

# "A Poor Girl Has no Chance," by ALICE NEILSEN *Charles Darnton*

**W**HAT could the poor girl do? Nothing. There you have it, poor girl, straight from Miss Alice Neilsen, who was once a poor girl herself.

I was prepared for the worst as I waited for her in the Spanish Room of the Hotel Astor. She had gone away a "Singing Girl" to return a prima donna. Experience has taught me that the made-in-England prima donna usually has more airs than those she sings. She may have gone away with an up-State twang, but trust her, in nine cases out of ten to come back with an accent as thick as a London fog. Of course, she is unconscious of it, and she flickers the lashes of her innocent eyes as she says, more pleased than apologetic: "One does grow like the people with whom one is thrown, doesn't one?" That was my last experience, and I had steeled myself for another of the same sort.

But an agreeable surprise was in store for me. Miss Neilsen evidently went abroad to study something besides "manner." She seemed absolutely unrolled. There was no affectation, no airs, no nonsense. She was unchanged even to that cunning, little mole upon which opera glasses were wont to be focused in the old Casino days. She was still from Missouri, and she was going to see her mother in Harlem. At once an awful load of prima donna was lifted from my mind.

**T**HROWING off her automobile coat, Miss Neilsen put the case of the poor girl in a nutshell. "The poor girl hasn't a chance in the world. It takes a lot of money to do one's self for grand opera. A girl with \$5,000 even can do next to nothing. She must go abroad to study music and languages. All the great teachers are there. The cost is as great as the work and study. It cost me all that I had earned in years on the stage. No, the poor girl has no chance."

But what could the poor girl do?—I was concerned for her. "She can go on the stage, into the chorus if necessary," said Miss Neilsen, "and work and hope and save. That is her only chance—the chance of making enough money to pay for the study she needs, the study that she can't possibly get in this country. This may sound delatoy, but it is the plain, undeniable truth. She must go to the land of song, the home of music."

"Do you feel, too, that it is easier for an American girl to 'make good' in Europe than in her own country?" "Indeed I don't, although once she has 'made good' the worst is over. Once the European public takes you to its heart it keeps you there. Here, on the other hand, your every new appearance is a debut. What you have

done doesn't count; you must do it all over again. New York is the most trying city in the world in that respect. I'm trembling with fear already at the thought of appearing here again."

"You have been away how long?" "Let me see. I must count on my fingers as I used to at school. One—two—three—four (one gloved finger ran over those of the other hand)—four years and a half. Dear me, what a long time! I'm afraid every one will have forgotten me. It's going to be very hard for me."

"As hard for you as your first appearance in Italy?" "No; nothing, it seems now, could ever again be so hard as that. Talk of Italy's sunny skies! They were the most lowering I ever saw on the night of my debut at the Theatre Bellini, in Naples. It was raining and, like the skies, I was weeping. I cried all the way to the theatre. Failure! Failure! Failure! That was the one word, the one thought in my mind. The terrible fear that had been with me since the night before, when my teeth chattered with it. I don't know how I got on the stage. 'No! It wasn't stage fright. It was something, a thousand things worse. The only time in my life that I had stage fright was when I was a little girl. It was at an amateur performance in Kansas City. After much pleading I was given a small part. My one little line was to be the cue for my sister's entrance. But the moment I faced that first audience I forgot everything and ran, crying, into the wings. At Naples that night I



"The only time I had stage fright"

felt the same impulse to run away and hide, and I could hardly believe my ears when the applause that meant so much to me did come."



"It takes a lot of money"

condition at the time, for the reason that the dancing I was obliged to do was taxing my strength. I was almost discouraged when a friend advised me to see Mr. Henry Russell, who was the talk of London at the time because of his having restored Duse's golden voice. I had no desire to do anything but rest, but I did see him and sing for him finally, with the result that he



"I just sat and watched Calve eat."

persuaded me to give up comic opera and go to Italy to study. After a year I sang in concert in London and in Italy, and finally had my opportunity in Faust. It was very hard work and very small pay at first. I've often sat in my dressing-room and laughed at my magnificent salary of 45 francs. But to have the Italians like me was worth more than anything else. The day after my Naples debut a newboy ran up to me in the street and, giving me a paper, cried, 'La Belle Americana!' Smiles had taken the place of tears. It had been worth while, after all. Next year I sang in 'Traviata' at the great San Carlo Opera-House, in Naples, and after that in London. Calve was to have sung with me there, but she was taken ill and could not. I have just been singing to her upstairs. She had come to luncheon, but I hardly took a bite. I just sat there and watched Calve eat. When I was at the Casino I could run over to the Metropolitan with my make-up on to snatch what I could of her wonderful voice and acting. It was hard work getting up my nerve to sing to her just now. But she was very kind. A prima donna is not always kind to another singer. Jealousy is one of the things a singer has to battle with. The very fact that she makes a success may keep her from getting another engagement.

