

Last Friday morning when Joe came back from the post-office he was so greatly excited that he almost forgot to fasten the gate. He had a letter in his hand and I supposed it must be a letter which had altered the entire course of his destiny.

He called to me jubilantly: "They're coming down from St. Louis!"

I grasped the situation presently; my friend and his family were coming down from St. Louis to spend the weekend. They were coming down on the afternoon train that day. I was deeply glad because an old dream of mine was coming true: my old reporter friend and I were to have our visit together in Ste. Genevieve at last.

They came that evening very shortly after the train had whistled. At a distance I noted that my friend was gray and sedate; that there was a distinguished lady with him, and a little girl. There was a maid, too, who proved to be capable of working miracles. At any rate, when night began to fall she lighted the dim old house, and brought linen and crystal and china and silver from chests and drawers and closets, and prepared a dinner of perfection.

After dinner the family and I went in to the fine old drawing-room and sat in antique chairs before an open fireplace. It had become distinctly chilly, and Joe had built a fire. The room really was a picture. For example, there were adjustable candlesticks on the old piano, brought from Paris, so that if one had wished to play "When the Swallows Homeward Fly," one might have seen the notes.

We talked of debonair old Aunt Fannie, the woman of quenchless spirit, who had lived in the house for all of her eighty-four years with scarcely a day away from it.

My friend's wife said to me: "I was here with Aunt Fannie when she died, and almost the last thing she said to me was that she was not going away, really; that she would always be in the house."

They are gone now; the house is again silent and shadowy, and Joe is away on his affairs somewhere. For a long time I have realized that there was something of spirit in the house far removed from walls and furniture. Assuredly I am not alone. The old lady said she would always be in the house, and so far as I am concerned, she has kept her word.

Death of a Medicine Man

as told to Grace French Evans

by Mrs. Richard Wetherill

BLOOD MEMBER OF THE NAVAJO TRIBE

FOR three consecutive nights my wrist was cut as was the wrist of my foster father, and the two wounds were bound together. A child of two, I was then a blood member of the tribe, though both of my parents were white. As I grew older I would be allowed to see and participate in many of the secret rites of the tribe. Just how many, would depend on my intelligence and endurance.

I tell you all this that you may know how it was that I was present at the end of Hostine Nez Atatlatle (Long Singer, a Navajo medicine man).

My white father left me for some years with the Indians, only visiting me from time to time. I lived alone with the woman who cared for me in a hogan in a great canyon in northern New Mexico, and all my playmates and friends were Indian children. Usually, I thought of myself as an Indian, but of course I knew that I would not be there always and I wanted to see and know everything possible before I had to go.

When I was twelve I underwent an ordeal that a very few of the Indian girls care to attempt. I held red-hot coals in my armpits, my arms pressed close to my sides, for several moments. The smell was awful, almost as bad as the pain. I still have the scars. After that I was given a good many more privileges in the tribe. They felt I was all right.

Hostine Nez Atatlatle officiated at the ceremony, but it was not till years later that what I have to tell you about him occurred.

I never liked him very much and I doubt if many of the tribe did, but he was a great man in the community. He had much wealth in silver and turquoise and his herds of horses and sheep multiplied. No medicine man was more successful with his cures.

If you fall ill and want help you seek out the medicine man who specializes in your kind of trouble. You tell him all

about the pain in your back, the headache, or whatever it is. You can talk about it the better part of a day, if you care to, while he sits and listens without ever speaking or giving a sign that he has heard. Then you go home and he thinks it all over for several days. Perhaps he will decide that he cannot cure you. In that case there is nothing for you to do. But perhaps he has thought of a way to help you. His cure will be mostly mental but he has also knowledge of herbs and other practical treatment and is really amazingly successful with his cures. He then names a price for banishing the evil spirit that is bothering you, usually a rather large price, and you go away and arrange for the payment. If you cannot get it, your situation is pretty hopeless, for, unless he is an exceptionally charitable medicine man, he will not even start his cure until he has been paid.

It looks as if he had everything pretty much his own way, but it really isn't as pleasant a profession as it seems. His cures are supposed to be successful, and if they are not he is in trouble himself. Three failures are all he is allowed. It is then assumed that some evil spirit has taken possession of him and he is tried by the tribal court.

