

# Beauty or Brains?

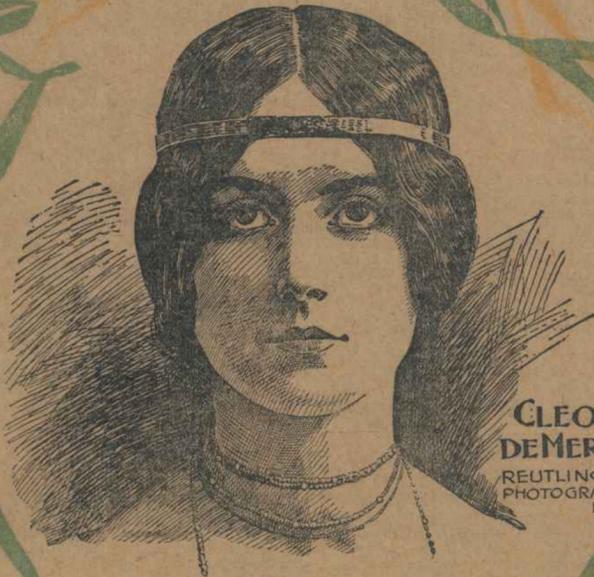
ALAN DALE  
DISCUSSES SOME OF THE  
FAMOUS FOREIGN  
BEAUTIES WHO  
COME TO  
VISIT  
US



**SYBIL  
CARLISLE**  
GAINSBOROUGH  
STUDIO  
LONDON.



**MISS JESSIE  
BATEMAN**  
ALFRED  
ELLIS  
PHOTO  
LONDON



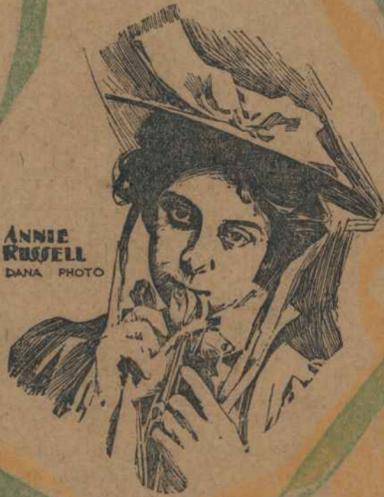
**CLEO  
DEMERODE**  
REUTLINGER  
PHOTOGRAPHER.  
PARIS.



**MAUDE  
ADAMS**  
PHOTO BY  
SARONBY  
9999



**ADA  
REHAN**  
PHOTO BY  
SARONBY  
9999



**ANNIE  
RUSSELL**  
DANA PHOTO

The actresses who visit are not the beauties—at least they are not beautiful to the connoisseurs. Little Maude Adams, who is at the top of the tree to-day, has got there by sheer labor, and after a long apprenticeship. She hasn't a "regular feature" about her make-up. Dress her up in a Grand street rig, and you wouldn't turn around to look at her. The manager who makes a point of appealing to men would scarcely have given this little lady an engagement. We admire her now, because of the intellect in her features. Her brain has been nourished, and—gives a luminous charm to her face. We called her "sweet" as Lady Babbie, because she was clever enough to appeal to our intellects. And she will be able to do this when years have passed over her head and we have forgotten the very existence of such Christmas card lassies as Jessie Bateman, Sybil Carlisle and Cleo de Merode. Look at Annie Russell. You wouldn't call her pretty, would you? There have been times when she has looked positively ugly. She

could never have looked in her mirror and said, "I'm so lovely that I'll go upon the stage." No manager could possibly have buttonholed a critic and have remarked: "I've engaged Annie Russell. She's a beauty." For years Miss Russell has been pegging away with all the ups and downs of the struggling artist. She has never saved a bud from failure by her looks. The festive bald head has steered away from her vicinity. And to-day, when she is much older than she used to be, success has come. She can snap her fingers at the pretty girls who started with her and forged ahead at the beginning of the race. They are never mind where they are. Miss Russell has arrived at the dignity of Internationalism, and she has been called "the American Duse." That is a compliment, because Duses are particularly ugly and clever. Never in my life have I heard Ada Rehan physically admired. Her dearest friend could never have called her handsome. That dearest friend might have stretched a point and called her—in Dickensian language—"a deuced fine woman," but no more could possibly have been said. If Ada Rehan had been a beauty, think you that she would have held her graceful position as long as she has done? Do you suppose for an instant that she would have had any inducement to burn the midnight oil and struggle as she has done for laurel after laurel? Miss Rehan's life has been one of incessant industry and indefatigable effort. If she had been lovely she could have tossed on the couch of indolence for a season or two. She could have listened in brainless enjoyment to sonnets written to her eyebrows, and to odes to her languishing eyes. That would have been the end of it. Miss Rehan has just returned from Europe as full of new plans as an egg is of meat—a speaking example of the value of brains and the inefficiency of mere physical charms.

Beauty is a curse. The brain becomes stunted, because the individual is not impelled to do her best. The lovely actress finds that her path is not one of roses. She has made her bow as a beauty, and a beauty she must remain until the public is tired of her, and her "short-lived" tyranny cries out for mercy. Charming actresses are very pleasant to look upon, but their charms don't last, and they have nothing else to offer. They have been so busy posing, reading lessons to ambitious girls anxious to ferret out their recipes, that they have had no time to attend to the substance of the thing.

The woman who goes upon the stage with a clear intellect and a disposition to work it for all it is worth is not hampered. She may have trouble in persuading managers that there is anything in her. They will look askance at her commonplace nose, at the lips that couldn't possibly be called "ruby," at the figure that has no pretensions to voluptuousness, and at the eyes that their pet critics will never call limpid. She will be forced to begin with a "thinking" part, and think her way laboriously up from the ranks.

