

The Saturday Review

of LITERATURE

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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The Publisher's Function

THE business of printing and selling books has reached a high level of efficiency in America. The organization of a modern publishing house is equipped to meet most problems of manufacture, advertising, publicity, distribution, and so on. The development of modern book advertising and publicity alone has been amazing. New ingenious schemes for interesting the public in particular books are constantly being evolved. As to manufacture, the taste and skill exercised in the making of many modern volumes reflects great credit upon the profession of publisher. We expect to say something rather medicinal in a moment, and so, quite frankly, we are sugar-coating the pill.

It is in the editorial department of publishing that we discern a few faults. We shall try to stipulate clearly just what they are.

What, in chief, is the publisher's function? As we conceive it, it is to print and sell books which both author and publisher may properly regard as, at the very least, sound in construction and craftsmanship. It is not a question, merely, of securing the work of prominent authors and popular authors and simply "putting it through," with the occasional more carefully considered publication of promising material by less well-known writers. The publisher who lives up to the best ideals of his profession—for profession it is, as well as business—must constantly exercise the most discriminating and intelligent editorial supervision of every single book he publishes. That would seem to go without saying.

In all publishing houses a staff of professional readers sifts manuscripts and hands on opinions of the books that may prove worthy of the publisher's list. Manuscripts in some way superlative advance to the desks of the chief editors. By the time a manuscript is accepted, presumably a definite body of valuable opinion concerning it has been precisely formulated.

And just at that "stage of the game," taking many recent books as evidence, the proper editorial coöperation with the author, advice, pregnant suggestion, skilled aid, seem to us to be wanting. A large publishing house is, of course, a mill that grinds forth many books. But with the proper organization and attention, there should be no reason why more care is not exercised in advance "treatment" of the individual volume. Many a book is now put forth, bearing a noted name, which, by ordinarily intelligent coöperation between publisher and author could have been distinctly bettered in many aspects. To be specific, an otherwise admirable novel may sag badly in the middle, the writing of the latter half of it may be much inferior to the preceding part, plot or characterization may suddenly be bungled, the author may, in some particular section, lose his sense of proportion, befog a clear issue, or badly violate the unity of a fine conception.

Where a noted name is involved there exists, of course, in this age of keen competition, the publisher's fear of losing from his list a valuable property. The author may rebel at any suggestion—with perhaps dire results. But, on the other hand, most authors are reasonable. Perhaps many of them are from Missouri, and have to be "shown;" yet that is just where the publisher should display acumen keen enough, intelligence large enough, and practiced, expert skill enough to tell them just what is wrong with an otherwise excellent product, and to suggest a remedy.

When we say "publisher" above, we are re-
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Who Has Not, Cannot Have

By AMY LOWELL

LANCES slanted against a froward sky,
So do the days of my life appear before me,
O verily Beloved.

Tempt me not, therefore, that I linger
With my long, pointed, red morocco shoes
Scuffing the fallen vine-leaves
A-skip upon the lozenged marbles of your floor.
I am not a man for chess and blue cushions,
For sheep's-eyeing across lute-strings
Of a dapper afternoon.
What were you among the cooks and water-boys,
Camping on a wind-vexed plain at nightfall
Amid the chattering stalks of last year's grasses,
While I, in some lost distance, wage a war
Against the goblins of a mouldering generation?
Would you follow my torn banners where they
flicker

In and out of the cloven bellies of mountains,
And the hail-stones gash like javelins,
And the sun dries up the roots of hair
Till my horse is naked as a woman
Bartered for an arid territory?
There are such, my lady,
And I have lands and lances to compel them,
And owe them nothing but a five-petalled kiss
Blooming between a brace of bloody battles.

This Week



"A History of the Pharaohs." Reviewed by *Ashton Sanborn*.

"More Changes More Chances." Reviewed by *T. J. C. Martyn*.

"Dawn Boy." Reviewed by *Mary Austin*.

"Disraeli and Gladstone." Reviewed by *Wilbur C. Abbott*.

The Bowling Green. By *Christopher Morley*.

A London Letter. By *Roderick Random*.

Cursing and Discoursing. By *W. R. B.*

Trade Winds. By *P. E. G. Quercus*.

The Phoenix Nest. By *The Phoenixian*.

Next Week or Later

On Reviewing. By *Willa Cather*.

Poincaré's Reminiscences. Reviewed by *Archibald Cary Coolidge*.

"The Letters of Bret Harte." Reviewed by *Henry Seidel Canby*.

