is the person now reigning over the transferrable affections of the matinee maid. The Saturday afternoon performances of the play are the Mecca of the autumn girl. She fills the orchestra to overflowing and gives evidence by many repeated curtain calls that, luridly unreal as he is, he has found favor in her eyes.

And such eyes they are! To most men it is given to look into only one woman's eyes at a time when they are lit by the divine fire of hero worship. The matinee idol sees them in tiers. Back of the first dozen rows the faces of an audience blur into a mass of posturesque masks against the blackness, but each face in the nearer seats has its own individuality to the actor looking from above during a curtain call, when his attention may wander in the direction of the house. To the intelligent actor with a well-defined sense of humor the scene must have its amusing side. He knows quite well that the glowing admiration in each face is not for him so much as for an idealized creature combining the heroic qualities of the hero he portrays with whatever personal charm he may actually possess or may be able to simulate by means of his art or his make-up box. And the situation has its pathetic side as well. The faces picture all the beliefs and enthusiasms of youth called illusions by those who have outlived them. The matinee girl expresses all of these in her face. She is under 20, and the world of romance and sentiment seems spread before her. Experience has not yet made her lukewarm in the expressions of her emotions. They are pictured in her eyes as in a mirror. She believes in love; in undying, burning, old-fashioned love, that will dare all, even death for its object. She believes in high standards of honor, purity, honesty of motive, self-sacrifice, everything that is greatest and best in life.

The particular matinees referred to have become a fixed habit with the feminine theatregoer. Last season she went, not once, but often. She grew to know the performance, its points, its climaxes and its scenes during which the imagination might revel in deeds of sublime courage and daring. With the summer's tan still on her cheeks she has returned to her hero, and her comments between acts regarding the changes that have been made in cast, costume or manner of presentation show a wonderful familiarity with the play and its actors. There is no condemnatory criticism.

A curtain call at a matinee is as different from the evening encore as it is possible to imagine. It is a gentle flutter, continued, but half repressed, thoroughly feminine in its expression. It is the eloquent eyes and lips of the orchestra rows that applaud the player most vividly. And even after the last curtain, when the hero bows himself back into the obscurity of the wings—that magic world into which so many heroes vanish—there is a half evidence of another breaking out of kid-gloved pattering. Then this changes to a feverish ripple of comment, the quick manipulation of fans, the occasional crunch of a chocolate and now and then a little laugh, joyless, nervous and high-strung. The air is surcharged with a hysteria of emotion; it is panicky with hero worship.

The matinee girl insists on having an intensely romantic actor for her idol. No funny man, no matter how clever or how popular he may be with the public, has ever brought buckets to the box office by

means of his vogue with feminine audiences. No earnest actor has won her favor, although his quiet art may be as far ahead of the flamboyant swashbuckling of the be-feathered cavalier as the stars are above the earth. No great tragedian appeals to her imagination. The matinee maid likes to weep a little and thrill a little and live above the clouds with the impossible. And for the laughter making comedian she has not an atom of devotion. Wilson, Hopper, Daniels and the rest may cavort about in time to music, but she will never enshrine them in her heart of hearts. The matinee girl likes the keen sword thrust, the villain going over the cliff with a running high jump and the lovers finally clasped in each other's arms beneath the calcium's light. Sometimes she is a little smitten with the villain if he dresses well, has a touch of gray in his hair and really loves the girl he pursues so bitterly; but it is the old-fashioned hero with impossibly noble sentiments and more than impossible prowess that she puts upon her dressing table, framed in rhinestones.

Managers appreciate the money-making possibilities that lurk in the subtle advertisement falling from lips bubbling over with girlish enthusiasm and expressed in the gush and adjectives the theatre-going girl loves to employ. Frequently the matinee idol is very much averse to being put into the class; but he can't help himself if the goddess of the afternoon will have it so. He clasps the leading lady to his breast and the air vibrates with a rapturous sigh far deeper and more intense than that which greets the leading woman's stunning evening dress.

The hero worshipper is a constant young person and her devotion will outlive almost any circumstance in a play that may tend to blight the romance and charm of it all. Not one of the matinee girls can see anything humorous in the various situations. To hint so would be profanation. Just as the musical enthusiast goes to the oft-repeated opera, unconscious of anything but the beauty of the music, so do these matinee women gather again and again and buy tickets as they go out for another matinee. The fierce young blood-and-thunder hero has them in a spell.

