

A DRESSING ROOM CHAT WITH ROSE STAHL

Of "The Chorus Lady."

"It's sassy night to-night," says Rose Stahl. She says it just that way, "s-a-s-i-y-e-y." And as she says it she removes the grease paint from one eyebrow, while the other moves up and down in a quick wink.

"Of course you know what sassy nights are? No? Why those are the nights the women are scared to applaud for fear the wags will come in and see you?"

Miss Stahl is sitting in her dressing room, facing a small mirror which gives her a crooked smile that doesn't belong to her. The only mural decoration near is a placard bearing the words "Forget It," which may be recognized as making a couple of hits in the play.

The plaid skirt with checks big enough to be seen by the president of an insurance company decorates one wall, and the versatile drapes a door. Both of these articles have had their meed of applause, and now hang limply, fatigued with success.

Miss Stahl catches up a kimono and drapes it on herself.

"Say, if I only had a picture hat," she remarks thoughtfully, to the artist who sits L. F., "you could take my portrait; not but what I hate publicity, as I say in the second act, but just to help the manager along. And I tell you, when you've got a manager who acts as press agent and has written the play besides, like Jimmy Forbes, it's up to the leading lady to get her picture taken often, now, ain't it?"

"You'll put me in without a picture hat? That's good of you. I always feel that a leading lady that don't wear a picture hat isn't more than half dressed." She catches up the bunch of blond frizzled curls, which lie on the toilet table and curls them about her supple fingers.

"Speaking of lingerie—no one was, but when a six rayed star is being interviewed, you don't interrupt to correct

when a man is trying to discuss feminine underwear," said.

"Isn't going on? Why, she's on now."

"The dressing room scene is so real that no wonder the old gentleman, who had located a few behind the stage in his youth, could only gasp."

"So she is! So she is! I for—I mean I didn't realize."

"Wasn't that a peach happening? I just loved it."

Miss Stahl talks of the stage just as the *Chorus Lady* did on the stage. It is difficult for her to remember all the time and once or twice she forgets and converses exactly like ordinary people, but as soon as she does it she flags herself and uses the word "pauze," which balances accounts finely.

Good natured and good souled are adjectives often applied to women after they lose hair, teeth and power to charm. Rose Stahl has, however, proved her right to all three so conclusively that in applying these adjectives to her you feel safe from the onslaught of her admirers. The optimism which is the groundwork of her character she describes as an inherited quality.

"You don't know my popper!" she exclaims, "and you a newspaper reporter? Why, he is the president of the New Jersey Press Association and none would think of swapping dogs in New Jersey unless he asked popper's advice first. He belongs to everything he can get near, too. He's an Elk, and a All Night Templar, and a Twenty-three Skiddoo Mason, runs with a fire engine and—"

It is evident that Miss Stahl is fond of her popper and it becomes necessary to check her exuberance in that direction for fear that there won't be time for the interview.

"Why didn't you write?" seems a fitting interruption.

It is. Miss Stahl pins the frizzled curls in a lopsided manner over one agitated ear and remarks:

"Why didn't I write? Can you look at me and ask that question?"

The interviewer takes a second survey and sees no reason why the question should not be repeated.

"I haven't brains enough," is the final word. "You think it takes brains to succeed on the stage? Not at all. It don't and I ought to know for I'm on the stage and if I hadn't made a hit you wouldn't be sitting there catching your death of cold asking me questions."

"Now, if you write people read your work and remember it and remember you, and the longer you work and the better you do the greater the reward. That's different from acting. I can tell you what that is in a few words."

If that "rabbit faced hackman"—you remember the quotation? Good—should drop me out of the hansom into a hole in the ground on our way home to-night by day after to-morrow my name would be forgotten. I know!"

"Then you didn't write any of those bright lines in the piece yourself?"

Miss Stahl looks at the interviewer reproachfully.

"You've heard of the girl who was asked

have the nerve to take more than seventy-five without it, and then it would seem like taking it from a child in the cradle."