"Odtaa." Reviewed by *William Rose Benét*.

"Howard Pyle." Reviewed by *Frank Jewett Mather, Jr.*

Good Theatre*

By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

CHARACTERS

THE GIRL IN THE BOX OFFICE

FIRST DINNER JACKET

SECOND DINNER JACKET

TWO STRANGERS

Customers in the lobby, and members of the audience

The scene is the lobby of a New York theatre while a play is in performance within. At the back, center, the window of the box office. Right, at a 45-degree angle, the entrance to the auditorium. The left wall, also at a 45-degree slant, is almost concealed by huge posters of the play, pictures of girls in one-piece bathing suits, large photographs of actors, and such announcements as *YOUR MONEY OR YOUR WIFE*, *THIRD HUGE YEAR*, *THE PLAY THAT MAKES DIMPLES TO CATCH THE TEARS*. SEE *THE BATHING CHORUS*, *THE BABIES THAT MADE THE OCEAN FAMOUS*. Down left, entrance from street.

The director will note that this piece requires a considerable number of backstage voices carefully drilled to emit, at given moments, the sound of a large audience screeching with laughter. This laughter must have a specially proletarian timbre, it is predominantly feminine and subtly suggests the vulgar horseplay of the piece proceeding within. It is always a sudden unanimous explosion, followed by scattered almost hysterical screams of female merriment. The director will see to it, by giving his signals at the proper instant, that this backstage laughter does not interfere with any possible laughter in the actual audience.

The box-office window is arranged so that the audience can get a clear view of the sprightly young woman in charge of the tickets. At the entrance to the theatre proper, R, are two dark and dapper little men in dinner jackets and velvet hats, very Hart, Schaffner and Marx in aspect, guardians of the doorway; they are almost twin-like in similarity though one is older than the other. Five or six young men and girls are standing L, looking at the posters. Their clothes and umbrellas show that it is raining outside.

Immediately after the rise of the curtain there is a terrific and multitudinous yell of laughter from behind the scene. The young people studying the posters look at each other and then move over to the box-office window, where they go through the motions of inquiring for tickets. Two or three other people also come in from the street, shake off rain, and go to the box-office.

GIRL IN BOX OFFICE (to these inquirers successively)

All sold out for the next three weeks.

All sold out.

(Another loud halloo behind)

I can give you two in the sky for a week from Monday.

Sometimes there's something turned in just before the show.

Sorry, sister, there ain't a thing.

Not a chance.

Positively S. R. O.

(A supreme explosion of laughter inside, followed by single squawks and yelps. The loiterers in the lobby go out reluctantly.)

N. B.—This play is fully protected by copyright and no readings or amateur performances of any kind may be given without the written permission of and payment of royalty to the author's representative, Norman Lee Swartout, Summit, New Jersey, U. S. A.

1ST DINNER JACKET—That's where she loses her bathin' suit.

(*He looks at his watch*)

Ten thirty-two. Runnin' right on schedule tonight, we'll let out by eleven five.

2ND D. J.—Does everything always come right on time like that?

1ST D. J.—Sure. You can set your watch by the laughs. You'll learn a lot about the show business when you go on the road with that new company. Hoboken to Tallahassee, they'll all yell at the same thing. The next one comes at ten thirty-three when she uses that hank of seaweed for a skirt. They'll laugh for twelve seconds. Time it for yourself.

(*He holds out his watch for younger man to see. A howl of laughter from behind, diminishing and then renewing, lasting exactly twelve seconds. If possible there should be among the backstage voices one that can produce a specially loud, braying, and grotesque masculine yawp, recognizable now and then above the others.*)

2ND D. J.—Pretty good. Not even this storm tonight ain't hurt none.

1ST D. J.—Takes more'n weather to pull this show's punch. Startin' on third year and took twenty-four thousand last week. Some draw, I'll tell the world. With this piece Monday's near as good as Saturday, and any showman'll tell you that's a miracle.

(*Another uproar behind*)

2ND D. J.—I thought it bein' Hallowe'en might cut into business, so many parties on tonight.