But when she is on the ladder she will be safe. Time will take nothing from her. She will have the intellect of the community to play to instead of its senses. She will realize that you can talk forever to the intellect of the world; to its senses for a few years only. She will be forced to act, because, not being pretty, the public won't allow her to stroll through a part without any dramatic effort.

The pretty actress is the  
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THE girl with the "chiselled" nose, the "rosebud" mouth and the aureate hair looks in her mirror and says: "Behold, I am too pretty for private life! A footlight career simply clamors for me. I can go upon the stage, and I shall be famous. My pictures will be in the cigarette boxes. My millinery will set the metropolitan fashions. I will be adored—the favorite of two nations. They all tell me I am beautiful. Why waste myself?"

Now, admit, pretty girl, that you have thought this. Confess that your friends have suggested it to you. Acknowledge that stage gentlemen, "who know all the managers," and have a "pull" with all the critics, have tried to fill your stupid, brainless little noodle with just such empty rubbish. And then heed me, for I am going to explode one of the most popular fallacies of the day. I am going to tell you that the girl who is born beautiful is, in most cases, born with a curse. That what Byron calls "the fatal gift of beauty" (yes, it was Byron, and not Laura Jean) is a distinct impediment in the way of theatrical success. That the delightfully ugly girl is better off than the insipidly beautiful one; that it is hard work to live down the disastrous effects of a symmetrical face, and that when you look at your features in a "beauty show" you are gazing at something that will cause you anguish in the years to come.

"The curse of beauty" does sound rather like the title of a cheap paper novel, with a heroine named Esmatruide or Hyacinth and a hero with a title and six feet (I mean six feet of height, of course); but it's a truism and it must be digested and realized.

The pretty girl finds it very easy to "get" to the stage. She needs very few inducements or "references." The manager, who is, of course, a man; sees her, realizes that she will interest other men, for reasons that are purely physiological, engages her, meets me on Broadway and says, "My boy, it's got a beauty; the town will go crazy over her." So far so good. The pretty girl goes home rejoicing. Splendid vistas open before her. She dreams of phantom broughams waiting for her and of magnificent emoluments that will keep poor monner pretty girls always have poor monners in clean black alpaca for the rest of her life.

Her season begins, and nothing seems to go wrong. Feminine writers (who are supposed to know more of females than their brothers, but who don't write glowing articles on the actress's beauty. They tell us how she does her hair, how she gets into her corsets, how many baths she takes a day, how she removes refractory blotches, what she does with her teeth, her hands, her figure, her nails, her eyelashes and her lips. She is given a "prominent role," which, as a rule, she trots through in sublime nonchalance. But nobody cares. It is her first season. Enthusiastic youths with pens write in this strain: "She is lovely. Why criticize her act? What does it matter how she acts? Such beauty is surely a heaven-sent gift. Let us rejoice." You know the style.

In the meantime the pretty actress rushes round and round, like a squirrel in its interminable cage. She gets nowhere and arrives at nothing. Round and round she goes, and the foolish mob applauds the novelty of the thing and its delicious uselessness. There is not the slightest inducement for her to work and study. She is cast for "pretty" parts, in which she can wear sumptuous clothes and display the charms that she can't help exuding. Let her try to get away from her "reputation," and woe to her! But as a rule she doesn't try, because she has no brains and is quite satisfied to be weak and lovely.

Take the two latest beauties to flash upon this city—Miss Jessie Bateman and Sybil Carlisle, in "A Brace of Partridges" at the Madison Square Theatre. They are so pretty that it is a pleasure to look at them, but Mrs. Wheatcroft could furnish "stronger" actresses from her school. If these girls had flat noses and large mouths, managers would insist upon their acting, or their usefulness would be nil. As it is, they are not asked to exert themselves, and they don't exert themselves. They are very comfortable as they are—thanks for kind inquiries—but they belong to the category of pretty girls, without a future. They will go on playing pretty parts until their "beauty grows familiar," fades and "palls upon the sense." And then—and then—they won't even be possible for dowagers, because dowagers are bound to act, and act vigorously, too. Their beauty will prove to be what somebody—wasn't it Socrates?—called "a short-lived tyranny," because pretty girls don't

bother about cultivating their brains. They are not asked to do so. The immediate necessity of their doing so is not apparent. And the woman without brains has no enduring value upon the stage.

Look at that poor little model of loveliness, Cleo de Merode, without a brain to bless her with. Hundreds of silly girls envied her those "lustrous" eyes, those glossy bandeaux of perfect hair, that sedate mouth and that nun-like look of sanctity. Poor Cleo had cultivated her physical charms to the detriment of her brain. It is an easier job, well meaning but misguided ladies can tell any schoolgirl "how to be beautiful," with cosmetics, and dyes, and lotions, and wrinkle-eradicators and embonpoint expanders and reducers. But the brain is troublesome. If Cleo had owned a brain she would have been better off. But she came here able to do nothing at all (she did that nothing rather nicely) and New York gave her the lay shoulder.

In a few years from now Cleo will be an impossibility even in Paris. She has rested upon her beauty laurels. There is no incentive for her to do anything worth looking at. It is a melancholy fate. The "short-lived" tyranny," too, will break her.

The beginning is easy for pretty girls. We all like them, but it is an insult to the stage to suppose that dramatic art has any particular use for them merely because they are beautiful. It is putting dramatic art very low in the scale. To be successful in any walk of life is a difficult thing. It means hard work, no "royal road" to anything, and—brains. The pretty girl is never asked to worry about her brain, and she doesn't do it. She is thankful for small mercies, and like the hare, in the fable, she is sublimely superior to the tortoise. But it is the tortoise who gets there—the girl who has never been told that she is beautiful, who has never been cursed with those attributes that appear exclusively to the senses, leaving the intellect out in the cold.