



BERLENA ALDRED  
ALISNY PHOTO



MAE MASON  
EMPORIUM PHOTO



ZORAH IRWIN  
ELITE PHOTO



BELLE BAKER  
FLOODE PHOTO



SADA WILLIS  
WILCOX PHOTO



MURIEL MOORE  
SACKETT PHOTO



MARION NOLAN  
THORS PHOTO



STELLA ROZETA  
ELITE PHOTO

# Pretty Girls at the Central Theatre.



CLARISSA EUDELL  
BUSHNELL PHOTO



HELEN HARLAN  
STANFORD PHOTO

a rope dangling in mid air, who drop from burning buildings. Usually the curtain goes down in time for them to think that everything comes out as it was expected to come out.

It was in "The War of Wealth" not as a firecracker, that there occurred a chapter of accidents that kept arnica, plaster and surgery in demand.

First, the bag of money hit Clarissa Eudell. It was thrown vigorously through a window and struck her a blow like that of a sandbag. Somehow the rest of the people on the stage made believe that she didn't faint and as soon as she had recovered consciousness she made believe likewise and all was smooth sailing.

Until the wagon crashed into Berlena Aldred—she was a black and blue Berlena when the affair was over and she had a task of it to hide her limp for a week.

Then one night the safe exploded too explosively. It went off with the usual bang—the cap was an energetic one—and the small children present with their mamas were the only ones frightened. But when the stage hands went about picking up the scattered properties they found that Belle Baker was one of those properties. The explosion had tipped over a scene which had tipped over her and in the general downfall she had struck the edge of a table, which cut her temple. It was no stage blood that she shed, but the real thing.

In one play where a tank of water was used there came very near being a real drowning. Sada Willis tripped when she should have passed the tank; it stood in the place of an ocean and there was plenty of real water in it, for the heroine who should have fallen in, in the place of Miss Willis, was intended to make a good splash. When Sada fell in it was her good fortune that Bob Cummings happened to be looking on. Bob let his own part go to wherever it wanted to go and plunged after her and he pulled out a young lady who was about as near drowning as she ever wants to be.

Lorena Atwood, who was playing leading parts at one time, had blood-curdling experiences. She played the heroine's part in "The Heart of Maryland" and the clapper of the bell was always a troublesome thing to manage. At last it swung hard against the side of the bell and with one great blow the heroine was knocked senseless.

In "Old Glory" she swung by a strand from a cliff to a lighthouse when the dis- obliging Chileans had done something to the bridge. To the glance of the audience she was hanging on a strand of rope; in reality she was supported by a good strong wire hanging from the flies. As the strand had no strength she depended entirely upon the wire.

Well—the wire broke. Down she went, down, down, and down went the curtain. She had the grit to go on with the part, although every move was agony. But she would rather play home and mother comedy in the future. She says that the greatest thrills in those lies in paring potatoes and rocking a cradle.

Mae Mason has had her troubles with the horse that Georgia Cooper has been riding in "A Night at the Circus." Georgia says the horse is all right, but she really doesn't know because she is on it. The people standing around are the ones that it chooses for its neatly aimed kicks. Mae Mason has stood near, and she is now wearing bandages.

All this comes of realism on the stage, and the Central prides itself upon this kind of realism. So long as there are real explosions, real horses, real rope suspensions, the heroines of melodrama and realistic plays are going to have their bruises. It is said that when Robert Downing "gets worked up" it is all your life is worth to be near him. With his short sword he makes havoc, slaying whomsoever gives him the chance. Helen Harlan knows this. She remembers it every time she sees a scar. In his production of the mob scene in "Julius Caesar" he has the clubs wielded so realistically that Marion Nolan was knocked over at one performance.

All the theatrical world over there are plenty of such stories told by the people

who have played in this school of drama. "The Bowery after Dark," as it was played in some of the smaller towns, was a terror for the soubrette, and the part nearly killed one girl. The rescues which Terry McGovern performed himself in his own version were given over to the young lady in the company which did not take Terry along, and she was made life-saver to the whole crowd.

In one scene she had to be let down to the stage by a rope. This worked beautifully for a while, but the night came when the rope gave way and there was a long siege in the hospital as a result. Nor did she ever go back to the part. Vaudeville was safer, she decided, and she left

melodrama for it. A melodrama called "The Tide of Life" had many a thrill. The climax of one scene was in the soubrette sliding on a rope from the second story of a warehouse. She was a well trained athlete, and these feats were so much a matter of course to her that she didn't think of rehearsing them. But the manager was a careful man and insisted that she try the slide once before the curtain went up. The property man, by the way, has a few ways been made the scapegoat of theatrical disasters to life and limb. So he it probably he deserved all that he got. He had provided a slight braided bed cord, and when the girl took her slide she reached its goal with all the skin torn from the palms of her hands, owing to the rope being too small around to be

grasped properly. She had no time to take care of herself properly. Somebody wrapped up the hands as well as could be done in the hurry, for it was almost time for the curtain to go up. It was only twenty minutes later that she had to make the slide again. The wounds were cruelly torn once more, and half fainting she kept her hands as much out of sight as she could while she staggered across the stage to climb the deck of a ship by clinging to a ladder in order that she might save the hero. Before the final curtain touched the floor of the stage she had fainted and was borne off the stage unconscious in the arms of the villain, who stopped hissing long enough to carry her. As soon as she came to consciousness she handed in her two weeks' notice. She had saved all the lives she wanted to.

It isn't all fun, even though they are pretty. Being a melodramatic soubrette means having troubles of your own. It has even been proposed in the East that an organization would not be out of order for these young women. Let them hold together, say the promoters; let them strike when the need is. They have rescued enough heroes' lives at the peril of their own; they have slid with avalanches, they have ridden on fire engines, they have been drowned in canvas oceans. Let them organize. Let them hold together for protection. There won't be any live ones to do the work if things keep on at this rate.

These girls up at the Central Theater are on the high road to all kinds of avalanches, fire engines and burning bridges. That's exactly what they want. There is glory in the thing, and glory is what they are after. They don't care for sprained ankles or dislocated shoulders or broken spines. Broken necks, even, would have the color of heroism. As long as they are permitted to take chances on their necks, their arms and their legs, they consider themselves in it. So it looks as if they would be the last people in the world to organize and go on a strike because they are all in danger of losing their lives. Apparently they enjoy the thrills quite as much as

the audience does. Even as young as the Central Theater is, it has already acquired its traditions to be handed down to theatrical posterity. There are many tales told about the hairbreadth escapes of these girls who are being called by the new slang "superettes." The truth is, they didn't like to be called "superes" and they were not quite soubrettes, although on the road to that title, and Marion Nolan it was who proposed that "superette" be the title and that it has remained. The audiences who watch the red-hot melodrama that goes on there week after week do not think much about the dangers that surround the girls who cling to