

GEORGE KELLY

The Torch-Bearers. American Library Service.

The author of the satirical burlesque, "The Torch-Bearers", and of "The Show-Off", currently considered one of our best comedies, has had a strenuous apprenticeship in stagecraft, having played both in vaudeville and on the legitimate stage as a juvenile leading man and as a headliner in his own sketches. He was born in Philadelphia, where he still lives, and was for the most part privately educated.

"Mr. Kelly has got hold of something in our American life, and often he has seen it for himself and not as Broadway expects him to see it. In the same way most of his characters talk for their own and not their Broadway selves."—Stark Young, *New REPUBLIC*, September 20, 1922.

"Now comes George Kelly with a play about the other fifty per cent of the population: those who take the theatre too seriously. However, Mr. Kelly, happily, does not take his public seriously. Possibly no one who has served time in vaudeville could. In his play, 'The Torch-Bearers', no time is wasted on a story. No concessions are made to the naïve conventions of those earnest souls who (he may have hoped) would be attracted to his play by its sonorous title. Mr. Kelly set himself to write a funny play, and stuck to his job.

"He turned out a gorgeous piece of foolishness. It is Stephen Leacock or Robert Benchley on the stage. Not in many years has there been a full length play in which that rare quality of giddy burlesque has been sustained at such high pitch throughout an evening. One's mind goes back to the sketch 'For Pity's Sake' which was included in a musical show a season or two ago, or to the episode in one of the 'Follies' when W. C. Fields exhibited himself as a

trick billiard expert. But those supremely comic bits were only bits. Here we have the same sort of thing for nearly three acts."—Kenneth Andrews, **BOOKMAN**, November, 1922.

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