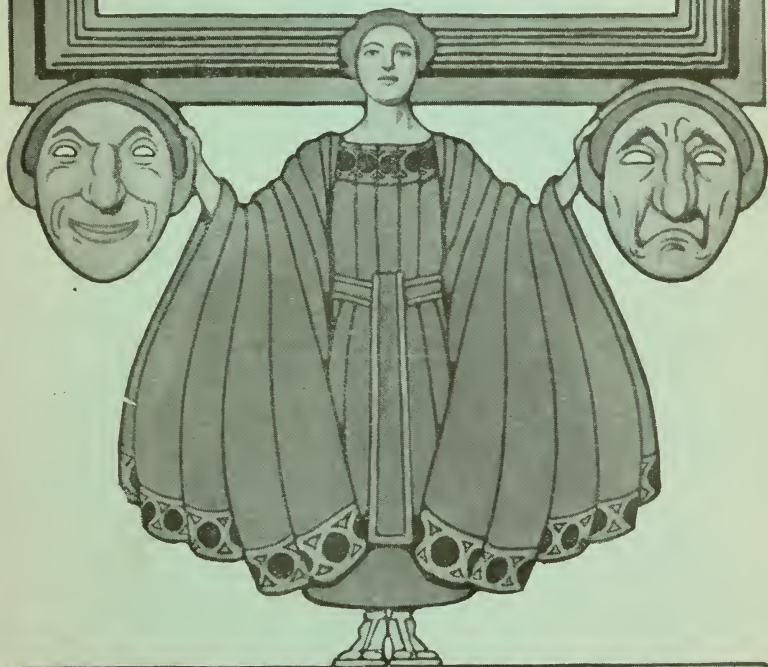


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At the Theatre

Sara Venore Shriner



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THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY
PHILADELPHIA

At the Theatre

A Monologue

By

SARA VENORE SHRINER



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PHILADELPHIA
THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY
1918

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At the Theatre

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no. 1

At the Theatre

CHARACTER

A Pennsylvania Dutch woman. She wears a close-fitting black waist and a full skirt; small bonnet or old-fashioned hat with elastic band; white cotton gloves or mitts. She carries a large umbrella and a hand-bag. No scenery is required except a chair, left center.

TIME OF PRESENTATION.—About twelve minutes.

At the Theatre

(Enter DUTCH WOMAN, looking around.)

Yes, vell dis is da Lyric Seater. I vonder where dey sell tickets fer da play.

(Comes to stage c. Talks to woman who goes by.)

Oxcoose me, missus, but vould you tell me, please, vhere to make buyings of tickets fer Romeo und Juliet? Inside dere? All right, sank you wery much.

(Crosses to L. of stage.)

How tydo mister. Is dis da place vhere you buy tickets fer da play? It is—ain't! How much you say dey are? Orchestra, two dollars. (*Thinking.*) Orchestra—vhy, vat you mean by orchestra? Och, be sure! Dem's da mens vhat makes da music play—ain't?

Vell now if I vouldn't listen to da music—vould it be cheaper?

It vouldn't.

Vat's dat? Balcony, one dollar.

Vell, now, I don'd vant to make settings on da balcony out—I vant to see da show.

Vhat you say? Oh, dem's da seats up higher den dem orchestra seats—now could I hear and see schust as vell up dere?

I could.

Den I vill take vone fer up dere. (*Opens her pocket-book.*) One dollar, you say—can you change a two dollar bill? I ain't got no vone.

(Takes her ticket, walks away and goes back again.)

Oh, say, Mister, vould you mindt keeping mine umbrella till after da play's ofer? You don'd do dat? All right. Vich vay I go up? Dem steps, und gife my ticket to da man up dere? All right. Good-bye.

(Crosses to R. of stage.)

Are you da man vhat takes dis ticket? You are, ain't.

All right, I'll follow you (*walks L.*) down dere in front of dem vimmen—seat twelve? All right, sank you.

Oxcoose me, missus, but dere ain't no other vay of gettin' in here; da man said fer me to set on seat number twelve.

(Turns around and looks for the seat.)

Oh, is dat it?

(Sits. Puts umbrella under seat.)

Och, du lieber, it makes me all out of vint to walk so many steps up. (*To woman on her R.*) You come to see da play too, ain't? I put mine umbrella under da seat.

My, ain't dis a vonderful nice big building? Vhat's all dem lights hangin' der endt of dat sthick on? (*Pause.*) On, such a chanticleer! Yes—vell—it is certainly nice.

Dem seats over dere look like dey might break down if you set in dem. Vat? (*Pause.*) Oh, dem's da box seats. Oh, yes, I see.

I vonder if I'll like it.

I readt da book onct of Romeo und Juliet. I don'd read ofden dem kindt of books but I sought dat vas certainly grant.

Vhat time you say it starts? Eight o'clock? Oh, vhy ve're early, ain't ve? Vell, I'm like pop—I like to go early to such places und get a good seat. I vish I vould 'a' brung some knittings along vis me yet. You belong to such a Red Cross too, ain't! In Reading up ve make so much knittings fer da boys already.

Vhat you say? (*Pause.*)

Oh, must ve take our hats off? Where ve put dem? I don'd see no nails vhat to hang dem on. What? (*Pause.*) Under da seat? Vell, I nefer keep my hat on da floor. Von't da man vhat's back of me tramp mit his shoes all ofer it? (*Pause.*) He can't? (*Pause.*) Vell, schust as you say—

(*Takes off her hat.*)

Dese gums is handy sings fer on da hats, ain't?