(*During this conversation two men in Elizabethan costumes have entered from the street, shaking raindrops from their cloaks and plumed hats, and look about them curiously. They examine the posters, confer together, suggest in dumb show that there is something about these that they do not understand, and go to the box-office window. Meanwhile continued explosions of laughter from behind make them look oddly at one another. The two Dinner Jackets, talking together, half turned toward offstage, as though looking into the house, do not notice these visitors until, a moment later, the voice of the girl at the box-office catches their attention.*)

(*The two visitors, whom we will identify merely as W and F, are very different in demeanor. W, of medium stature, inclined to plumpness, has a high forehead prematurely baldish, auburn hair, bright hazel eyes, a small moustache, and a very tiny beard on his lower lip. He is of mercurial, sensitive, excitable disposition. The other, F, is more controlled; taller and thinner, with dark eyes and the arched brows of a humorist. His handsome face is shrewd, observant, cynical, a trifle sombre; he has a drooping moustache and a neat beard.*)

2ND D. J.—(*timing another laugh*): Six seconds for that one.

1ST D. J.—Yeh. That's where she skids on the jellyfish. At matinees that on'y gets four seconds. They always laugh longer at night. Nothing on their minds, I guess. Kids in bed and dishwashing all done for the day.

2ND D. J.—That's the only trouble by this show. So much time out for laughs, always I miss the 11.25 for Cypress Hills.

1ST D. J.—Don't be sore on them laughs, brother. Every one o' them screams is a meal ticket. That's what I call good theayter.

GIRL (*loudly*)—Not a darn thing. What's the use you boys coming round here in fancy dress an' tryin' to kid me?

W (*to F*)—Who is the saucy knave to use us thus? There was a varlet once at the barrier of the Globe spoke me just so. I draggled him in Bankside.

1ST D. J. (*turning*)—Coupla birds from that fancy dress ball at the Astor.

GIRL—No, you can't go in without seats. Standin' Room's full up. Besides the show's most over, they're in the last act.

W—P'll not stomach it.

GIRL—Don't try to start nothin' round here. Run back to the costumer's and put on your pants.

W—Godamercy, to be groundligned thus. Ho, young capon, forth and be carved. (*Makes as if to draw his rapier.*)

F (*restraining him*)—Tush, Will, tush. No offence was meant. Besides it is no fire-eater. Seest thou not, tis but a wench?

W—Go to! A wench in the theatre? (*Looks at her closely*) Zounds, 'tis even so. Nay then, considered as wench she is not ill favored, though uncouth in the poll. (*He refers, need we explain, to her close cropped hair.*)

GIRL—You boys better get home to New Haven and sleep it off.

W—Nay, duckling, spite me not. What manner of play is this? (*Laughter behind.*) It reapeth public favor?

GIRL—It's a knockout. Mean to say you ain't heard of it?

F—But is it play indeed, play absolute? Once this evening we were shrewdly gulled with accelerated portraits—

GIRL—Come again, Webster. I don't get you.

W—Instead of proper playhouse life and doings On a whited arras we saw passage Of wild phantasmas and distracted shades With trivial texts between. Inexplicable dumb-show!

A murrain on such cozenage!

GIRL—Oh, sure, it's a real stage play, not a pitcher.—Better stick around. I might find you two good seats, about a month from now.

W—Gramercy; this is our only night. We saw your fiery blazons overhead. "Your Money or Your Wife"—the title's merry.

F—The alternative is justly choosed. The more wiving, the less in pocket.

GIRL—Yeh, it's a nifty. Gets 'em coming. It ain't nothing to do with the show. Just a line. W—But what meaneth this bombast touching tears and dimples?

F—A form of hyperbole, I trow; inclining men's minds to credit that the piece assuageth dolor with concurrent risibles, moving simultaneously to grief and merriment.

(*Another yell of laughter inside*)

W—Merriment, indeed. Lord, Frank, they whooped it just so at the old Globe. I know that voice of the groundlings. P'll warrant some zany hath fallen on his rump.

GIRL—It's a good guess.

W—And your choirboys yonder. (*He points to poster of the bathing beauties.*) A cunning trick of padding. They counterfeit damsels right briskly. 'Tis good for business.

GIRL—Boys! Say, what do you think this is? The Columbia varsity show?—Mr. Einstein! Let these guys breathe on your neck. I'm busy.

F—The wench is something choleric. Accost the little gemini in sable.

(*They make a courteous bow to the two Dinner Jackets*)

W—Gentles, Godigoden (*which is correct Elizabethan for "God give you good even"*).

1ST D. J.—You can't get in. Sorry, gents; full house.

W—A brave night for the author.

F—What have we here; something comical-tragical-historical-pastoral?

(*Another shout of laughter inside*)

1ST D. J.—It don't sound tragical-historical, does it? Come on, boys, what's the big idea? You from that party at the Astor?

W—Gossip, we come from far; our inquest's honest.

