

## FRANCES PARKINSON KEYES

One of the remarkable features of the American theatre in the 1920s and '30s was the number of women in charge: Eva Le Gallienne and Katharine Cornell heading their own companies, Alla Nazimova in Hollywood and Jessie Bonstelle in Detroit, Cheryl Crawford at the Group Theatre, Hallie Flanagan at the Federal Theatre Project. In advance of them all was Theresa Helburn, another product of George Pierce Baker's Harvard class. After serving a brief stint as a reviewer for *The Nation*, she became the iron-willed administrator of the Theatre Guild, an offshoot of the Washington Square Players, which championed Shaw and the New Stagecraft. To keep it on a financially even keel, she provided glamour by inviting Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne into the company and produced both the groundbreaking musical comedy *Oklahoma!* and Paul Robeson's *Othello*. There is something piquant in the fact that, by a fluke of childhood friendship, the career of this no-nonsense lesbian should be chronicled by Frances Parkinson Keyes (1885–1970). Keyes, a convert to Roman Catholicism, a firm believer in virginity before marriage, married to a stodgy Republican senator, was a popular purveyor of “women’s fiction.” Her first writing had been a series of articles about life in Washington for *Good Housekeeping*. In the 1950s, she became a fixture of New Orleans society, which loosened her up. Her thoroughly researched novels now took the past of Southern Louisiana for their theme; the most entertaining is *Crescent Carnival*, about Mardi Gras in the 1890s.

### *Terry Helburn*

I  
I HAVE never lost my sense of sustained excitement, mingled with keen enjoyment, at a theatrical opening. The lights blazing above the entrance. The mounted police dashing back and forth. The long lines of shining limousines. The sidewalk crowds surging around nonchalant celebrities. The pompous critics taking their aisle seats. The exchange of greetings between established first-nighters. The condescending glances toward those who do not belong to the charmed circle. The suddenly

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subdued chatter, the slow rise of the curtain, the acclaim of the star. The stampede into the aisles at the end of the first act. The guarded expressions of those who await the critics' opinion. The candid praise or condemnation of those less timid. The final curtain, the frantic clapping. And then that kaleidoscopic street again. . . .

Perhaps the fact that I am essentially a country-woman accounts for the pleasure all this gives me. But only in part. In the last analysis, the fact that my presence at such functions is almost invariably due to a very remarkable woman, who is likewise a very old friend, is also largely accountable for my feeling about them. This woman is Theresa Helburn, Lawrence Langner's co-director in the Theatre Guild, who in such large measure, as he himself testifies, has contributed to the outstanding success they have shared through the development of a great theatrical idea. It is she who, on the occasion of an opening, often draws me into the charmed circle, which immediately becomes permeated with her friendliness and her vitality. Nothing in her speech or her manner betrays the struggle which has preceded success, the obstacles which have been overcome and the disasters which have threatened. And this is indubitably because of her lifelong, singlehearted, and unshakable conviction that "the play's the thing."

Except in our extreme youth, her approach to the drama and mine have always been from opposite directions: to me, it represents the most welcome and the most powerful means of relaxation that an overcrowded life affords; merely to sink into a seat at the theatre brings a sense of release that nothing else, short of an ocean voyage, provides. To Theresa Helburn, the drama represents not only supreme success in a chosen career, but the strenuous lifework to which all other pleasures and all other interests have been subordinated. (I do not say all other affections, because she has also been a devoted daughter, sister, aunt, wife, and friend.) Nevertheless, despite the difference in our approach to it, I believe, as she does, that without our common love for the theatre and the recurrent occasions on which it has served to reunite us after long periods of separation, our friendship might not have endured and flourished as it has ever since our school days.

My first impressions of Terry are not, however, centered on

her domination of a drama, but on a large, cold classroom at the rear of 94 Beacon Street, Boston, which, at the time, was the location of Miss Winsor's School. I had already been going to this school two or three years, but I still felt like an outsider: I had been away from Boston between the ages of ten and fourteen, part of the time in Vermont and part of the time in Europe, and I had ceased to belong exclusively to the Back Bay. I was troubled by this sense of strangeness. Terry was a newcomer who had never belonged and who was not in the least troubled by this circumstance. Business had brought her father to Boston and logically, but unenthusiastically, his wife and children had accompanied him. In consequence, Terry had been wrested from the Horace Mann School and thrust into Miss Winsor's.

It was a common saying among us that our teachers did not assign history and English lessons by the page, but by the number of inches that multitudinous pages would cover when pressed closely together. This was really not much of an exaggeration. Our algebra lessons did not cover quite so many pages, but our teacher of mathematics considered ten intricate problems a very reasonable number for daily solution. Some higher power decreed that not all of these should be classified as homework, but that we might spend the final period at school in solving, or attempting to solve, the first one or two. We were all extremely grateful for this concession.