(*Puts it under the seat. Taps woman in front on shoulder.*)

Oxcoose me, lady, take your hat off, vhy don'd you, und put it under da seat? Dat's de vay I do. (*Pause.*)

Oh, you vill take it off when you're ready. Vell, I didn't vant to make you madt. I vould be glad if some vone told me how to do when I didn't know. (*To woman on her R.*) I didn't vant to hurt her feelings.

You know, my daughter Annie reat in da newspaper dat dis play vas going to be acted out, und she knowed how I liked da book, so she sait I vas to schust come to da city to see da play und because she needed some new sphring dresses I could schust brung dem along home.

Yes, I come alone; vhy, pop he vould have come too, but he is so busy always in da sphring fixin' up da house aroundt. He vas laying cement boardwalks when I come down.

What's dese little books fer vhat he give? (*Pause.*) Och, be sure—dese is da programs—vhy vhat?—vhat is it?—da vhat (*very excited*) da Leglong Café—vhy, I sought dey vere going to play Romeo und Juliet. Oh, just such advertisement, they certainly could fool a body, ain't! Oh, yes, here it is—Romeo und Juliet by Villiam Shakespeare. Vell, he certainly must 'a' been a schmart man. Annie tells me of so many sings vhat he wrote.

(*Surprised.*) I guess it begins when dey make out da lights. (*Looks down on stage eagerly.*)

Oh, mine gracjous, ain't dat grant—dem people is fine lookin'—dere's Tibalt. Dat's Juliet's cousin, ain't?

(*Long pause.*) Now dere comes Romeo—ain't he pretty but—— Och, he looks so sat. I guess because he lofed her so much. (*To lady back of her.*) Yes, yes, I vill keep quiet—but anyway, I vasn't speaking to you.

Oh, vhy da curtain made down—it ain't ofer, is it? (*Pause.*) Just end of act vone? Vell, I sought anyhow dat da book what I reat vas longer den dat.

I certainly like it, don'd you? Dey make nice music too, ain't?

Who is da man what's sthanding und schwinging mit der headts of der people ofer mit a shtick? (*Pause.*) Oh, he leads dem—he certainly is goot at it. I vas vonct to da—A-ca-demy of Music in Philadelpy, und dere dey made such vonderful nice music. My Annie plays some pieces on da organ—— Och, now, what is it? Ain't dat funny—dot one—it schust slipped my mindt. It's such a patriotic song. Oh, yes, “Keep da Fires Burning at Home”—und—“Brighten da Corner Where You Are” vone of dem Sunday hymns. Yes, she schust plays dem on da organ, but it makes so nice. I guess it vould make pretty if dem men vould play 'em on all dem instruments yet! (*Pause.*)

Now, dere makes da curtain up again. Dere comes Romeo und Juliet. Don'd dey look nice together?

Och, hear how he speaks to her. “Vhat light shrough yonder vintow breaks? It is da east und Juliet is da sun.” Don'd he call her nice already yet? Oh, I like it. (*Looks under seat for umbrella.*) Och, mine umbrella—I sought mebbe it got away. I'm very pertickler about it. Pop gave it to me before ve vas married. Yes, ve're now married some twenty or sirty years. Vat's dat? (*Pause.*) Vhy, ve haf vone girl—Annie—und vone boy, Villie—Villie is now at Camp Meade down; he is such a Sergeant.

Annie she puts me so much in mindt of Juliet—she is schust about so big as her. Dis play makes me sink of da time vhen me und pop vas young. He used to talk so to me—vell, not in dem same vords, but dey meant da same.

It's too bad, ain't, dat dere moms and pops couldn't

make out agreeing—as to my judgment I don'd sink Romeo could have got a nicer and purttier girl fer a wife den Juliet—do you?

(Feels in her hand-bag excitedly.)

Och, du lieber, I sought my camphire bottle vas broke! Annie makes me always take it along.

Oh, my, listen how Juliet talks now. Och, ain't dat sadt! *(Weeping.)* “God knows when we shall meet agin.”

Yes—yes—I vill keep quiet. Oh, vhy don'd she let da nurse come? Och, gootness, she has a knife—und some poison! *(Shrieking.)* O-O-Oh, she drunk it! Und her last vords vere fer him *(crying)*, “Romeo, I come, I come,—dis do I drink to thee!” I feel so sorry for Romeo. He loved her so much. *(Weeping.)*

(Long pause. Wipes her eyes, sniffles a bit, then looks suddenly at stage and becomes very much scared.) Dat's da church yardt, ain't? Listen how he speaks to her und she's deadt. Oh, he's going to take poison too. How vere his vords—“Here's to my lofe—thus vis a kiss I die.” It's sadt dey bose take poison. But den maybe such sings always happen fer da best.

(Frightened.) Vhy, it ain't no fire, is it? Fer vhy are all da people gettin' up? *(Pause.)* You say da show's ofer? Vhy don'd dey show twict? Vell, I certainly did enjoy dat vonct.

(Gets up and looks under seat for hat and umbrella.)

Where's my umbrella und hat? Vell, it looks pretty much like he vas on my hat wis his shoes.

(Puts on hat.)

Vell, I certainly enjoyed it, didn't you? I vish only my Annie und pop could have saw it. Say, missus, if you ever come to Reading up, vhy come around to see me. *(Pause.)* Oh, it ain't hardt to findt—ve live da church beside—anybody can tell you vhere Sweitzelheimers live. Yes. Vell, goot-night.

(Exit.)

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