"I never like this act," said a Brown Pottery girl crowned in a big black velvet bow; "I am so afraid of fencing. You know they get hurt sometimes."

"I think that girl is better than the one who played the gypsy last season, don't you? And last Saturday, why, she was perfectly great," answered her chum. "We are getting up a box party for next Saturday; will you come?"

"I've promised Lila. She gives a theatre party here on Saturday too. It's so nice of you to ask me."

"I think he's perfectly splendid; don't you?" said one wild-eyed young thing in a pink shirt waist; "but it must have seemed queer to be married to a man who killed people like that!"

"In those days everything was different I suppose. You see, there were no policemen. Oh, there's Gladys Nottingham over there. She just lives in this theatre! I see her every time I come and I'm here every week!" Which will give an idea of the way the play stands in the favor of these marsh-mallow-fed critics of the drama.

Kyrle Bellow was one of the first of the matinee heroes. Although Montague and Lester Wallace enjoyed popularity with their feminine auditors, it was not the ingenuous admiration of the afternoon girl. Herbert Keley had his following, and the late Nelson Wheatcroft, although identified with polished villain parts, was a marked favorite with Saturday audiences. Faversham, Henry Miller, Charles Richman and James K. Hackett are the more recent additions to the galaxy, and it cannot be said that any of these actors court the prestige they enjoy in this particular line, as each is happily married.

The fancy of the matinee girl can be better understood perhaps when it is known that she admires girl heroes of the stage—a very few—to her affections. Maude Adams has no more enthusiastic following than her Saturday afternoon audiences, who wave their handkerchiefs and applaud her to the echo. Julia Marlowe is a great favorite with her girl auditors and Viola Allen was very popular with matinee-goers. So that, despite much that is said to the contrary, the enthusiasm of this gushing young woman is probably an expression of the charming aspiration of youth toward the ideal, the good, the beautiful and the true—and the actor who portrays the possession

of these virtues wins her admiration for what he seems.

### HOW SHE SAVED THE TRAIN.

A Young Colorado Girl's Presence of Mind Averts a Railway Accident.

The proudest and happiest girl in all Garfield county Col. tonight is Nora O'Neil, aged 15. On one of the hillside eight miles from Glenwood lives Nora O'Neil with her parents, a few yards from the track, with the well-named Roaring Fork tumbling by just beyond the track and forty feet below. A sharp curve obstructs the view of the track, and Nora is accustomed to listen for the whistle of the flying trains, so that her womanly curiosity may be gratified by seeing the passengers flash by.

The train from Aspen to Glenwood was bowling along at thirty miles an hour one night last week, over the narrow gauge and as the sharp curve near the O'Neil homestead was distinguished by the engine he whistled sharply. He knew Nora's curiosity, and was obeying orders at the same time. Nora heard the whistle, and dropping her sewing, ran to the doorway. She looked towards the curve expectantly, and through the gloom saw a sight that froze her blood. The outline of a huge boulder, lying directly on the track was distinguishable. The frightened girl rushed to the curve and attempted to remove the boulder, but her frail strength could do nothing. Smaller evidences of a rock slide were on the track, but their removal would mean nothing.

The girl thought quickly and ran to her home, for only a short distance down the track she saw a headlight of the rapidly approaching locomotive. A stick of kindling lay near the stove, which was grasped and with feverish haste poured on some kerosene and ignited the improvised torch from a nearby lamp. Then she rushed frantically from the house to the track, for the whistle had sounded again, and ominously near.

Nora rushed around the little curve and waved her signal in wide circles and with a quick "down brakes" the belated train stopped three lengths from where the plucky little life saver stood. And none too soon, for so great was the momentum that the locomotive crashed into the huge boulder that barred the way and tore away a portion of a pilot. Off jumped the engineer and his stoker; the conductor and curious passengers swarmed around the partly disabled locomotive and while all incoherently poured out their thanks to Nora, the tears swelled in her eyes.

"That's all very well," said a drummer, "but let's do something more substantial for her."

And that was how Nora O'Neil found herself in possession of a well-filled purse as she watched the lights of the train rushing along toward Glenwood.

### At the Necktie Counter.

"Black neckties, if you please," Drummond the salesman, stared across the counter at the speaker as if his thoughts were in Egypt.