The period lasted forty minutes, from ten minutes before one to one-thirty. On her first day at school, Terry raised her hand at ten minutes past one and, having attracted the room teacher's impersonal attention, inquired whether she might go home. Patiently the teacher explained that Theresa would be much freer that afternoon if she had made a good start on her problems.

"I've finished them," Terry announced tersely.

Involuntarily, the teacher glanced at the clock. There was a moment of electrified silence. It did not seem probable that this small cheerful child, who was actually the youngest girl in the class and who looked even younger than she was, could solve ten difficult problems at the rate of two minutes apiece. "Bring me your notebook, please," the teacher requested.

With complete self-possession, Terry rose, slid from her

seat, and approached the teacher's desk. The silence was now not only electric but breathless. It was broken by the crisp sound that the pages of the notebook made as the teacher turned them. Then she closed the book with a snap.

"The answers are all correct," she said levelly. "You may be excused. The rest of the class will please proceed with the problems."

Terry nodded and departed, her pleasant rosy face wreathed in smiles. She left no smiles in her wake. But she left ungrudging admiration. From that moment everyone knew that if she did not belong, it was because none of the rest of us was in her class, figuratively speaking, though, literally speaking, she was in ours.

2

None of us was ever to match wits with her successfully or to establish superiority on any other plane; her resourcefulness and her inventive powers were already greatly in evidence. But, after that, she made friends, happily for me, myself among them. When we left school, our feeling for each other continued to be friendly, but it did not find very frequent expression. Terry went on to college and her family moved back to New York, which became her logical center; I married at eighteen and went to live on a farm in New Hampshire, from which I did not often stray very far. Terry came to visit me two or three times and, in the course of these visits, coached our local Dramatic Club, of which I was then president. Then came several years in which I saw very little of her. I was more preoccupied with babies than I was with dramatics, and Terry was equally preoccupied, in very different ways. From Bryn Mawr, where she carried off both the Mary Helen Ritchie Prize and the George W. Childs Essay Prize, she went on to Radcliffe, where, as a graduate student, she joined Professor Baker's famous 47 Workshop, which was the prelude to all dramatic studies in universities. Later she matriculated at the Sorbonne; but she abandoned her courses, as she says semi-seriously, because no one would permit her to fling open the classroom windows, hitherto hermetically sealed, and admit currents of air to the venerable Paris buildings. (She has always been something of a fresh air fiend and to this day has to be closely

watched lest she quickly reduce the comfortable temperature of a house to arctic chilliness.) Finally she settled down again, more or less, living with her parents on West End Avenue, and invited me to visit her there, so that we might “go the rounds of the theatres together.”

I received the invitation with rapture, took the children to my mother-in-law’s house in Boston, and prepared for flight. On the eve of my expected departure for New York, I came down with the flu or, as we still called it then, *la grippe*.

I was bitterly disappointed, but Terry’s telegram, in response to mine voicing this disappointment, was reassuring: she either had changed or would change all our theatre tickets, and she had also managed to change the dates of all social engagements. Philosophically, I faced the postponement of two weeks. But when convalescence seemed assured, I had a relapse. This happened three times.

I cannot truthfully say that warmth was lacking in Terry’s manner when she finally met me at the Grand Central Station, but still I thought I felt a certain constraint in it. Within twenty-four hours I was so sure of this that I questioned Terry about it. I realized all too well, I said, how inopportune my illness had been. If she would rather I cut my visit short. . . .

“Of course not,” she said promptly. “But—well, I may as well confess. As you know, parties had been planned for you, and your prospective hostesses took one postponement in their stride. The second one was a little harder to face, but they were good sports about that, too. However, when it came to a third, I knew they *couldn’t* face it. So I produced another Frances Parkinson Keyes.”

“What do you mean, you produced another Frances Parkinson Keyes?”

“Well, of course that wasn’t really her name, but everyone thought so then and everyone still thinks so. She’d just landed from England and she didn’t know anyone when she got here. I met her as a result of a letter of introduction from mutual friends and I pressed her right into service—coached her about Pine Grove Farm and Harry’s politics and the babies and all. She didn’t slip up once and everyone thought she was charming. Incidentally, I explained her accent, too—it might have passed for Bostonian, but I wasn’t taking any chances, so

I said you'd been to school in England for years. She went to all the parties that were given in your honor and now she's gone south and isn't coming back to New York before she returns to Europe. But I'm afraid you may have a rather dull time, because my aunt is bound to be the only person who'll give another party. I confessed to her this morning, too, and she thought it was a huge joke. I don't know how many other people would."