1ST D. J.—Inquest! No one dead around here. W—When I was at the Globe—

1ST D. J.—The Globe? Oh, friends of Charley Dillingham, maybe. Say, are you professionals? Why didn't you flash a card—

W—We had a hope to learn what new progressions, what simulations and what pretty arts the playhouse stages now. Tell us the course and color of your drama.

1ST D. J.—Sure, it's a pleasure. Greatest wallop Broadway ever had. It's got everything, sure-fire. Comedy, music, dancing—

F—Dancing to song, if sweetly devised, is a thing of great pleasure. It hath an extreme good grace, and maketh sport for the vulgar.

1ST D. J.—You said it. Boy, wait till you see that chorus. Well, it's like this. There's an ornery old bird living on Long Island, that's kinda gypped his brother outa the family property, they had a run-in and the brother went off to Florida, years ago when it was all just a sand beach.

W—Florida?

F—A kind of plantation, perchance—

1ST D. J.—Oh, filling stations and scenery and one-piece bathing suits. Where folks lay around on the sand and wait for the newspapers to take their picture.

W—A Forest of Arden—(*He is listening with closest attention.*)

1ST D. J.—So the brother beats it off down there in the sunshine. He gets together a kind of Boy Scout Troop, a bunch of his old buddies that's all cuckoo for the simple life. They camp out in the jungle and sing barber shop harmony and swear it beats Times Square all hollow. And there's a Gloomy Gus along who pulls a swell line of philosophy. He's full o' the hebejeebies but he's one grand wise-cracker. (*Loud laughter behind.*) There, that's him now.

F (*to W*)—Nay, there is strange infusion in his discourse. I make but doubtful seizure of his drift.

W (*nudges him*)—Soft, soft! This is of notable purport. (*"Purport," in Elizabethan usage, is accented on the second syllable.*) (*To D. J.*)—But the wench, man! Sure your author hath not fobbed you off with a mere parcel of—(*he hesitates for the word*)—wise-crackers—moralizing in the greenwood? What is a play without wench?

1ST D. J.—You should worry. This is Broadway, ain't it? Sure, I'm coming to that. There's a coupla lovely girls, they get fed up living with the rich guy and they run away to Florida, too.

W—Ha! Habited as boys?

1ST D. J.—How'd you know? Yeh, it's a fack, though it don't really make much difference; they're all dressed like boys nowadays. And there's a young feller, a mechanic that works in a garridge who's fell terrible hard for Rosie—that's one of the girls. He's crazy about her, just worships her, and the poor bimbo can't do nothing but blow up her tires and fill her batt'ry with acid—

F—The scoundrel!

1ST D. J.—Oh, no, just this what they call love at first sight. The girl likes him, too. He's a big athaletic kid and she's seen him do his stuff at a boxing bout they put on for charity. You know how these classy dames falls for that sorta thing.

W—And your lovesick mechanical follows to the Forest of—to Florida?

1ST D. J.—You betcha. He opens up a hot dog stand and names it for her, calls it Pretty Rosie's Dog Parlor. He does a big sideline in cold cream, too.

F—Hot dogs, cold cream, a strange antipathy. What is't, a kennel or a dairy?

1ST D. J.—Cold cream for sunburn. Most of those dames down there gets themselves sunburned right up to the horizon. Well, the kid's clever, on trees along the road he hangs signs *Get Your Dogs at Pretty Rosie's*, and *For Sunburned Legs Come to Pretty Rosie's*. When she sees these signs everywhere she thinks it's a queer coincidence.

F—'Tis ever the weakness of playwrights. They are not content till plodding probability leapeth like a flea.

S—This—this dame you mention—she seeks him out, undaunted by his kennel of wild hounds?

1ST D. J.—At first he don't reckonize her in her pants, and she pulls his leg something fierce; it's a riot. Then, of course, the chorus comes on, the whole gang goes in swimming, and say, there's some slick love-making—

(*Laughter behind*)

That's what they're doing now. (*He looks off, as if into the theatre. W approaches the doorway and looks off also, vastly interested.*)

F—For the stage, love is matter of comedies; but in life it doth much mischief.

1ST D. J. (*turning to F*)—Say, your friend's a good showman. He talks like balloon soup, but he knows good theayter.

F—Aye, he hath a practitioner's eye for a love scene.

1ST D. J.—I think he's kidding me. He's seen this show before.