Indians have courts and judges much like ours. The only difference is that they are chosen by the tribe solely on account of their ability for the position which they are to fill. The story of Long Singer begins, if you are to believe the Indians, with one of these courts and ends in another.

As I have said before, he was most successful and wealthy, and all this had made him very arrogant. A tall, high-chinned Indian of fifty, he walked behind no one. He had little kindness and no charity. The girl in the hogan below his died because she could not bring him the thirty sheep he demanded for her cure.

The hogan where I lived was not far

from his and at nightfall I used to see him standing in his doorway, arms folded high on his chest, cursing and hectoring his four Piute slaves as they drove the flocks of sheep up the trail from the valley into his gates. If he had goods to barter at the Post, do you think he would bring them himself? Not at all! He rode down first, very aloof, indifferent. Later came the Piute slaves and the squaws with his goods.

One of his sons was chosen to serve on the court. He was a fine, intelligent young fellow, but dominated by his father. Hostine Nez Atatatlé was pleased by this honor, but he assumed that it was his wisdom rather than his son's that they were seeking. And this brought about an incident which, though it did not amount to much in itself, was the beginning of all his misfortunes.

Some of the young Indians got drunk. It was just an ordinary drunk followed by the usual fight. But unfortunately one of them hit another on the head and hit too hard. He died and his assailant was tried.

The son of Hostine Nez Atatatlé was one of the judges, and just back of his shoulder sat his father, advising him. His advices were without mercy. The others of the court were for leniency. Drinking was natural, and so was fighting. Why be hard on the boy? But the medicine man, speaking through his son, held out and at length obtained a death sentence. Not satisfied with this he had a number of proposals, all of them cruel, as to the manner of death. But at this point the judges were firm. When his crime is not too serious, a condemned man is often allowed to select his own kind of death. The judges gave him this privilege and he died a few days later with an arrow through his back.

That seemed to close the incident, but almost immediately after this the ill-fortune of the medicine man began. A squaw came to him who had met with an accident. She had been carrying a load of wood up the side of a cliff when an evil spirit had tripped her up, causing her to fall some distance. As she was pregnant, it brought on a miscarriage and she became very ill. The medicine man was sent for. To every one's surprise he accepted the case, which seemed a hopeless one.

His vanity was so great that failure

seemed impossible. He collected his fee and went to work. First she was put in the sweat-house and thoroughly sweated, then she was rolled in the snow. This did not help her. After that she was thrown into an herb-induced sleep, which lasted four or five days. During this period the medicine man prayed and made sand pictures. But this did not help either, and while he was trying to think of something else to try, the woman died.



There was great consternation. The medicine man, who had never lost a case before, had failed. Something must be wrong with him that the gods had forsaken him. Presently a whisper began to grow. What about that boy whose death he had so unnecessarily demanded? Could it be that the spirit of the boy was taking its revenge by entering into him? Such things happened. Perhaps it was so with Hostine Nez Atatatlé.

He was unused to reverses of any sort. He was so sure of his standing with the gods, of his own worthiness. But something must be wrong or he could not have failed. He, himself, did not consider the theory of the dead Indian boy. He had been just, he felt, nothing else. His haughtiness, his arrogance, did not lessen, but he began to grow thin. He spent his days fasting and praying that he might learn the reason for his failure, but no light was vouchsafed him.

He determined to leave no stone unturned. He arranged for the Um Tah, the cleansing ceremonial. This was a very fortunate move on his part. The Indians enjoy an Um Tah immensely, and as only a very rich Indian can afford this ceremony it did much to restore his standing.

It lasted for twenty-three days and each night had to be spent in a different camp. The first day, surrounded by the men of the tribe, he rode about fifteen miles, where they formed the first camp. All night they danced and sang, making the celebration as wild as possible.

The plan was to lure the evil spirit out of the medicine man, to join in the celebration. It was hoped that when they slipped away in the early morning, it would still be asleep and they could

leave it behind. The second day another fifteen miles was covered and in the evening another celebration took place. This was repeated for twenty-two days and nights.