Neither do I. But from that time on, I never doubted that Terry Helburn was destined to be an impresario.

## 3

The stage had always attracted her very greatly, and I believe that if she had persisted in her desire to become an actress, she would have had an immense success. Though actually short of stature, she has always carried herself with such dignity and assurance, and moved with such easy grace, that her lack of height is not noticeable. And though she has never been beautiful, she has the type of personality which brings with it the illusion of beauty and qualities even better and brighter—vitality, mobility of expression, quick understanding, and wit unbarbed by venom, wisdom unburdened by pedantry. Above all, she has charm, which, as Barrie so rightly said, is that sort of bloom upon a woman that makes every other attribute secondary. When Terry was a girl, her abundant hair was very dark and rather shaggy-looking. It turned gray prematurely and she tried the somewhat startling experiment of wearing it dark blue. But her instinct for the appropriate had not led her astray; now, carefully coiffed and azure-tinted, it makes a becoming contrast to her fresh skin and gray eyes. She has equally happy results in her experiments with clothes. She appeared at one of my parties in Louisiana wearing a creation of stiff gray satin, made for her by the famous Valentina, from a dress length that had belonged to Terry's grandmother; afterward, one of her fellow guests, who met her then for the first time, pronounced her by far the loveliest and most striking woman present. On another occasion, when she was considering "something conservative in black," Valentina easily prevailed upon her to substitute sky-blue silk, caught up with pink roses, and admonished her that she must also put pink roses in

her hair. "You will look like a French marquise," Valentina told her. And she did.

She could have acted such a part to perfection and any number of other parts as well; but to her conservative parents, the very word "actress" was anathema. I do not remember her father very clearly, but her mother was one of those lovely-looking women who create an impression of languor and deference which is as charming as it is misleading; as a matter of fact, she had unlimited energy and an iron will. Terry adored her. Feeling as she did about her, it is not surprising that Terry eventually yielded to her wishes, even though she had not only accepted a part in Lawrence Langner's *Licensed*, but actually started to rehearse. However, Langner says in his book *The Magic Curtain*, she later "sent in her regrets, stating that her family regarded the play as immoral and did not wish her to take up acting." Having renounced one form of dramatic expression, she speedily sought another; and this is not surprising, either, for as she herself puts it, she has been "in love with the theatre all her life." At first, she thought of this new expression almost wholly in terms of writing; besides numerous short stories and poems, all of which were eagerly accepted by the editors to whom they were submitted, she achieved a one-act play, entitled *Enter the Hero*, which to this day brings her substantial royalties; and later she became dramatic critic for *The Nation*. But, in spite of her success, such media were not the ones for which she was predestined; and opportunely, or perhaps we should say providentially, Lawrence Langner, with whom she had been so briefly associated in *Licensed* and the Washington Square Players, asked her if she would join a group that hoped to form an organization which would produce full-length plays on a strictly professional basis. (The Washington Square Players had produced one-act plays on a semi-professional basis.) She consented to attend a meeting and it was at this and at the gatherings held soon thereafter in a bare little office on the top floor of the Garrick Theatre that "a group of young enthusiasts, inspired by their faith that America wanted and needed a theatre devoted to ideas and ideals of maturity and integrity," laid the foundations of the great institution of the Theatre Guild.

Inevitably, the prevailing atmosphere at these meetings was

chaotic as well as zealous, and resignations occurred almost as frequently as discussions. When the first executive director announced that he was through, Terry Helburn reluctantly consented to "fill in" for a few weeks. Almost immediately, she proved to have a calming influence. This, she says with becoming modesty, was due less to her personally than to the fact that the previous director—a man—could not be expected to have such feminine traits as thriftiness and tact, and that it was because she—a woman—happened to have both qualities that she was successful. Certainly her salary—\$30 a week and a promise of percentage on profits—could not have predisposed her to extravagance; and tact, like charm, was one of her fairy godmother's gifts.

The few weeks during which she was supposed to be filling in lengthened into months and then into years; and still nothing was said about another incumbent for the position. She married, and her marriage, like everything else in which she has been concerned, has been singularly successful. (Her husband is the well-known lexicographer, John Baker Opdycke—"Oliver Opdyke"—and they have so correlated their careers as to make these mutually agreeable and not mutually annoying, as might so easily have been the case. Of course, part of the credit for this belongs to Oliver, whom I like immensely; but, after all, this is not his story!) She bought a country place in Connecticut and converted it into a pleasurable rural center for herself, her husband, and her friends. She perfected her tennis, which she has only recently given up, at sixty, "because her doctor advised her to do so at forty"; also her swimming, which she has not the slightest intention of giving up. She began driving a car in 1905; she handles an automobile with the accomplished ease that comes partly from essential adaptability to such a function and partly from long familiarity; and long solitary drives among the hills satisfy both her need for quietude and her love of scenic beauty. Seascapes are not included in this affection; indeed, she rather dislikes the ocean in all its phases; nevertheless, Europe became a habit to her; she spent two or three months there every year, indulging her tastes for mountain climbing, for orchestral music, and for architecture. But none of these interests and none of these activ-

ities affected her association with the Guild. Instead, it became closer and closer all the time.