"What is it?" he said at last.

"Black neckties. Silk."

Drummond threw a box down. The customer opened it. "These are red—and not silk," he said, quietly.

"Nobody wears black silk now," Drummond said, yawning, and looking indifferently at the plain old man before him. Then he took up the box and threw it back into its place.

"Have you none of the kind I want?" asked the old man.

"No! That kind of goods went out years ago. We don't keep 'em," said the salesman, insolently.

"There are plenty of black silk ties," said Sanders, the man at the next counter, in an undertone.

"I know; but what's the good of bothering with an old back number like that? Methodist preacher, I'll bet five to one! But I was telling you about my cousins, the Harts. The three brothers all left the village and came up to town. One is now a railway boss, one a banker and the third is a sugar man. All of them millionaires."

"A lucky family! How was it?"

"They all had the capital to start with. The man with capital wins out every time."

"Perhaps you have neckties—black silk?" the old man said to Sanders. He had been lingering near the counter.

"I think there are some, sir," said Sanders taking down some boxes. He opened one after another, but there were no ties of the kind the old man wanted.

Drummond, with a half-amused stare at the persistent customer, turned away from gossip and giggle with a salesgirl. Sanders anxiously took down box after box.

"I am afraid I'm giving you a great deal of trouble," said the old man, kindly.

"That's what I'm here for," said the salesman, pleasantly. "I am sure I shall find them." The box was found at last

and a necktie of the right width chosen, wrapped and handed to the troublesome customer with a smile.

The next morning Saunders received a printed slip, notifying him of his promotion in the store. Drummond also received a slip, but it informed him that after the end of the next week his services would no longer be required by Colton & Co. Underneath the printed form were written the words: "Civility and efficiency are capital as well as money. You will fail because you have neither."

"Who was the old bore?" demanded Drummond, in a fury.

"It was John Colton, the silent partner of the firm," said one of the men.

### ALONE AT SEA.

The Thrilling Experience of a Man Who Crossed the Ocean Alone.

It was Captain Joshua Slocum who refitted an antiquated sloop, called the Spray, and set forth in her 'strange countries for to see.' He tells his adventures in a delightful book called 'Sailing Alone Around the World,' and this was how a very big universe looked to him when he was in the open sea off Sable Island:

The fog lifted just before dark, and I watched the sun go down and out of sight. Then I turned my face eastward, and there apparently at the very end of the bowsprit, was the smiling full moon rising out of the sea. Neptune himself, coming over the bows, could not have startled me more.

"Good evening, sir!" I cried. "I'm glad to see you!"

About midnight the fog shut down again and continued for a number of days, while the wind increased to a gale. It felt as if I were drifting into loneliness, an insect on a straw. I lashed the helm, and my vessel held her course; while she sailed, I slept.

During those days a feeling of awe crept over me. My memory worked with startling power. The ominous, the insignificant, the great, the small, the wonderful, the commonplace, all appeared before my mental vision in magical succession. Pages of my history were recalled, so long forgotten that they seemed to belong to a previous existence. I heard all the voices of the past, laughing, crying, telling what I had heard them tell in many corners of the earth.

The loneliness of my state wore off when the gale was high, and I found much work to do. When fine weather returned, there came the sense of solitude which I could not shake off. I used my voice often at first, giving some orders about the affairs of the ship, for I had been told that I should lose my speech from disuse.

At the meridian altitude of the sun, I called aloud, "Eight bells!" after the custom on shipboard. "Again, from my cabin, I cried to an imaginary man at the helm, "How does she head there?" and again, "Is she on her course?"

But getting no reply, I was reminded the palpably of my condition. My voice sounded hollow on the empty air, and I dropped the practice. Why not sing? My musical talent had never bred envy in others, but to realize what it was, you should have heard me use it out there on the Atlantic.

You should have seen the porpoises leap when I pitched my voice for the sea. Old turtles, with large eyes, poked up their heads, but the porpoises were, on the whole, the most appreciative. One day, when I was humming "Babylon's a Fallin," one of them jumped higher than the bowsprit. Had the Spray been going a little faster, she would have scooped him in. The sea-birds sailed around rather shy.

### Reading-rooms for the Blind.

A good work never stops. Since the Congressional Library at Washington opened a reading-room for the use of the blind,—the first instance of the kind known,—its example has been followed by public libraries here and there throughout the country, and the sightless are no longer deprived of the pleasure of reading.