On the morning of the twenty-third day they prepared for the supreme effort. At three in the morning they stole away from camp with the utmost secrecy. Hostine Nez Atatatlé was pretty well exhausted by then, so he was carried in a travois, a sort of hammock slung between horses. The whole band rode with the greatest speed for twenty-one miles. They arrived at their destination about the middle of the morning. It was a hogan especially built for the occasion and around it were heaped great piles of dust. As they arrived they created a tremendous hubbub. Some rode about the hogan shouting and shooting. Others leaped into the dust and flung it about in order to blind the eyes of the possibly pursuing evil spirit. The drummers drummed frantically and everybody yelled. In the midst of all this the medicine man was rushed into the hogan. Some of the escort were dispatched to pick up any of their comrades who had fallen exhausted on the twenty-one-mile run. These were revived by raking their backs with an instrument made of deer toes and turtle shells.

Then began a feast which lasted most of the day and night and with it ended the Um Tah.

Hostine Nez Atatatlé felt that he was reinstated in the eyes of the gods and of the tribe and his step grew stronger and again his curses rang out when the Piutes brought in his herds at sunset. Before long he even accepted another case.

This time it was a boy who had been doing some repair work at the bottom of a well, when his father accidentally dropped the bucket on his head. The boy became an idiot, and Hostine Nez Atatatlé was called in. His confidence fully restored, he attempted the cure after accepting a comfortable fee. The Um Tah had cost him a great deal and he was glad to be earning again. But again he failed and his failure became definite when the boy wandered off a cliff and was killed.

What the tribe had only whispered before they now said openly. He was a man haunted by a devil, a man with whom it was unsafe to have the small-

est dealing. Hostine Nez Atatlatle had been disturbed before, but he now became desperate, realizing that honor and position were gone, even his life in danger of forfeit, and the faces of the gods turned from him! He had no real friends; his family feared rather than loved him. In bitter loneliness he prayed and fasted, seeking the answer to the riddle, seeking relief from the curse. And everywhere the secret, inquisitive eyes of the tribe observed him and waited. He sold most of his horses and his turquoise and caused another great ceremonial to be held. It was the fire ceremonial, and the last, the ultimate, resort.

It was necessary to wait some weeks, as it could only be celebrated after a heavy snowfall. For days the tribe worked building a great circular corral, three hundred feet in circumference. It was made of dense brush so that the eyes of the evil ones might not look in, and in the centre forty wagonloads of wood were piled. Every twenty feet, against the inside of the brush inclosure, there were other great piles of wood. Outside the corral a great hogan was built, big enough to contain about two hundred Indians. Of course, you can get a number of Indians into a pretty small space, but even so it was a big hogan. Every day, in that hogan, a medicine man made a sand painting on which Hostine Nez Atatlatle sat for some hours, while they prayed and danced about him. On the night of the twenty-eighth day came the great ceremony.



The huge pile of wood in the centre of the corral was set on fire and all the smaller piles about the edge kindled, and in the lane between, in the red glare of the flames, danced thirty naked men, their bodies and faces painted black with white snakes down their arms and legs. Hostine Nez Atatlatle sat beside the medicine man who was conducting the ceremony, and the dancers danced before them. After them came thirty men painted yellow with black spots. They carried bows and arrows and as they danced they shot flaming arrows out into the white night where the evil spirits lurked. They were followed by another group and another and another, until there had been sixteen sets, each painted differently, rep-

resenting the sixteen original clans of the Navajos. After these dancers were gone, a space about twenty feet square was cleared and into it stepped a medicine man, very tall, and with a high headdress. His body was painted black and his face white, and he carried over his arm various bags. He represented the first man.

He made certain passes over the smooth dirt and, out of it, before our eyes, there suddenly arose a woman. I cannot explain this, though I suppose it was some kind of hypnotism. It was a real woman. From where I sat with my foster father I recognized her as a squaw I had seen at the post. The medicine man motioned her to him and she seated herself beside him. He made a few more passes over the even dirt and presently it began to heave itself up into a small mound out of which grew a little tree, bearing on its branches bits of meat, cloth, and other trifles, picturing all the earthly needs.

Then he and the woman lay down and embraced. A moment later he lifted up a small child. This represented the first child born to the Navajos.

By this time the fire was a red-hot blaze, the flames leaping up so high that they seemed to cut the sky to shreds. The tomtoms, which had never ceased all through the night, increased their tempo and twenty naked dancers appeared. They were painted snow white, hair and all, and they carried long wands of cedar bark which had been pounded until they were as flexible as feathers.

