

THE REAL MAUDE ADAMS

Intimate Details of the Life of One of America's Most Interesting Actresses Revealed for the First Time in the Cosmopolitan Magazine's "Life of Charles Frohman"

THE late Charles Frohman was unquestionably one of the greatest theatrical managers since Shakespeare. The story of his life is the story of the American stage during its most important period.

"The Life of Charles Frohman" is appearing serially in the COSMOPOLITAN MAGAZINE, and in the May installment is revealed intimate details never before printed of the life of Maude Adams, herself one of the most interesting figures in the American stage. Excerpts from this installment are given on this page.

Printed by permission, from "The Life of Charles Frohman," by Daniel Frohman and Isaac F. Marcossow, which is continued each month in the COSMOPOLITAN MAGAZINE.

FOR over a year Barrie had been at work on a play for Miss Adams. Now came his whimsical satire, "What Every Woman Knows." Afterward, in speaking of this play, he said that he had written it because "there was a Maude Adams in the world." Then he added, "I could see her dancing through every page of my manuscript."

Indeed, "What Every Woman Knows" was really written around Miss Adams. It was a dramatization of the roguish humor and exquisite womanliness that are her peculiar gifts.

As Maggie Wylie, she created a character that was a worthy colleague of Lady Babbie. The role opposite her, that of John Shand, the poor Scotch boy who literally stole knowledge, was extraordinarily interesting. The play involves the marriage between Maggie and John, according to an agreement entered into between the girl's brothers and the boy. The brothers agree to educate him, and in return, he weds the sister. Maggie becomes John's inspiration, although he refuses to realize or admit it. He is absolutely without humor. He thinks he can do without her, only to find, when it is almost too late, that she has been the very prop of his success. At the end of the play, Maggie finally makes her husband laugh when she tells him:

"I tell you what every woman knows—that Eve wasn't made from the rib of Adam, but from his funnybone."

Curiously enough, in "What Every Woman Knows" Miss Adams has a speech in which she unconsciously defines the one peculiar and elusive gift which gives her such rare distinction. In the play she is supposed to be the girl "who has no charm." Of course, in reality she is all charm; but, in discussing this quality with her husband's brothers, she says:

"Charm is the bloom upon a woman. If you have it, you don't have to have anything else. If you haven't it, all else won't do you any good."

"What Every Woman Knows" was an enormous success, in which Richard Bennett, who played John Shand, shared honors with the star. Miss Adams' success in this play emphasized the extraordinary affinity between her and Barrie's delightful art. Commenting on this, the playwright himself has said:

"Miss Adams knows my characters and understands them. She really needs no directions. I love

Reading Character in the Tongue

"PUT out your tongue," is a phrase associated in most people's minds with doctors, and is usually reminiscent of minor ailments and nasty medicines; spoken by a gossamer, however, the curt command takes on an altogether different significance.

A gossamer, it may be as well to explain, is a professor of gossamer, a new science which consists in reading people's characters by the shape and size of their tongues.

Thus, according to its votaries, the possessor of a short and broad tongue is apt to be untruthful as to words and unreliable as to deeds. A long tongue moderately pointed,



Maude Adams as Maggie Wylie, in "What Every Woman Knows."

to write for her and see her in my work."

Nor could there be any more charming comment on Miss Adams' appreciation of all that Barrie has meant to her than to quote her remark that:

"Wherever I act, I always feel that there is one unseen spectator, James M. Barrie."

Maude Adams was now the best beloved of American actresses, and was, without doubt, the best box-office attraction in the country. She had made her way to this eminence by an industry and a concentration that were well-nigh incredible; yet people began to say, "What marvelous things Charles Frohman has done for Miss Adams!"

As a matter of fact, the career of Miss Adams emphasizes what a very great author once said, which, summed up, was that neither nature nor man did anything for any human being that he could not do for himself.

Miss Adams paid the penalty of her enormous success by an almost complete isolation. She concentrated on her work; all else was subsidiary.

Charles Frohman had an enormous ambition for Miss Adams, and that ambition now took form in what was, perhaps, his most remarkable achievement in connection with her. It was the big production of "The Maid of Orleans" in the Harvard Stadium.

John D. Williams, for many years business manager for Charles Frohman, is a Harvard alumnus. Realiz-

ing that the business with which he was associated had been labeled for years with the "commercial" brand, he had an ambition to associate the profession with something really esthetic. The pageant idea had suddenly come into vogue. "Why not give a magnificent pageant?" he said to himself.

One morning he went into Charles Frohman's office and put the idea up to him, adding that he thought Miss Adams as Joan of Arc would provide the proper medium for such a spectacle. With a quick wave of the hand and a swift, "All right," Frohman assented to what became one of the most distinguished events in the history of the American stage.