F—'Tis possible—

W (*from doorway, exulting*)—Lord, Frank—Our darling fustian!—Aye, the very thing! (*Continues to gaze entranced, while a great shout of laughter comes from behind.*)

1ST D. J. (*to F*)—Then the real estate boom hits

'em, the old wise-crackers is so busy laying out waterfront lots on mortgage they has no time to picnic in the woods; land values goes to the sky and even Gloomy Gus starts a development. The old fourflusher on Long Island loses his jack in Wall Street an' has to come down to borrow from his brother and say he never meant it. They get him a job as a bellhop at Coral Gables. Just a grand hokum fadeout, and everybody happy.

(Laughter within. *W comes back from doorway radiant.*)

W—Ah, Frank, thou shouldst write plays.

F—Tush, these are but toys.

W—To hear the groundlings roar as they do now, Oh noble sport, sport royal!—Thou'rt too nice. To my gross Bankside wit, 'tis meat and drink To hear the addled citizens at their mirth— Their lewd and lackwit innocent noble mirth!

1ST D. J.—Yeh, it's a great show; a great play for the public.

W—I thought so once myself.

1ST D. J.—Would you believe, every critic in town panned it—

F—The intellect of man, then, is not dead.

1ST D. J.—Give 'em what they like, as they like it—

F (to *W*)—As you like it—

(Laughter within)

W—Nay, Frank, I see thou hast no playhouse heart; In this my mystery thou art not capable. Why even this hodge-pudding of poor dross Brings me my old ecstasies into mind— How from the moment of first entrance on To strike them with the sense of some suspension, Some controveise of passion and desire So that without a guess of what's to come They feel the onward moving, and are thrilled—

1ST D. J.—Sure! You gotta have suspense—

W—To hold all this within the troubled wit And ere a line be characterized, to feel In airy storage in the delicate brain Your creatures at their doing— Not trammelled up with heavy circumstance But actual and free—yea, this is godlike!

1ST D. J.—I've got a kid in Bushwick High, she said exactly the same thing. She's only sixteen but she's took a correspondence course in playwriting. Her mother was trouping in East Lynne before she was born, I think that gave the kid a sorta litry slant.

(Laughter behind)

W—That uproar hath the proper vulgar note, Sweet in the playwright's ear. Your auditors Seasoned with mirth and ripe in apprehension Then curiously draw your tensions tighter, Let glamour tease them on.

1ST D. J.—That's right: get 'em laughing, you can do anything with 'em.

F—As Tully hath it, *Haec ego non rideo; non sal sed natura ridetur*; which is to say, meseems these cachinnations are not caused by wit but by mere animal heyday. Thou rememberest, Will, all motives of laughing have been anatomized in three: foreigners, bodily prostrations, and strong cheese; whereof the merriment of the third seems most difficult to construe.—Confound not these baubles with thine own heavenly stuff.

W—Then think you that the roister-doister vein Requires no cunning? E'en your fustian Must be just so; so filed and peized To weigh the voice and carriage of the speech, To throw the cranky jape just on the moment, Dibble the seedling theme in earthy sconces And plant it unawares; and get it over To a stamping coughing jostling stinking pit Of ragamuffins, grooms, and varletry, The cut and longtail of the populace— And still have grace for loftier quiddities To please the court and gentry—

There's an art,

Lord Chancellor, that statesmen in great place Might study to their profit.

(Laughter behind)

Mark you, the veriest groundling of the lot Must see himself, his inward hope or grievance, Active on the scene. Aye, this it is That makes our stagy antics quick and sheer: Lo, on the very instant of their doing They are transmuted to the blood and stuff Of every hearer; who admires the image

And hugs it as his own, or fashions it To suit his private fancy.

1ST D. J.—It's a fack; we have to keep a cop at the stage door to move on the bozos.

W—It is the varsal ego in men's bosoms That gives 'em stomach, in their loneliness, To chew and savour this our bright pretence And take it to themselves.—Haply the author Like the matron pelican of adage Feeds his unsusceptive auditors From the red artery of his proper breast.

F—Bravo, Will! Almost persuadest thou me! Thou art, what's passing rare in playwrights, nigh as eloquent as thine own creations.

W—My stuff, you say? Fico! A peoplish vein, With flashes of proud verse, But farced and strumpeted for greasy groundlings.

Oh halidom, to think what *these* (gesturing off) could do,

New fangles and devices for the scene And women—female women—on the board To play their lovely, elvish, tragic part And draw the little nerves of tender feeling So tight, so strange. Lord, Lord, what truths and triumphs

Are promised for the workmen in this craft.