"Anybody can write a logical play and anybody can act in one, but that sort of play never exhibits the 'Standing Room Only' sign. It's the illogical situation that you make get over the footlights so that people don't stop to question, but are carried away in spite of reason and judgment and experience, that's the great play every time, and it's the play that gives a chance for acting, too."

"Of course Mrs. Smith might tell Mr. Smith all about it as soon as the curtain goes up, but if she did the audience would get home before they started out."

"Clara Morris says the same thing practically in her autobiography, that it is the great moment in an actress's life when she can take a situation that none would accept as possible in cold blood and making it so vital that the audience are carried off their feet in spite of themselves and don't judge it until they get home, then, as they sit down in front of the fire they remark, 'Well, when you come to think of it—'"

"And when you do come to think of it, what difference does it make to the play-



ROSE STAHL READY FOR HER CAB.

"The reason I love vaudeville is because I honestly believe that it takes a greater artist to make a hit in vaudeville than in the regular drama. You've got four acts in the latter and you can grow on your audience like tan and freckles do in that time if there's anything in you at all."

"If you slump in the first act why try, try again and when the curtain's rung up for the climax perhaps you'll have got used to your clothes and can seize the opportunity by the forelock. There are plenty of actors and actresses to-day who, if it were not for the length of time allowed them for that growing on process, would be buried deep under the daisies of dramatic criticism."

"Now, in vaudeville it's big—and if the audience don't sit up and take notice at the beginning, you're a dead one."

"Twenty minutes to make good. That's all. No second act, no third or fourth. You've got a time allowance and the next attraction's in the wings waiting his turn and you've got to hustle every second of the time."

"When you feel that you have made good from the start you come pretty near getting a genuine thrill, none of your near-thrills that you get from a lukewarm audience after you've worked like a drayhorse for an hour or two."

"Playing on Broadway has never meant anything to me especially. When I heard I was to appear at the Hollis Street Theatre in Boston, I was nervous, but I didn't feel that way about New York."

"The people here have no strong ties, no strong feelings for their artists. You'll hear them say, 'Rose Stahl, oh, yes, I don't care to see her to-night. I saw her three weeks ago. Let's try something new.' That's it, the something new all the time, the bad novelty better than the good old time."

"Don't forget that I like to be in New York just the same. I have a nice apartment up at the Algonquin, the kind that when people come in to see you they say, 'Oh, you've got your own furniture; ain't that nice?' You know the sort I mean, and of course if I had to have my dinner at a stated time every night and if I couldn't sleep well on trains and in dinky little hotels like so many of the temperamental ones, why I don't suppose I'd ever want to leave New York. I haven't had any dinner to-night—forgot all about it—and I never eat after the theatre, so you see I was born to travel on the road. I don't deserve any credit for it."

She stretches out her arms in the narrow

confines of the dressing room, where an ugly brick wall forms one boundary.

"Now, I suppose this is one of the swell New York theatres where they forget all about the dressing rooms until it was built and then walled in the fire escapes. You won't put that in your story on account of the manager-playwright-press-agent, who probably owns some of it, but it's funny when you think of it, right here in the centre of New York."

Philadelphia, where I played *Janice Meredith*, we got so used to the rats that we used to know them all, the gray faced rat, and the one with the brown spots, the one with the side whiskers and the one with a lordly, aristocratic manner, who looked as if he ought to wear a monocle."

"We got awfully chummy with them. In a good many of the dressing rooms on the road a woman always sits with her feet in a chair when she is off the stage, and makes a time shell get one of the call boys to beat a stick in a corner to keep them away while she puts on her make-up. That's no joke, either."

"Now I'm going to tell you something I really love, and that is to play in London and the provinces. Me for them every time."

"They think a lot of the vaudeville artists over there, and show their appreciation in a lot of nice ways."

"Another thing the British can teach us is loyalty. One afternoon in New York I heard a conversation between an Englishman and a woman whose escort he was for the matinee. After the curtain fell on a certain star's wonderful performance, she turned to him and said:

"I wonder how old she is. She must be—"

"Oh, I don't know how old she is, what difference does that make? But wasn't she bully good?"

