

With the First Nighters

NAZIMOVA.

When men adjudged great in their profession have confessed their inability to properly describe this woman, Nazimova, the greatest find in the dramatic annals of the young century, how inadequate are the vocabularies of others who essay to do her justice.

In the compelling fascination in watching her, it is next to impossible to bring oneself to the belief that she is acting, for as no other actress it has been my good fortune to see, she is the mistress of every mood of every woman, and in each succeeding characterization her power is more and more astonishing.

To see her in one play is enough to realize her capabilities, but having seen one and not the others is a pity, for she does not act, she lives every part she undertakes, and her method, that comes first of intuition and then in unconscious expression in every speech and movement, is so different, so perfect that you feel that at last you have seen an actress who is truly great. Of this method there may and probably will be imitators in the days to come, but now it is her's, and her's alone, and without apparent effort and with none of the exaggeration peculiar to a foreigner, particularly one of her race, it appeals irresistibly.

From the childlike Nora to the sinuous Hedda is to her only a step, and her nature is so attuned to that of every woman of the great Norwegian's fancy that even her physique changes with their changes, and not only does every trait of the romping child-wife in "A Doll's House" vanish in the lure of the serpentine Hedda, but in the transition, Nazimova seems to add to her stature. It is too bad that "Hedda Gabler" was played but once during the engagement, for those who can intelligently interpret the plays of Ibsen too seldom visit us.

There are those uncomprehending ones who have the temerity to say that Nazimova would be greater if more mature, implying that there will be more joy in witnessing her performances when her ways have become settled.

More cavil of the carping ones. Nothing could be a more valued asset in her art than the entire absence of anything of the kind, and it is safe to presume that starting as she has, that she will continue in her natural and beautiful way, and that she may never be seen in a play where by word or action she will do anything that is

studied. She resorts to none of the stagey tricks, there is apparently no effort in a thing she does, and yet in one convulsive shock of that little figure, she expresses more than any words can tell. The poise of her head, the expression of her face, and those wonderful eyes in laughter or tears, or when she is struggling with conflicting emotions, all are a part of a genius, whose brilliancy exceeds that of any other English-speaking actress on the stage.

Speaking of her English, it is not the least of her great accomplishments, for except for those words beginning in "th" and at times when she is speaking rapidly with a rising inflection, there is not a flaw in a sentence she utters.

While Ibsen usually contrives to make his very real people do some things which are very unreal, as, for instance, Nora's leaving her children, at the same time the appreciation of his work is gaining ground, and it is well that such as Nazimova is the interpreter. His "A Doll's House" is a vehicle shrewdly chosen for this remarkable young woman; the range it gives her from her simplicity in the beginning until she emerges disillusioned, calls for the full meed of her power and her art.

It would be sweet to forget Brandon Tynan in mentioning Nazimova, but how can one? Try as he did, however, to spoil the performance, this stick by contrast but added to the brilliancy of the star. He is not even mechanical in his work, and seems utterly lacking in the comprehension of his roles. On the first night he was far from letter perfect also, and his entire performance was discreditable. It would be well before he reaches a city to put him through a process of decrustation. There is no one in the company who really has any business playing with such a star, though no fault is to be found with Percy Lyndal, who is a clever actor. Evelyn Wiedling's work in both plays was a sad mess.

But the beautiful thing about the engagement has been that theater goers were repaid in full by the little Muscovite, and so the others mattered not.



SUPERHEATED ETHER WORKING OVERTIME.

Is it possible that after another periodical dose from the prolific Pelton and Smutzer aggregation which controls "a hundred and sixty-eight theatres" somewhere, that their latest announce-

ment is going the usual way, and that this city is not to be surfeited with innumerable high-class attractions during the season of 1909-10.

It is hard to believe that either of these gentlemen would wilfully misrepresent things. Possibly they were misquoted, or maybe they were mistaken in their interpretation of the information which it would appear, came to them first hand. At any rate, it is not true that the long list of attractions enumerated under number one heads during the late visit of one of these theatrical four-flushers, will be seen at the Grand the coming season.

Possibly a few of the independent shows will crowd the apron of the Grand stage, and maybe, too, the Shuberts are planning to control a string of theatres in the west, but it is easy to reason why the extravagant claims of P. & S. will not bear fruit, unless the products of the citrus belt are considered.

The Shuberts have wired this office that they can make no statement at present, but will do so later, and in the meantime, the average western manager of experience is inclined to the belief that while they may have something up their sleeves, that the present campaign is on the order of a bluff, and that by fall again, things theatrical will move along as usual with Klaw & Erlanger, the Shuberts et al sticking as close to each other as a sick kitten to a hot brick.

Already the principal western theatres that book the K. & E. attractions have also booked a good number of the Shubert productions, and this, together with the fact that many of the Shubert plays and players listed by the P. & S. comedians in their please-interview-me kind of a way will not leave the east next year, the time being insufficient to meet the demands of the eastern cities, leads one to believe that the Pelton and Smutzer hullabaloo is composed mostly of vapor heated to the proper temperature to make it available reading matter for the uninitiated.

Another phase of the situation which would seem to prove the versatile Pelton & Smutzer in error is the knowledge that at present the large western houses cannot keep all of their winter dates filled even with the K. & E. and Shubert shows to draw on. With such a state of affairs, what course of business reasoning could be brought to bear on the Shuberts to make them build and buy a string of western theatres of their

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