

*The Actress*, by Louise Closser Hale, does not, strictly speaking, belong in the class of married-woman stories, excepting in so far as life on the stage may be regarded as an initiation into the funda-

mental problems of mature life. Frankly speaking, although a book that is very delightful in many respects, regarded as a novel *The Actress* is structurally so loose that at times it almost ceases to be a novel at all. It is a narrative in the first person, told by a young woman with lofty ambitions and considerable talent for the stage. In the opening chapters there is a wealthy, good-hearted, altogether worth while New Yorker who would gladly make her his wife if she would give up her profession. So to escape him, perhaps also to escape herself, she accepts a place in a company that is going to England for the summer; and the greater part of the book is a graphic, realistic, intimate chronicle of life behind the footlights, told with a first hand knowledge that justifies the suspicion that it is largely autobiographic. Really, it is this part of the book that one cares about, and certainly it is extremely well done. Some of the bits of characterisation are deliciously human. Eventually, the heroine finds that the footlights have lost their glamour and is glad to come back to her long suffering American stockbroker;

but that part of the story is almost in the nature of an anti-climax. It is certainly not the part that one lingers over and reverts to as one does to the earlier chapters.

*Frederic Taber Cooper.*

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