"He was a Squire of Dames all right and there are many like him over there."

"In the profession we have a saying: 'A woman can't play Juliet until she's so old she don't look the part.' They recognize that truth better than our men do. They seem to catch on to the fact that a woman can't display finesse, experience, and all the fifty-seven varieties of emotions until she's been through a lot."

"The Terry benefit shows that up. There's an example for you! London went mad, and I'll wager there wasn't a paper mentioned her age."

"Every one was cheered to the limit, but who do you suppose the crowd went maddest over? You'll never guess if you don't know Edna May! I never saw anything like it, never expect to again."

"She came down in a natty little victoria and stood up to bow right and left as if she were the royal family. Why, I saw the King and Queen drive by the Shaftesbury Avenue Theatre one day and there wasn't nearly the applause that Edna got."

"That means a lot to her. It's for one season or for two, it's for always, until she's gray and wrinkled and tired. Even then they'll go and see her, give her benches and won't add her years up in a column alongside their criticism."

"I hope this play will be taken over there," said Miss Stahl. "It ought to succeed. It's all about chorus girls and betting and those are what the Englishmen care more about than anything else in the world, so they say."



"A PERFECT FIGURE CERTAINLY SAVES YOU MONEY."

if she had read a notorious French novel and she said, 'No, I haven't; but if I had I should say I hadn't.' You don't suppose with a playwright who is your manager and your press agent I would admit that I had anything to do with the play even if I had? I guess not!"

She takes a turn at interviewing.

"Tell me what you think of 'The Chorus Lady.' Ain't it a dandy play?"

A pause.

"Yes, I knew you'd say that. I've seen it in your face ever since you sat down. I've been waiting for it. Every night when I get near that situation I shiver for fear some one will shriek out that question from the audience. But I'm ready for it."

"The room is square and the walls hung in dark blue brocade. The woodwork was of oak and the dull pictures which hung in the centre of each side of the room were framed in carved oak. The paintings were excellent copies of Arnold Böcklin."

"The massive carved oak fireplace was ornamented with two lapis lazuli vases with Louis XV. bronzes mountings. On the oak centre table was an electrolier made in the form of a high brass candlestick."

"The curtains were of a lighter hue of blue embossed velvet. The only color in the room came from the Turkish rugs which were in shades of pink, gray and mauve."

"Such a room lacked entirely what would be called cheerfulness, but it was extremely beautiful and in the highest degree restful. It of course had to be done to perfection."

"The carved oak furniture was several centuries old and the hangings were too costly for any but persons of wealth. Its general effect was, however, within the reach of anybody. A room with the ugliest furniture and hangings of the black walnut may be made restful and refined by keeping the furniture out of sight and not overcrowding the walls or mixing the colors too vividly."

"If you are asked to give some general rules? Well, it is hard to do, but there are one or two things which impress one who has studied American house decoration. American Colonial furniture is the best style for persons who must think of the amount of money they are going to spend. Whether it be original or a reproduction, it is characteristic of the nation and it is really beautiful in most of its designs."

"Then the decoration of the whole period has to be original and simplicity. Old American wall papers, old china and floor coverings all have a particular appropriateness and beauty for American homes."

"One who wants to spend lots of money may go in for other periods, but persons of moderate means will get their best results from the following out of the old ideals of domestic beauty in this country. But the must follow them in the spirit in which they were observed."

"The must not have three Colonial tables in a room mere because they have that many and are able to crowd them into the room. They must not buy enormous carved sofas meant for Colonial halls just because they can afford one to put into their little apartment sitting room."

"Nor should their walls be covered with blue china plates simply because they can afford to buy them. They must carry out the idea of that day in the same way they were admired then."

wright and the star so long as the audience has responded to the emotional stop at the right time?"