In Washington itself the work has widened in influence. The afternoon readings in "The Pavilion of the Blind," as the reading room is called, have been wonderfully successful. There authors and singers have come to give pleasure by readings and music, and the blind Chaplain of the House frequently devotes an afternoon to the entertainment of his companions in darkness. He has a softly modulated voice, and often repeats poetry of a religious character.

When the Episcopal convention was in session in Washington, several of the bishops became very much interested in this work for the blind. Bishop Whipple and Bishop Whitehead read twice during the week they were there, and through their efforts and those of Bishop Gilbert and Dr. Samuel Hart, the prayer book was printed in the New York Point system and placed in the "Pavilion."

A very encouraging thing is the interest manifested in the work by the young ladies of Washington. Amidst the dis-

tractions and demands of society they have found time to minister to those less fortunate than themselves. A committee of twenty-five have taken turns in escorting the blind people to and from the readings.

Several members of the committee have learned the tedious system of writing in New York Point and Braille, and have volunteered to copy in it the leading magazine articles and stories, and place them on the reading tables of the Pavilion. One girl writes half a dozen articles every month, and binds them in a little volume, which she calls "The Meteor." She is well repaid for her trouble by the eager pleasure of the readers when the little book appears.

### Heroes Without Heroics.

One of the most touching incidents of the South African war was the recent decoration of Captain Towse of the Gordon Highlanders, by Queen Victoria. The gallant soldier had been blinded in both eyes while leading a brilliant charge, and after attempting in vain to carry his wounded colonel off the field, he lay beside him all night, defending him till help came. Twice he had been recommended for the Victoria Cross.

As the blind officer was led into the royal presence and knelt at the feet of his queen, tears so filled her eyes that she could hardly see to pin the coveted badge on his breast. Her few words of praise came in so broken a voice as to be inaudible to all but the recipient.

The same papers which brought this story of a vicissitude of war referred to a no less glorious triumph of peace. During the recent outbreak of the bubonic plague in Honolulu, when everyone else has fled, Armstrong Smith a young teacher "though pale and thin from overwork, warned of his own peril, himself a suspect," stuck to his post as volunteer nurse, "giving incalculable aid and comfort wherever he went." When the danger was past, influential citizens presented him with five thousand dollars to apply himself to the study of medicine.

It detracts nothing from the valor of such deeds that they were followed by fitting rewards. To the honor of this generation, however, be it said that never a day passes but is illuminated by some unobtrusive act of heroism and self-sacrifice.

### Near Enough.

A group of men were exchanging stories of adventure in a grocer's store in a small Western town.

"I've been in camp," said one of them; "only came down yesterday. One morning last week I struck the trail of a grizzly about half a mile above the camp. I followed that trail without let up till about half past four that afternoon, and then I gave it up, and went back to camp."

"What possessed you to quit after putting in a whole day's work?" asked one of his listeners.

"Well, to tell the truth," said the grizzly's follower, shifting his weight ponderously from one leg to the other, "it seemed to me the trail was getting altogether too fresh."

### Balloon Flying by Moonlight.

French meteorologists engaged in the exploration of the upper air by means of captive balloons have found that, owing to the effect of the sun's heat on the balloons, the best results are attained at night, and their most successful experiments have been performed by moonlight. The balloons carry self-registering thermometers and barometers and attain enormous heights, varying between 40,000 and 50,000 feet. The highest flight recorded by the instruments is nearly nine and one-third miles.

"Johnson's new book is bound in blue." "Yes; but it ain't half as blue as Johnson is!"

## "77" For Fall COLDS

A Cold taken in the Fall of the year is a dangerous Cold; it may "hang on" all Winter long. Yet it is an easy Cold to get rid of before the bad weather sets in and the Cold settles into Grip.

Dr. Humphrey's Famous Specific, "77," restores the checked circulation, indicated by a chill or shiver, the first sign of taking Cold, starts the blood coursing through the veins, and "breaks up" the Cold. "Seventy-seven" consists of a small vial of pleasant pellets; fits the vest pocket. At druggists, 25c.

Doctor book mailed free. Humphrey's Homeopathic Medicine Co., Cor. William & John Sts., New York. 22 Rue Etienne-Marcel 22, Paris.