Schiller's great romantic tragedy, "The Maid of Orleans," was selected. In suggesting the heroine of France, Mr. Williams had touched upon one of Maude Adams' great admirations. To her Joan was the very idealization of all womanhood. Bernhardt, Davenport and others had tried to present this most appealing of all tragedies in the history of France, and had signally failed. It remained for slight, almost fragile, Maude Adams to revivify and give the character an enduring interpretation.

"The Maid of Orleans" was enacted on a stupendous scale. Fifteen hundred supernumeraries were employed. John W. Alexander, the famous painter, was engaged to design the costumes.

Miss Adams concentrated herself upon the preparation with a fidelity and energy that were little short of amazing. One detail will illustrate: She had to appear mounted several times during the play and ride at the head of her charging army.

This equestrianism gave Charles Frohman the greatest solicitude. He greatly feared that she would be injured in some way, and he kept cabling from Europe warnings to her to be careful, and to her associates who were responsible for her safety.

Miss Adams, a good horsewoman, determined to be better, and for more than a month she practised every afternoon at a riding academy in New York. Since the horse had to move amid clanging armor and in all the tumult of battle, she rehearsed every day with all sorts of noisy apparatus hanging about him. Shots were fired, colored banners and flags were flaunted about her, and pieces

of metal were fastened to her riding-skirt, so that the steed would be accustomed to the constant contact of a sword.

"The Maid of Orleans" was presented on the evening of June 22, 1909, in the presence of over fifteen thousand people. A magnificent and thrilling success, it proved to be the greatest theatrical pageant ever staged in this country. The elaborate settings were handled mechanically. Forests dissolved into regal courts; fields melted into castles. A hidden orchestra played the superb music of Beethoven's "Eroica."

The first scene showed the maid of Domremy wandering in the twilight with her vision; the last revealed her dying of her wounds at the spring, soon to be buried under the shields of her captives.

The battle-scene was an inspiring feature. It had been arranged that Miss Adams' riding-master should change places with her at the head of the charging troops and ride in the magnificent charge down the field. When the charge was over and the stage-manager rushed up to congratulate the supposed riding master on his admirable makeup, he was surprised to hear Miss Adams' voice emerge from the armor, asking, "How did it go?"

Strapped to her horse, she had led the charge herself and seen the performance through.

"The Maid of Orleans" netted fifteen thousand dollars, which

Charles Frohman turned over to Harvard University to do with as it pleased. The irony of this performance was that the proceeds were devoted to the Germanic Museum at the university, and the Germans were responsible for the donor's death.

Mr. Frohman had a magnificent velvet album, containing the complete photographic record of the play, made and sent it to the German Emperor with an appropriate inscription.

There is no doubt that Joan of Arc was the supreme effort of Miss Adams' career. When she was told that Charles Frohman had refused an offer of fifty thousand dollars for the motion picture rights, she said:

"Of course it was refused. This performance is all poetry and solemnity."

The following June, in the Greek Theatre of the University of California, at Berkeley, Miss Adams made her first and only appearance as Rosalind in "As You Like It." This achievement illustrates the extraordinary and indefatigable quality of her work. She rehearsed "As You Like It" during her transcontinental tour of "What Every Woman Knows," which extended from ocean to ocean and lasted thirty-nine weeks.

Most managers would have been content to rest with the laurels that "Joan of Arc" had won. Not so with Charles Frohman. Every

stupendous feat that he recorded merely whetted his desire for something greater. Now he came to the point where he projected what was in many respects the most unique and original of all his efforts. It was the production of Rostand's classic, "Chantecler."

There was a widespread feeling that he was making a great mistake and that he was putting Miss Adams into a role, admirable as it seems though she was, for which she was absolutely unsuited. But he said:

"Chantecler" is a play with a soul, and the soul of a play is its moral. This is the secret of "Peter Pan"; this is why Miss Adams is to play the leading part."

Miss Adams was in Chicago when Frohman bought the play and she learned that she was to do the title-part. She afterward declared that this news changed a dull, dreary, soggy day into one that was brilliant and dazzling. "To play Chantecler," she said, "is an honor international in its glory."

The preparations for the production were carried on with the usual Frohman magnificence. A huge fortune was spent on it. The costumes were made in Paris; J. W. Alexander supervised the scenic effects.

The casting of the parts was in itself an enormous task. Frohman amused himself by having what he called "casting parties." For example, he would call up Miss

Adams by long-distance telephone and say:

"I've got ten minutes before my train starts for Atlantic City. Can you cast a peacock for me?"

Whereupon Miss Adams would reply:

"Ten minutes is too short."

Never, perhaps, in the history of the American stage was the advent of a play so much heralded. The name "Chantecler" was on every tongue. Long before the piece was launched, hats had been named after it, controversies had arisen

over its Anglicized spelling and pronunciation. All the genius of publicity which was the peculiar possession of Charles Frohman was employed to pave the way for this extraordinary production. It was a nation-wide sensation.

