

►► The Theatre ◄◄

By OTIS CHATFIELD-TAYLOR

THE news of the week, theatrically speaking, is that Miss Katharine Cornell is again with us in New York. The news would, however, be better and more startling, so far as a small minority of us are concerned, if she were not once again indulging her persisting predilection for the poignantly pathological in her choice of a play. *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, imported by Miss Cornell from London where it has been causing much discussion for many months, is a play by Rudolph Besier about the Moulton-Barrett family and the efforts of Robert Browning to rescue Elizabeth from the baleful atmosphere created by the head of the family. Along with considerable brains and a dominating personality the father, Edward Moulton-Barrett, is distinguished by hypocrisy and marked incestuous tendencies. He bullies or makes thinly veiled love to the members of his family in such a way that the aptness of the quotation on the program is at once apparent—"Childe Rolande to the Dark Tower came." Apart from the main business of the play, which is the study of this despicable character, there is the subsidiary love story of the interestingly ailing Elizabeth and the hearty and handsome poet.

The Barretts of Wimpole Street, although thoroughly unpleasant in many of its implications, gives the impression of being rather more literate than some of Katharine Cornell's other recent vehicles. How much of this is due to the fact that when two characters in a play represent Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning, who we all know wrote some truly lovely poetry, we ourselves are inclined to let our imaginations and memories do some of the playwright's work for him, I am not prepared to state exactly.

Otherwise I am rather puzzled by Miss Cornell's selection of *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* to act in. True, she does have a chance to look devastatingly

glamorous (I'm afraid that word has been used about her before) and fragile in entrancingly beautiful early Victorian gowns. At the risk of appearing boorish and ungrateful, however, that's not quite enough for me. I still want to

Recommended Current Shows

Ballyhoo: W. C. Fields makes up for the deficiencies in tunes.

Civic Repertory: Always worth a visit. Miss Le Gallienne offers varied fare.

Elizabeth the Queen: The Lunts in Maxwell Anderson's historical drama.

Fine and Dandy: Fast nonsense with Joe Cook.

Five Star Final: Thrilling and affecting melodrama with Arthur Byron.

Girl Crazy: Most of the song hits are in this one. Yes, they're by Gershwin.

Grand Hotel: Fine acting in an effective play from the German.

Mrs. Moonlight: Nice blend of sentiment and humor.

Oh, Promise Me: Rough, raucous and broad farce.

Once in a Lifetime: Spoofing Hollywood.

On the Spot: Edgar Wallace thriller about Chicago.

Philip Goes Forth: Uneven George Kelly but better than many others' best.

Private Lives: It looks easy, but why has no one but Noel Coward done it?

Sweet and Low: Fannie Brice, Jim Barton and some nice songs.

That's Gratitude: Clean, homely and funny Frank Craven comedy.

The Green Pastures: Beautiful negro miracle play.

Tomorrow and Tomorrow: Philip Barry's best serious play well acted.

Vinegar Tree: Mary Boland as a ridiculous middle-aged romantic.

see Katharine Cornell play the leading part in a good play. You see, I missed her *Candida*. From her work in *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* I'm almost willing to believe she's as good as her fans say. But Elizabeth Barrett is not the leading part of this piece. About this point the direction of Guthrie McClintic has been most obscure. Neither he nor Miss Cornell do anything to make her part more important than it should be. What they do, however, is to remove as much

as possible of the morbid fascination that the part of the father could and should have and, therefore, remove much of the point of the play. I am told that in the London production the character of Edward Moulton-Barrett is unforgettable. Here Mr. McClintic has soft-pedalled the abnormalities of the man in his direction, and Mr. Charles Waldron is so monotonous and sketchy in his characterization that one wonders what the play is driving at. For this reason the final scene falls completely flat.

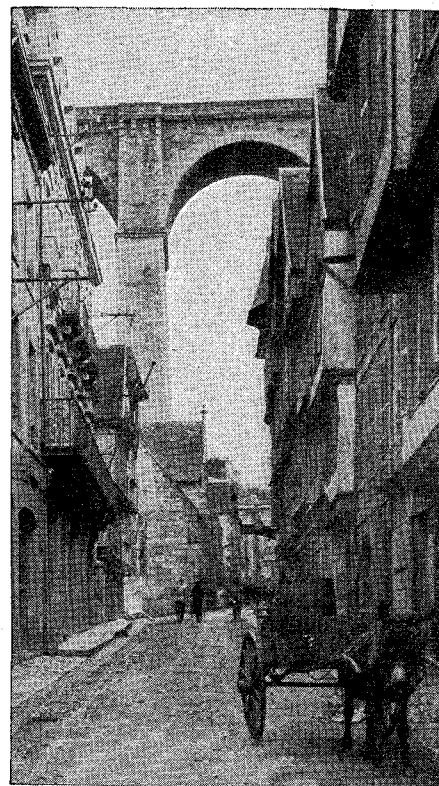
To sum up, it would seem that in their unsuccessful attempt to gloss over the essentially pathological features of the main theme of the play, Mr. McClintic and Miss Cornell have made it neither one thing nor the other.

The Barretts of Wimpole Street is, however, distinguished by the American debut of Brian Aherne, who gives us a brilliant portrayal of the young Browning, and the first appearance on Broadway, except as an understudy, of Margaret Barker, whose performance is a sure indication of future success. She has beauty, charm and, apparently, intelligence. Joe Mielziner has also done another of his astoundingly atmospheric settings.