It has been rumored that Miss Stahl had had a wide and varied experience as a member of many stock companies that have penetrated the uttermost wilds of barrooming lands and that her appearance on the Great White Way comes as the crown of laurel after patient endeavor. There is another surprise in store for the interviewer who, referring to such rumors, says sympathetically:

"You must enjoy this long rest in New York after your experiences—"

Miss Stahl wheels about in her chair.

"See, do you think so? I want to tell you I'd rather play in vaudeville than in a four act play every night in the week, and next to playing in vaudeville or along with it I adore travelling."

"I love one night stands. No, I'm not jollying you a bit. Everybody that's ever played with me will tell you that."

There is a sincerity that cannot be misunderstood.



HOMES MADE MORE RESTFUL.

THE FASHION NOW TO HAVE ROOMS ALMOST EMPTY.

Apartment Crowded With Furniture and Ornaments Too Fatiguing in Their Influence for Buried, Nervous Americans—The Atmosphere of Repose.

The present fashion of having rooms so empty that they look almost unfurnished is, according to one of the authorities on decoration, a physical result brought about by a condition that has manifested itself in different forms.

"New Yorkers are very hurried, crowded and nervous," the foreign decorator told THE SUN reporter, "and for that reason they have finally realized the importance of having their rooms restful in effect."

"They want to have a feeling of repose, at least when they get in their own houses. They have gradually learned that the restful influence of a room is the result of its furnishing and decoration."

"Take the average drawing room of ten years ago. Everything in these rooms was such as to make a person who was already nervous more fidgety."

"In the first place there were little pictures all over the walls, hung with no regard for homogeneity in color or subject and apparently meant merely to match if possible so far as size was concerned. All these little objects to distract the attention were probably on a background of highly colored and conspicuously speckled wall paper. As if its figures were not enough to worry the consciousness, the pictures had to be added."

"Then on the tables were photographs of the family or of actors standing in such ways that they could not be ignored. The old-fashioned plush photograph album, of which so much fuss has been made, was in reality more excusable than these frames, standing everywhere to catch the eye and the dust."

"Even the furniture did not escape. Tables which were put on fine furniture to serve a really useful purpose and were then so overlaid by lace and crocheted creations of the same form that they disappeared under the ridicule of persons of taste, are now supplanted by other and worse successors."

"Ten years ago there was not a chair or a sofa that was not decorated with either a fringe or a drape. The fringe was thrown carelessly over the arm of the chair, while the drape was usually festooned in graceful curves and caught down with safety pins which a genius invented for

that purpose. Who has forgotten the complicated and terrible mental labyrinths of the late '80s and the '90s?"

"Next to the fever set in. The India rubber plant was more resistant to steam heat and gas, so it supplanted the palms, which did all the good to contribute to the general fussiness of our rooms."

"Such an apartment is a desire for something simpler and more restful in the way of decorating rooms?"

"The Japanese take out their brick-brace piece by piece, admire it for a while and then return it to where it was stored. Usually they have only one on view at a time. That is one reason why every Japanese room has a grateful, quieting atmosphere."

"Compare a real Japanese apartment with a so-called room designed by a decorator. I know of one that has a frieze of dolls and open fans alternating around the room. Then there is a paper spangled with gaudily colored fans, and in each corner are large parasols covered a cosy corner. This consists of piled up sofa cushions of every shade and material."

"Such an apartment is enough to give a tired man the creeps. But it is called Japanese."

"A restful room is very easy to arrange and costs much less than a fussy room. One obstacle stands very often in the way of tasteful decoration. Much that people buy and much that is given to them belongs to an earlier stage of decorative ideal without going far enough back to acquire the value of antiquity. These things have become endeared to their owners, who do not want to part with them, or if they do may not have the money to buy others."

"The old advice in such a case is not to put too many of these things out in view. It is perfectly possible to have only a limited number in use, and the disposition made of them is of course a question of good or bad taste."

"I have seen rooms immensely improved simply by being deprived of half a dozen pieces of so-called bric-a-brac which were an eyesore because they crowded the scene too much. In the Japanese way of taking out one thing at a time there is a suggestion for those persons who have too much ornament of the wrong kind."