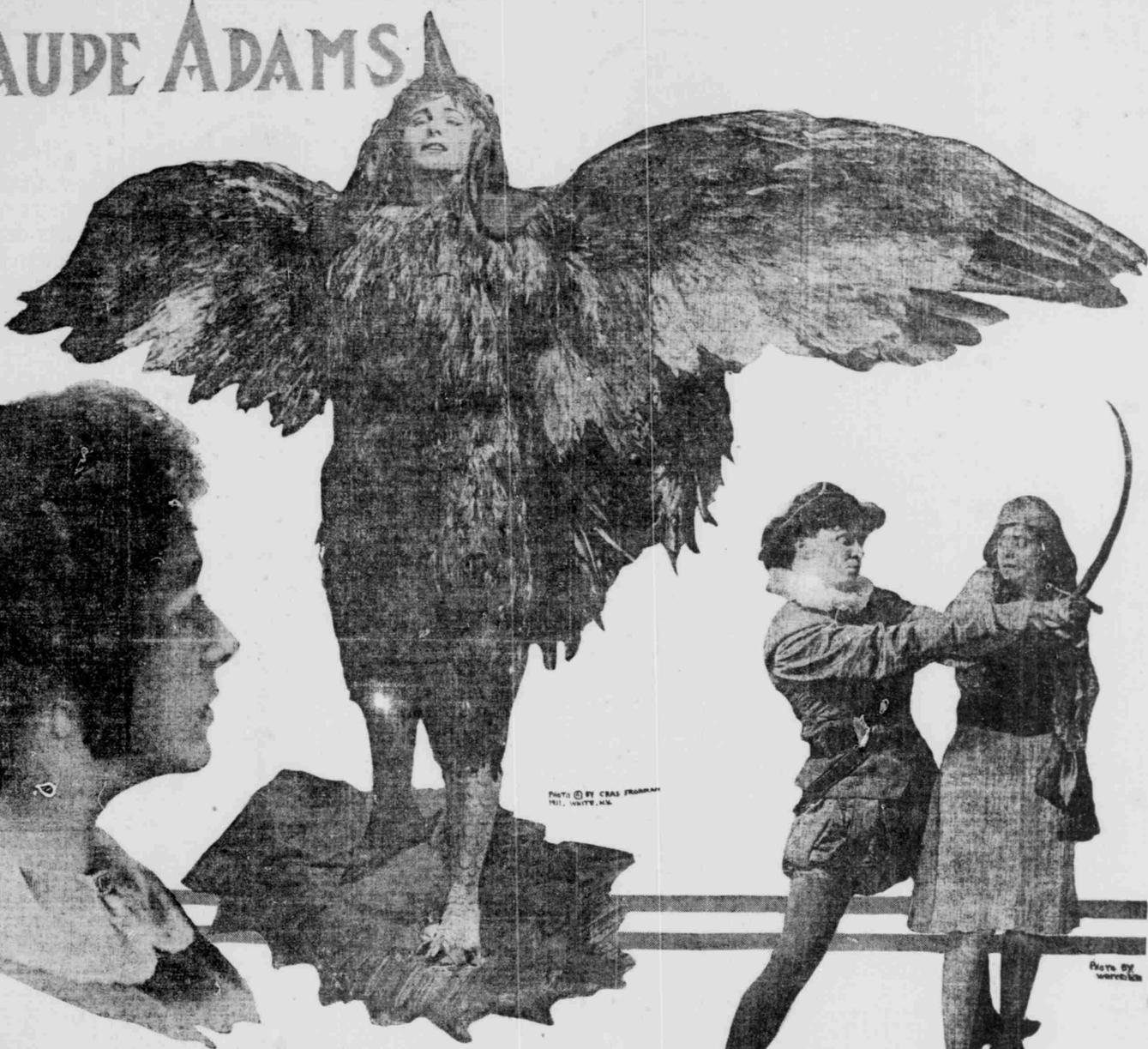
Miss Adams' career unfolds a panorama of artistic and practical achievement unequalled in the life of any American star. It likewise reveals a paradox all its own. While millions of people have seen and admired her, only a handful know her. The aloofness of the woman in her personal attitude toward the public represents Charles Frohman's own ideal of what stage artistry and conduct should be.

This is expressed in what was perhaps the greatest epigram he ever made. He was talking about people of the stage who constantly air themselves and their views to secure personal publicity. It moved him to the remark:

"Some people prefer mediocrity in the limelight to greatness in the dark."

Herein he summed the reason why Miss Adams has been an elusive and almost mysterious figure. By tremendous reading, solitary thinking, and extraordinary personal application, she rose to her great eminence. With her, it has always been a case of career first. Like Charles Frohman, she has hidden behind her activities, and they are a worthy respect.

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Maude Adams as Chantecler, in Rostand's Celebrated Play.



Miss Adams Working Over the Model of Her Pageant-Production of "The Maid of Orleans."



Maude Adams as Viola, in "Twelfth Night," Played at Harvard and Yale Universities, 1908.

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