Accompanied by a frenzy of drumming and yelling, they rushed up to the blaze, into which they thrust their wands, which kindled at once. With these fiery whips they beat each other and themselves in the maddest dance you can imagine. It seemed impossible that they could stand the great heat of the blaze, to say nothing of the burning cedar wrapped again and again about them. Later I learned that the medicine man paints them with a sort of asbestos paint. But they do not understand that; they think it is the Great Spirit protecting them.

The dancing continued until the fire was dying down and the first light of dawn showed on the horizon. We all went home and Hostine Nez Atatlatle was convinced that now he was saved; but most of the Indians doubted it.

Twenty or thirty of his sheep suddenly dropped dead as they grazed. I knew it was poison weed, but no one would believe that. Then his son had an accident. He stumbled and fell into a camp fire, breaking his leg and seriously burning his arm. Something happened to a daughter, I do not remember exactly what. The Indians avoided him. They felt sure he was still accursed.

Never a very talkative man, he became completely silent. When I first knew him he had rather thick, coarse lips. That year they turned into a thin etched line on his face. It was the gossip of the Post that he made things pretty hard for his squaws and children. They were poor now. All the ceremonies and the prayers had consumed his wealth, and, of course, there was nothing coming in.



For a year he kept to himself. No one had word of him or saw him. Then suddenly he was back at the Post, seeming much like his old haughty self. Only there was a queer, inturnd look about his eyes that made you nervous. He let it be known that he was ready to resume practice.

I do not think any of our own Indians would have risked it. It was a man from over the hills who came to him finally, for a fee smaller than any other medicine man would have asked. And that man died!

It was, of course, the end for Hostine Nez Atatlatle. But Indians never do anything in a hurry. They took no immediate action. However, his squaw did. One morning she was gone, taking with her the depleted flock of sheep. She was afraid, she said, to live with one possessed of the devil.

It must have been about the last blow for him. The Indians would not let him come to the Post for food. He might not get water from their springs. His shadow must not touch their shadow.

He withdrew to a wretched little cave high up on the side of the canyon to wait, I suppose, for what he knew must happen. No Indian came near him; he had nothing to eat but what his arrow brought him.

I met him one day on the trail near his cave and was shocked at how ill he looked. I asked him if he had enough

to eat. He said that he had, but he complained that he could not sleep and when he did his dreams were so terrible that he preferred to remain awake.

Soon after that I climbed up to his cave with a small gift of food. He seemed glad to see me and motioned me to be seated in the opening of his cave. Looking inside, I saw that there was nothing there but a sheepskin, a pot, and his bow and arrow. Outside was the customary stone wall, which the Navajo builds before a cave for protection. I noticed that one end was broken.

"Hostine Nez Atatle," I said, "was it you who broke down your wall?"

"Yes," he spoke slowly, "the harm which is on the earth cannot hurt me now. It is the harm that comes by the air that I must fear. And it is already too late to keep it out. If it should wish to leave me, I have made the way clear for its going."

I think he was wishing that death might enter through the broken wall.

Presently he said: "There are two of you—" (Indians were always saying that to me, because I was both white and Indian), "and you think and have some wisdom. Tell me, how has this thing come to me?"



But for all that I was both white and Indian, I could not tell him. So we sat in silence looking out over the great valley of the canyon, and after a while he began to talk. I have said that he was a silent man, but that day he seemed to have a great need of words. He spoke mostly of his boyhood, when he was very little and his father had protected him. He described how they had hunted deer and run wild horses. He had been taken north on the great tribal buffalo hunt. He remembered when the Utes had come down on the war-path and he had hidden in a bush, where an arrow had pierced his shoulder. He dwelt on endless little episodes of his childhood, seeming to wish to make them live again. Then came tales of his young manhood and of his first young wife, dead years ago. How gay their courting had been! She had laughed so much and worn such pretty turquoise. Then he fell silent. There had been no words of his fine big hogan or of the days when he was the first medicine man of his tribe. As I rose to

go he pointed up to a steep trail above.

"My father took me up that trail when I was six years old. He carried me most of the way. I brought down an eagle's feather."

Again there fell a silence. Presently I said good-by, but he did not seem to hear me and sat with his eyes fixed on the upper trail where once a child of six had clung to his father's hand.