"I saw a small room the other day which had four large pictures on its four walls, a center table, four chairs, a bookcase and a sofa. There was a lamp on the table and on the bookcases one or two bronzes."

"The room was in that way charmingly furnished. Of course it was in one sense put in favor of the room that the pictures were all in their places beautiful."

"The sense of quiet and repose was delightful. There were no fussy photographs, no little pictures scrambled over the walls and no china figures to attract the dust."

"Everybody cannot have large pictures that fill up the side of a wall, but it is possible to group small pictures that they have seen the effect of a single mass, as have seen the whole side of a hall hung with small framed photographs so distributed that they gave the impression of a single picture. Then two or three pictures may

DON'T HELP WOMAN ARTISTS

BETTER CHANCE IN NEW YORK FOR THE STRUGGLING MAN.

Women of Social Position Unwilling to Help out the Ambitions of Their Own Sex—Acquaintances That Give the Beginner His Chance to Succeed.

There is no English speaking city in the world perhaps where women artists—painters, sculptors, etchers and illustrators—get so little help and encouragement from their own sex, particularly the wealthy of their sex, as in New York.

This is the charge made by a woman of means and social position who has dabbled in an amateurish way in art and has made a point of coming in contact with many of the woman artists of the city.

"I would say nothing," this champion of the woman art declares, "were men and women artists subjected to the same treatment. But they are not, and that is my grievance. Men artists of any merit at all have quite a different experience from women of equal attainments."

"I have seen men who were ordinary from a mental and social standpoint and who painted very ordinary pictures get on famously from the start, sell their canvases and make considerable money simply because a fashionable woman took them up."

"I am not speaking, of course, of artists who themselves belong in fashionable circles, but of the men and women whose knowledge of New York society is limited to what they read in the newspapers. Of course, even with the boost I mention many of the men artists I have met failed to achieve fame, but they certainly did have a chance to get a good start."

"Now take the case of the woman artist similarly situated. She may have a higher average of artistic ability than the man, or even, as in one case I knew, have a letter of introduction to one of New York's influential women with an avowed leaning toward art; nevertheless, she will not stand the ghost of a chance with the man painter in the next studio unless her work is supremely better."

"The young woman I mentioned presented her letter and I kindly received. She saw all the pictures in the hostess's house, some of which had been bought from this and that artist whose fortune, it was hinted, the buyer had been instrumental in making. The young woman artist looked, listened, and hope beat high."

"This is what happened: The patron

of art, after a delay which made the artist wonder again, descended on the studio, bringing with her two women, evidently persons of wealth. All three admired the artist's work, said nice things to her, prophesied success and left without ordering a picture or without even dropping an invitation to dinner. What is more, she never was asked to dinner, even by the woman to whom she bore the letter of introduction. The artist was good looking and talked well, she wore presentable clothes, but all the opportunities she got to meet the sort of people who buy pictures were invitations to family luncheons and cards to crush reception."

"As an offset to this experience is the case of a young man, every step of whose artistic career in New York I watch. The woman painter, West, and his sole claim to artistic training was a year's study with an old painter in Washington, D. C., after which he came to New York to try his luck."

"He wanted to paint portraits. At the start he took a hall room in a fashionable boarding house and did his work there, his landlady, the kindest of women, permitting him to stand some of his pictures in her drawing room and letting him run up a big board bill. Things would have gone hard with the young man but for a fellow boarder, a woman, who was acquainted with a society woman who cared a good deal for pictures and was pretty enough to like to have her portrait painted."

"This woman took no end of pains to bring the painter and the society woman together, and finally induced the latter to come and look at the portraits displayed at the boarding house. The woman came, saw, didn't care a rap for the pictures, but invited the artist to come and look at her portrait painted by a well known artist."

"That was the beginning. The end was that in less than one year the young man had a studio of his own where he exhibited a life size portrait of his patron, together with several other portraits of 'Lady So and So,' then on a visit to America."