France

Where one sees everybody from home and the rest of the world

Normandy of apple blossoms... Chartres Cathedral with the loveliest windows man ever made... crypt of St. Gervais at Rouen and birthplace of La Salle, the discoverer of the mighty Mississippi ▼ Picturesque Brittany with its clean little inns... Dinan where Anne of Brittany's castle is still to be seen... Rennes, the ancient capital with its Palais de Justice and museums ▼ The Chateau country with the smiling valley of the Loire... Chaumont where Catherine de Medici lived; and Benjamin Franklin made his home during a mission to France... Ambroise with its St. Hubert's chapel holding the remains of Leonardo da Vinci... Angers and the famous tapestries of the Apocalypse ▼ Poitiers with its Baptistère St. Jean, the oldest Christian church in France ▼ The million-dollar air of Biarritz with the pounding Bay of Biscay for a background ▼ Bagnères de Luchon high up in the Pyrenees with its famous baths and smart hotels ▼ The Roman theatre at Arles with its granite obelisk that Constantine brought from Egypt ▼ The snow-tipped Alps... hillsides of flowers climbing forever... little, lost churches with clouds for their door-mats... Mont Blanc, the loveliest and loneliest peak in all the world.



Information and Literature on request

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➤➤ The Movies ◀◀

➤➤ "Trader Horn"

HERE is romance for you, real romance—not sticky mugging by a pair of cute children, but a romance of menacing jungles, roaring lions, rivers swarming with crocodiles, and shrieking black savages ruled by a white goddess with beautiful golden hair. Improbable, possibly, but you must ask old Mr. Alfred Aloysius Horn, the South African tinware peddler who told his story to Ethelreda Lewis, about that. The fact remains that the film *Trader Horn* has some first-rate excitement and some handsome photography. Harry Carey, the familiar movie actor, portrays Trader Horn in his younger days—at the time when he and Peru (Duncan Renaldo) went in search of Nina (Edwina Booth), the "mysterious white goddess" who had been brought up from birth by savages. A good portion of the film was made in Tanganyika in Central Africa, where director W. S. Van Dyke spent many months with a large crew, sound trucks, studio lights and a refrigeration plant to keep the film from going bad.

How much of the picture you see in the theatre was later made in Hollywood I cannot say, but many of the shots are unquestionably authentic, and many more are exciting enough to be convincing. Searching for the white goddess the two white men and the black gun-bearer (played by an African gentleman named Mutia Omoolu), come upon

a remote village where the natives are having a celebration in which they crucify their victims upside down and stick them full of spears. Escaping this

Worth Seeing

The Blue Angel: Moving tragedy with Emil Jannings and Marlene Dietrich.

Cimarron: Early days in Oklahoma with plenty of action and adventure. From Edna Ferber's novel, and fine stuff it is, too.

City Lights: Charlie Chaplin both convulsing and pathetic, with emphasis on the pathos.

The Criminal Code: Walter Huston as warden in a real penitentiary, and no funny-business.

Finn and Hattie: Mitzi Green and Jackie Searle are immensely amusing. The rest of the film is routine.

Little Caesar: Edward G. Robinson gives you his idea of Chicago's Big Boy Al.

The Royal Family: Frederic March is swell in a none too gentle satire on the Barrymore family.

Tom Sawyer: Jackie Coogan, as Mark Twain's illustrious little boy, is still getting his fence whitewashed for nothing.

they encounter four lions fighting over a kill, a number of bad-tempered rhinos, and more yelling savages. *Trader Horn* hasn't much plot, but it has lots of excitement and some fine sound pictures of animals.

➤➤ "Inspiration"

It is beginning to look as though we members of the G.F.P. (Garbo For President) club would have to do something drastic about getting stories worthy of our lady's charms and talents. *Inspiration* is another cheap affair on

the *Camille* pattern, with Greta Garbo as a notorious Parisian artist's model who falls in love with an excessively innocent young man (Robert Montgomery). After things have been going on some time his family produces a young girl of good family for him to marry. Finally Greta very nobly sacrifices herself and goes out alone into the snowstorm (no kidding). Comrades of the G.F.P., we must unite. Solidarity forever! Greta Garbo is the screen's foremost actress as well as its most fascinating personality—and yet her films are usually just so much trash. The fact that she is as alluring as ever in *Inspiration* is no excuse! The lady deserves better treatment!

➤➤ Other Films

Stolen Heaven: In many scenes the exquisite Nancy Carroll makes this seem much better than it is. As a matter of fact the story about a street-walker and hold-up man who go to Palm Beach to enjoy a few days of luxury before they die is melodramatic and showy to the point of being silly.

By Rocket to the Moon: The first half of this silent UFA film is a fascinating account of the launching of a gigantic "space rocket" going to the moon. The Germans know how to make machinery dramatic and exciting. The scene of the last half is laid on the moon, and is pretty bad.

Millie: Cheap drama about cheap people of the all-men-are-beasts school. God, how we women suffer, and suffer, and suffer. Sobbing by Helen Twelvetrees.

Dracula: Bram Stoker's old horror story about blood-sucking vampires, bats, wolves, coffins and such. Probably as well done as possible, but not very terrifying in the year 1931.

The Royal Bed: Not a bed in it—Robert Sherwood's amusing and flawlessly moral play *The Queen's Husband*, given a new title simply because Radio Pictures thinks you and I are that kind of people.

Scandal Sheet: George Bancroft as a tabloid editor who uncovers a love-nest featuring his wife and best friend, and prints the story, too. Sloppily written and carelessly directed, but good in spots.

The Girl from the Reeperbahn: This story (all in German) of a lighthouse keeper who is nearly lured away from his wife by a siren washed up out of the sea seems to be immensely popular with German-speaking audiences.



Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

DARK MOMENTS IN A DARK JUNGLE

Peru, Nina, Trader Horn (Harry Carey) and Renchero face a charging lion with clubs and spears in the film "Trader Horn"