Down in the valley the Indians grew restless. Strange things happened that winter. Weird lights appeared in the canyon; wolves got their flocks, there were owls calling in the valley. Owls are a very bad sign.

So they sent a party for Hostine Nez Atatle and he was tried before their court and found guilty of being possessed of a devil.

He had no protest to make. He knew better than they that he was, indeed, possessed.

But before they carried out their sentence they made every effort to save him with endless prayers and fasting. It was a thin ghost of Hostine Nez Atatle whom they finally took to the Canyon of Human Sacrifice when they knew that there was no more hope.

I saw Hostine Nez Atatle executed. I was at that time already married, but my husband's occupation made it possible for me to continue living among the Indians. He was away when all this occurred.

I went to Hostine Begal, my foster father, and asked him if it would be possible for me to attend the rites held over Hostine Nez Atatle. He strongly disapproved.

"It will make you sick," he said.

"It is a bad thing to see," he insisted. He meant that I would be in some danger of the liberated evil spirit of Hostine Nez Atatle. When I persisted he closed the argument with:

"The medicine man will not allow you!"

Then I went to the medicine man who was to conduct the ceremony. He objected just as strongly as had my foster father.

"It would take too much time to get you ready. Then when you were there you would open your mouth and let the evil spirit in."

Finally he said: "What we do is not for fun—it is bad."

"I know that," I answered, "but you have told me many times that I must re-

member all I have seen and learned so that in a distant day the wisdom of the tribe will not be forgotten. You have told me to make a record. How shall I do that, if my eyes are bound?"

To this he made no answer, and I saw that I had said enough.

It would have been an insult to have offered him a bribe of money, but the next day I sent a Navajo to his corral with three horses and a cow. For his wife there was a five-pound sack of flour.



On the appointed day I presented myself at the hogan where the Indians were being prepared for the ceremony. The medicine man was busy painting them from head to foot as a protection against the evil spirits. When he came to me he made no comment, but prepared me as he had the others.

The Canyon of Human Sacrifice lay only a few miles from my hogan, but, unless one knew its secret, one might pass its entrance a dozen times without seeing it, so intricate was the path through the rocks. I had never been there before. No Indian dares enter except after elaborate preparations, and I was enough an Indian to have ridden by with head averted when I passed that way. It is a haunted, fatal spot, and those who go there must be painted and prayed over for hours by the medicine man.

It was five in the afternoon when my horse picked his way through the entry to the canyon. Other riders had joined me by the way, but no one spoke. We were not the first to arrive. The ceremony was already commencing.

Let me tell you how it looked when we rode through the cleft in the rocks. It wasn't a very large space, perhaps about fifty feet across and half a mile long; just sheer rocks everywhere, almost no vegetation. Against the cliffs at the four points of the compass, four small stone altars had been built. On each was a dish of meat and a saucer of blood. At the foot of each lay a slain kid.

High up on the east wall there was a great symbol of the sun roughly painted on the rock. It has been there since before the race memory of the Navajos. At its foot, entirely covered by a black blanket, sat Hostine Nez Atatle, and with him sat his brother and

one or two others of his kin. He neither moved nor spoke, nor did they.

In the centre of the open space there had been laid a sand bed perhaps eight feet long, four feet wide and six inches thick. Before this sat the medicine man who was conducting the ceremony.

Over at one side were three or four drummers, seated by a little fire, and throughout the whole afternoon the tomtoms sounded softly, but ceaselessly. With them were the singers. This is the chant they sang with endless repetition:

Great Spirit, why have you deserted
this man?

He was given power to heal
To teach his people
How they might live well.
But an evil spirit has entered him
And all is ruined!
He has given up all that was his—
His family, his property, his power.
He has fasted; he has done everything
The Great Spirit has asked!
Can you not help him now?

Then the medicine man, who had sat with head covered and bent, threw off the blanket which had shrouded him and lifted his head. We saw that he had made a small sand painting not more than a foot across. On it was the emblem of the sun and of the moon, and a lizard and a snake.

The medicine man raised his arms to the sky. The sun was beginning to sink behind the western wall of the canyon and it was darkening about us. His shadow stretched away endlessly.

"Great Spirit," he prayed, "show me some way to save this man! If my prayer is not strong enough to save him, then am I weakened, indeed, in the sight of my people. Great Spirit, show us a sign that, even now, he may be saved!"