## "VERONIQUE," "MOONSHINE," "THE WHITE CAT" AND TWO SHAKESPEAREAN PLAYS NEXT WEEK

**"VERONIQUE,"** a musical piece, will be offered by George Edwards' company from the Apollo Theatre, London, at the Broadway Theatre on Monday evening. The book was written by M.M. Vanloo and Duval, the score by Andre Messager, director of opera at Covent Garden. The principals of Mr. Edwards' company are Ruth Vincent, Lena Malin, Kiddy Gordon, Agnes Vincent, Miss Valli-Valli, Deborah Voler, Ruby Delmar, John Le Hay, Lawrence Rea, Aubrey Fitzgerald, Ralph Nairn, John Malcolm and James Grant.

Japan by the British Government to report on the situation there and to form an alliance on behalf of the home office. The party returns to England via New York, and on the trip London meets and falls in love with Molly "Moonshine," who has been sent out by the United States Department of State to capture the respect.

that are usually neglected. Mr. Sothorn has built his Shylock upon the interpretations of Keen and Booth, while Miss Marlowe, it is said, will lay unusual emphasis upon the womanly, rather than the intellectual attributes of Portia.

pany will revive "The Two Orphans." The Third Avenue Theatre will have "Lighthouse by the Sea."

the One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street Theatre. Adelle Ritchie will head the bill at the Columbia. Others will be Annie Irlan and company, the English Minstrels, the Roscoe Minstrels, Misses Francey, and Fields and Ward.

# HEART and HOME PAGE for WOMEN

## THE TORTURE OF TACITURNITY

**A** WIFE of Sioux City, Ia., has sued her husband for divorce, to get a chance to talk. In her petition she declares that when she was married her husband took her to live on a farm, and that being entirely dependent upon his society she looked forward to his noon and evening hours coming as affording opportunity for a "good talk." But no matter how interesting or spirited her conversation she declares, her taciturn spouse answered only with an unresponsive grunt till the perpetual silence ruined her nerves and threatened her "mental health."

## Hints for Girl Stenographers.

**I**f a girl works around a typewriter during the day or handles dusty goods the hands are thoroughly begotten by night the dirt working in as the perspiration opens the pores. If there is no running water at her office she should leave them uncovered until she reaches home. Putting on gloves with the letter for any further use and dries the hands. Wash the hands in soap water holding a teaspoonful of

## BETTY'S BALM FOR LOVERS.

**A**ll perplexed young people can obtain expert advice on their tangled love affairs by writing Betty, letters for her should be addressed to BETTY, Post-Office box 1,854, New York.

## What Are His Intentions?

**I** AM a girl of eighteen, with plenty of good, honest friends. For the past six months I have been having a very congenial young man of twenty-three coming to spend the evening with me. He told my mother he was very fond of me and that he had serious intentions. I introduced him to a Southern boy who is keeping company with my younger sister and they became thick friends. One evening my sister's friend came to me and begged me to drop the young man in question. He said his intentions were

## HEALTH AND BEAUTY.

**A** Red Shade for Hair. P—If you want to make the red shade try this: Acetic acid, 4 drams; powdered henna leaves, 1 pound; w h i s e y, 4 drams; powdered rhubarb, 4 drams; add water enough to form a paste. This paste is applied to the hair, which has been previously thoroughly washed. The ends of long hair are fastened in beads around the head and the hair is thoroughly covered with the paste, which is left on until it dries. The henna is then washed off with water, which has been softened with a little ammonia. The operator would do well to wear gloves when applying the paste, otherwise it will stain the hands. The longer it is left on the redder the hair will become. Fifteen minutes will give a very perceptible change of color. In regard to the expression of the eyes, you can soften it by darkening the eyelashes, using the kohl on the eyelids, but the effect is likely to be very artificial.

## HINTS FOR THE HOME.

**C**reamed Clams. P—Put a level teaspoon of butter and cook until yellow. Add three level tablespoons of flour, and when smooth one cup of this cream until the sauce is thick, then add twenty-four finely chopped clams. Cook five minutes, add one egg beaten, and cook one minute.

## HEALTH AND BEAUTY.

**T**o Keep the Hair Light. D. M. G.; also J. U.—Try the following: hair soap. It will lighten the hair without injury. Salts of tartar, 1 ounce; Juice of 3 lemons; Water, 1 quart. Rinse the hair with a cupful before washing. If the hair becomes brittle apply a good brillantine.

## HEALTH AND BEAUTY.

**T**o Get Rid of Warts. W.—The remedy I give you is one of the several best cures, but if the blemish is in your hair it could not be used, unless you can apply the remedy gently to the wart without touching the hair. Solution of ethylic acid of sodium, 5 drams. Every two or three days touch the wart with the solution, administered with a camel's hair pencil.

Copyright 1905 by The Evening World. All rights reserved.