"A year later the young artist was spending the winter abroad, the letters of introduction of Lady So and So giving him a chance to do enough work in London to pay his way."

"Now had this young man shown signs of high talent his quick rise would not have caused me any wonder. But with few exceptions his work was commonplace, as a proof of which after a few years of steadily increasing fortune he remained stationary and then sank to the level where he belonged. To-day he is painting ordinary pictures for ordinary people and making a living, but no more."

"And his first patron? Would she have

done so much for a young woman artist, no matter how much talent was evidenced? Never! On the contrary I have reason to know that she never enters a woman's studio."

"And the young man's landlady? Would she have allowed a young woman to run up a board bill of more than \$100? Perhaps. But I am rather inclined to think not."

"The other day I put this question point blank to a fashionable woman who is known as a patron of the arts: 'Why is it that you and your friends never invite women artists—beginners, young artists, to dinner?'"

"Well, for one thing," she answered, "one is never sure how a woman will look. One knows of course that a man will turn up in evening dress and even if the cut of it isn't quite right and his hair is long it doesn't matter much. Such discrepancies will be put down to the eccentricities of genius."

"But how can one be sure how a woman will dress? She may come looking like a fright. And, another thing, gaudieries of manner and speech are more readily overlooked in a man than a woman."

"You are right, I told her, 'doesn't seem to me convincing. Why should not lack of knowledge of certain social formulas be pardoned as soon in the woman as in the man artist, supposing either has any talent at all? And I reminded her that most of the women artists with whom I am acquainted are lacking in none of the features named, and yet I am quite sure that neither she nor any of her fashionable friends would ask them to dinner where they would have a chance to meet possible patrons and enlarge their social boundaries."

"Asking women not in one's own set to dinner might lead to embarrassing complications," said the art patron, when I paused.

"For instance?" I suggested.

"For answer she shrugged her shoulders."

MEN AND WOMEN.

Their Various Ways of Keeping the Hems of Their Garments Out of the Mud.

"I notice," said Lucinda, "that women are not the only ones who lift their garments to keep the hems thereof clear of the mud. No. Men do just the same thing, only far more clumsily."

"When a woman deftly, with one hand gathers up and holds the folds of her skirts as she bids adieu to her general grace; but did you ever see a man in a long skirted overcoat going up an elevated stairs, clutching the skirts with both hands, one on either side, and raising them so that he wouldn't stumble over them on the steps? He is like a woman in lifting his skirts, but dear, dear how different in handling them."

"And don't men turn up the bottoms of their trouser legs to keep them clear of the mud? When this practice was less common than now the man who followed it was likely to be hailed by his fellows:

"'Say, old chap, is it raining in London?'"

"By now it is a common thing for men to protect the hems of these garments in this manner in rainy weather or when the streets are muddy. They used to clomp along anyway, and let them drag; but men are now far more trimly attired and far more careful to keep themselves so than they used to be."

"The funniest thing that men do, though, to keep out of the mud is this:

"You may see coming along a man who hasn't turned up his trousers, because he doesn't want to get that ugly grass in them around the bottom, and then you may see this man, when he comes to a muddy crossing, grab his trousers legs one in each hand, somewhere above the knee, and raise the hems of them to his ankles to keep them clear of the mud."

"More and more men now do this, and whenever I see a man walking across a muddy street, holding up his skirts in this manner, why, really, I always want to laugh for certainly he does not then present a very attractive figure."

"No women are not the only ones who raise their skirts in crossing muddy streets; men, with such garments as they wear, and their own ways, now commonly or to a far greater extent than ever, do the same thing. But this does not mean that men are growing feminine far from it. In this, as in so many other things, their lack of grace proclaims them still distinctly masculine."

His Unbearable Affront.

From the Washington Star.

"My husband is a brute," said the excellent woman.

"If you are so good as scolding him?"

"Of course I have."

"Ah! I suppose he talked back and used harsh language?"

"Worse than that! He yawned!"



REMOVING TRACES OF "THE CHORUS LADY."