AN ELIZABETHAN WORTHY

Oh to be actual of it once again—(a pause) Methinks we still might move a heart or two, And not o'ergild the fable.

GIRL (coming from box-office; she has her hat on)—Mr. Einstein, here's the report on tonight's business. Will you OK it please. (1st D. J. takes the paper and goes into box-office. *W is looking into the theatre. The girl turns to F.*) Well old sport, your friend's got quite a line. I been listening in. Gee, he talks like grand op'ra—

2ND D. J.—That musta been some party they were on tonight.

GIRL—Where do you sheiks learn all that new slang, up at college? That's a grand crack about the women, female women. Say, I'd like to have that bird meet some o' my girl friends—

F—Nothing, I trow, would give him greater solace. 'Tis our misfortune we have a journey to perform.

GIRL—Back to New Haven, I spose. Well, there's time for a coupla sundaes before the midnight—

W (coming from doorway; his eye kindles upon her, and I begin to see myself that she has her charms)

Ah, sweet chuck; in relenting mood? 'Tis o'erlong since I have seen such brightness in an eye.—Frank, these new tires do not so ill become them. (He indicates her attractive close-fitting little hat) A goodly porringer!—An we held converse together, duckling, deemst thou not we might find topics of good cheer?

GIRL (who has quite succumbed to this mode of address)—I'll say so. What you doin' after the show? Do you Charleston?

2ND D. J.—Hey, I thought you were dated up with me—

W—We might repair to a tavern—

F—Will, our space is short. On the punctual midnight—

GIRL—Frank, you're an old iceberg. Damn the midnight. There's plenty of trains at Grand Central.

W—I had forgot. 'Tis true, we make a journey—(chaffing her genially) a journey that permits no baggages. (Then almost as if to himself) The dead shepherd spoke the seasonable line—poor Kit. (He quotes.) "That time might cease, and midnight never come."

GIRL—That's the idea.

W (Takes her arm, looks at her quizzically and tenderly)

—Sweetheart, I had a gust for frolic once.

Savor thy passing hours; may they be sweet—

(She leans toward him, meeting him clearly in the eye; it is even suspicious that a kiss is toward, while F watches in amused tolerance; what the 2nd D. J. thinks I don't care, he is only a puppet anyhow; but then, after just enough pause, comes a burst of clapping from within.)

GIRL—That's the curtain. Cheese it, here they come. Meet you here in three minutes.

(She runs off, into the auditorium.)

W (looking after her) And so, goodnight.

(A confused sound of movement from behind. *W and F stand a moment uncertainly.*)

F—Come, Will. Here we have no part. We are but cuckoos in the nest—

W—Or those thin shadows on the whited screen. The word is exit.

(As they go toward the street, L, drawing their cloaks about them, 1st D. J. bobs out of the box-office.)

1ST D. J.—Well, so long, boys, glad to see you any time you're around.

(They make a polite salute, and are gone.)

(The advance guard of a typical musical comedy audience comes through the doorway, R; the men lighting cigarettes, women adjusting their wraps. They pause to utter comments, which must be very distinctly said and not hurried.)

MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE—

A great show.

Certainly was comical.

I thought I'd die laughing.

I could see that all over again.

How d'you suppose they think up them things.

I liked it, it was *different*.

It sure was original.

CURTAIN

Faure in Translation

THE DANCE OVER FIRE AND WATER.

By ELIE FAURE. Translated by John Gould Fletcher. New York. Harper & Bros. 1926. \$3.

Reviewed by HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON

MILADY was the tragedy of my life. I was fourteen years old and some one had told me about Alexandre Dumas. And so I set forth to get me a copy of "The Three Musketeers." Alas! the local lending library charged ten cents for every volume taken out and their only edition of "The Three Musketeers" was a cheap Flemish reprint which came in five "to-be-continued's."

Five times ten makes fifty cents. My frugal parents bestowed upon me a weekly largess of ten cents. That meant that I must practice economy for five whole weeks to get to the end of the story. Once however I had made the acquaintance of d'Artagnan and Athos, I could not stop.

In that dilemma, I appealed to my Mother, and glorious to say, I finished M. Dumas's masterpiece in less than a fortnight. But the shock of the last chapter almost killed my faith in the human race.

A year before, a kindly aunt had given me "Ivanhoe"—a well-known romance by one Sir Walter Scott. That story had told me that all beautiful women were good and true, and at thirteen such a faith was very satisfactory.

But what was I to make of Milady? She was infinitely fairer than any of Sir Walter's heroines,