Then his arms dropped and he sat silent, waiting. Everything seemed to stop. The sun itself seemed to hang motionless over the cliff. No one drew a breath. We just waited.

You see, if the sun had gone behind a cloud at that moment; if the moon had appeared in the far cleft; if a lizard or a snake had crossed the bed of sand, he would be saved! And we stood there and waited. Hostine Nez Atatle sat over against the cliff—and waited!

It was—well, I cannot tell you what

it was like. I do not know how long it lasted. No sound but the low beat of the tomtoms—no movement anywhere in the canyon.

Then the last rays of the sun flashed across on the great painted sun symbol, and it was over.

The medicine man stood up.

"All has been done!" he said.

He walked over to Hostine Nez Atatle.

"All has been done!" he said again, and held out his hand.

Hostine Nez Atatle dropped his blanket, rose, and walked over to the bed of sand. He walked with even, measured steps and high chin, and there he lay down. Only when he was flat on the sand, his whole body relaxed as if, after all his sleepless vigils, he was at rest.

With his blanket the medicine man made certain passes over him and then I saw him place a small pellet in the taut line of Hostine Nez Atatle's lips. Afterwards I asked about this and was told: "It is that which makes you hard."

I believe it was some very powerful narcotic and that the ceremony which followed was designed to give it time to act.

The medicine man stepped back off the bed of sand and said: "We shall pray for you." Then he took off his moccasins, his head band and blanket, and these he laid upon the little fire beside which the drummers sat.

There came to him an old, old squaw, his great-grandmother, herself a medicine woman, carrying a bowl of a mixture of herbs. Some of the contents he sprinkled on his head. In what remained he dipped his hands and washed them. Then he raised his arms high and let out three terrifying yells while the musicians beat their rattles and tomtoms and the silence of the canyon was shattered and torn.

He said: "Great Spirit, you have done this!"

Then the four riders appeared. I suppose they had been there all the time, just out of sight in some cleft, but they had the appearance of having risen out of the earth. So wildly painted and decorated were the bodies of the riders that no one could know them. They were heavily blindfolded. The four horses were led by four guides, masked and fantastically painted.

Slowly, to the beat of the tomtom, they advanced to the bed of sand. There they took positions at the four points of the compass. In their midst lay Hostine Nez Atatle. He made no move of any kind, though his limbs were unbound. His eyes stared straight at the sky from which the sun had gone.

To the saddle of each horse there was fastened a rope. The ends of the ropes of the horses from the north and east were tied to his wrists; those of the south and west to his ankles. When this was done and the ropes were sure and strong, each rider lifted his whip and slowly rode away, one to the east, one to the west, and the others to the north and south.

It was all over in a moment. You would not think it could be over so quickly.

No, there was no sound in the canyon, not a single sound—only the tomtom!

For an hour the horsemen rode blindfolded. Their guides had set them onto trails, but not the usual travelled trails, for, after they were gone, the path by which they had passed must be obliterated. When the first hour was over they took off their bandages but they never looked back to see what might follow at the end of the rope.

All night they rode, for the evil spirit must be scattered far and wide. At dawn they cut the ropes and rode on. At noon they might take shelter at any hogan they came to, but they might speak no word, not then nor for six days. Their horses they must turn loose and drive away, for no one must mount those horses ever again. They were devil horses from then on, branded with a brand that every Indian knows.

Back in the canyon the leaders of the horses toiled for hours, carrying away the sand on which Hostine Nez Atatle had lain, for it also was accursed. They carried it to the four points of the compass, and on each pile they placed a prayer stick. The stones of the altars they scattered far.

The medicine man who had made the prayer did not practise again for years. He had failed once—and he had seen a medicine man die.

As for me—I went home sick—sick! But there were two of me, and while the white woman shuddered, the Indian bowed her head and knew that there was no other possible end.

AS I LIKE IT—*William Lyon Phelps*

I WENT for the third time to see Rudolf Besier's play, "The Barretts of Wimpole Street." This piece had been running over a year at the Empire Theatre, the longest run of any play at that house, and it is a place famous for successful productions. It was the last week of the engagement, and an attendant shouted in front of the box-office, "No more seats! Every seat is sold for the balance of the week." Hundreds were being turned away, and went out disconsolately into the street. As I passed the ticket-taker, and entered the theatre, the place was jammed, although it was nearly fifteen minutes before the rise of the curtain. The largest number of vertical spectators that I have ever seen made such a wall of humanity in the "Standing Room Only" spaces, that I had literally to fight my way into the aisle. There was an air of expectation such as one seldom feels in the theatre—the vast audience seemed to know that witnessing this play was a matter of life and death.

This has been a bad year theatrically as well as in every other aspect; many theatres are dark, and many others are imploring audiences to come and save their plays from extinction. But here is a drama accepted by Katharine Cornell in manuscript, and already in its triumphant second year in London, and taken off in New York when it seems obvious that it could easily pack the house for two more seasons. Never before have I heard of such a stoppage of success.

After the play was over, I talked with Katharine Cornell, whose impersonation of Elizabeth Barrett is so impressive and so affecting. Naturally I asked her why she took it out of New York in the full tide of prosperity. It is because she wishes other cities to have the privilege of seeing it.

She is not doing the customary thing, sending out a second or a third "road company." She is taking it herself. This might almost be called missionary work; for under the peculiar conditions of theatre-going in America, the only place where the modern drama may be adequately heard is New York. Those

who live in Cleveland, Detroit, St. Louis and Kansas City have hardly better opportunities to know what is going on in modern drama, than if they lived in Manchuria. If a stranger made an estimate of the level of culture in American cities by the number and quality of local offerings in the theatre, his appraisal would not be flattering. To realize this, all one has to do in Boston or Buffalo or Pittsburgh is to glance at the theatrical advertisements.

Thus Katharine Cornell is giving a goodly number of the American people a rare opportunity, the opportunity not merely of seeing a very fine play beautifully presented and acted, but the opportunity of having an emotional experience that will be remembered as long as life lasts. To see "The Barretts of Wimpole Street" is to enrich one's intellectual and spiritual existence.

As SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE is read in every town in America, let me urge the inhabitants of every city where this play comes, not to miss it. Go without three meals if necessary, but don't let this drama pass unseen.

"The Barretts" is being talked about in remote corners of the earth. In consequence of a previous note I had written about it, a letter comes from a man in Australia, who wishes he might be in England or in America to see this play. He received an impact merely by hearing about it; and I hope by this time he has read it, for it is now available in book form. But it is primarily a piece for the theatre; it must be seen incarnate in order to be truly appreciated. Its appearance at this moment in the world's history has a significance more than the birth of a work of art.

Every good play artistically presented creates the illusion; we forget that we are in the theatre, and what is more important, we forget ourselves. We are drawn away from the world of current events and from our own petty affairs to a spectacle of human life, which at the moment takes possession of our attention. But while this is especially true of "The Barretts," it is not merely our interest that is held in bondage; our lives are changed. Among the thou-

sands who have seen this play, there are many individuals who have entered the theatre with one set of ideas, one attitude toward life, and emerged profoundly different. To a certain extent this should be the case with every great emotional experience; one should not hear a symphony of Beethoven, one should not read a great poem, one should not see a painting by Raphael, one should not see the Grand Canyon, and be just the same afterward. As the poet Flecker said, "The business of poetry is not to save men's souls, but to make them worth saving." Every sincere and beautiful work of art should enlarge one's personality.

"The Barretts of Wimpole Street" is unusually long. But it all takes place in one room, and with one tremendous exception, is concerned with the fortunes of one family. Love is the supreme force in the world—*amor vincit omnia*—and this is a love story comparable to no other. It is all *true*. Those who believe that the tyranny of Mr. Barrett is over-emphasized for theatrical effect do not know the real man.

His character was so dominating, so austere terrifying, he had that absolute certainty he was right, characteristic usually of those who are wrong, he had so successfully cowed his children from birth, they were so financially dependent on him that mere existence without him was impossible. He had all the conditions necessary for the success of absolute monarchy. He knew he was the Head of the House, and his nine children knew it too. For in order to be a successful aristocrat, the subjects must be as convinced as the sovereign.

But there is one force in the world greater than Fear—it is Love. Only one man in the world could have saved Elizabeth—for once the time and the place and the loved one were all together.

Robert Browning was probably the greatest personal force in English literature. Apart from his genius as an imaginative writer, he had enough energy for ten men. Innumerable times have I witnessed the contact between his poetry and the mind of youth—and there