## 4

Terry says that for seven years she did her casting "from the pit of her stomach." Perhaps. But meanwhile she had revealed for such work a flair that was as unquestionable as it was outstanding. It was she who cast Laura Hope Crews for the leading part in *Mr. Pim Passes By*; it was she who took "the little round comedienne" June Walker out of bedroom farces and gave her an emotional role in *Processional*; it was she who insisted that Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne should be acting together and cast them as the co-stars of *The Guardsman*—to give only a few examples of many which might be mentioned. And then there was that underlying fact, most important of all, that she was in love with the theatre. It is certainly not a feminine trait to abandon anything genuinely beloved; so she has gone on and on.

The crises which nearly always precede first nights may trouble her transiently; but before a play is a week old, she is telling funny stories about it. For instance, there were the pigeons, allegedly "trained by an expert," which were supposed "to add a rural touch" to a scene where she had declined to introduce pigs and cows. These pigeons were scheduled to soar across the stage at the Boston opening of *Oklahoma!* and then promptly wing their way back to their baskets. They were transported from New York at great expense, were duly released, and duly soared—completely out of sight. They have never been seen since, at least by Terry; presumably they are still raising families among the rafters of the Colonial Theatre. . . . Then there was the case of the snow-white steed on which George Washington was to make an impressive entrance in *Arms and the Girl*. It did not occur to anyone responsible for the production that such a noble animal would be unobtainable in Boston. But alas! the erstwhile reliable livery stables had all disappeared, and it was almost curtain time before "a horse of sorts" was found on a farm situated beyond the more remote suburbs. This animal proved to be a dingy gray and there were grave doubts as to its probable behavior under excitement; but it had to do.

An even greater cause for anxiety was Katharine Hepburn's inopportune attack of laryngitis; at noon on the day *The Millionairess* opened in New York last fall, it was still uncertain whether she could go on the stage at eight, or if she did, whether she could make herself heard beyond the first row. But Terry, telephoning me at five that afternoon, mentioned the matter with at least the effect of doing so more or less in passing: "Everything seems to be all right now. But perhaps we'd better not try to have dinner before the show. It might be pretty hurried. However, of course we're expecting you at the supper party for the cast that the Langners and I are giving at their house afterward."

It might be argued that the problems connected with openings, though vexatious, are inevitably short-lived and, therefore, do not constitute a real test of buoyant fidelity under difficulties. But no one could argue that it does not require stamina to take seven successive failures in one's stride as Terry did when *And Stars Remain*, *Prelude to Exile*, *But for the Grace of God*, *The Mask of Kings*, *Storm over Patsy*, *To Quito and Back*, and *Madame Bovary* followed one another without a break for the better. It also takes stamina—though of a different kind—to come through triumphantly when there is a long series of successes, which is what happened in the seasons that *Pygmalion*, *The Silver Cord*, *Porgy*, *The Doctor's Dilemma*, and *Strange Interlude* were among the dozen hits. Terry proved that she had both kinds.

Eventually, all the original board members, except herself and Mr. Langner, withdrew from the management of the Guild, and since 1939 they have been its sole directors. Either as playwright, producer, or director, Theresa Helburn has had a hand in almost all the plays—now nearly 200 in number—that it has presented in the thirty years of its existence. She has "been involved in the supervision of more Broadway plays than any other woman in the entire history of the American theatre"; and no theatrical organization in the history of the stage, with the exception of the state-supervised theatres in Europe, has lasted so long.

## 5

Inevitably, Terry succumbed to the temptation of accepting an invitation to Hollywood—extended, characteristically, by telephone and in the dead of night. “A lovely little pine-paneled office” in a leading studio had been prepared for her and a suite reserved at the Garden of Allah. But though she dutifully remained the eight months for which she was under contract, she realized almost immediately that she and Hollywood did not speak the same language. She was hardly settled in her new surroundings when she was handed a script for Grace Moore and told to go through it at once, as eight high executives were waiting for her opinion on a certain scene. Then she was catapulted into their presence before she had finished reading the script. “But it’s impossible for me to give an opinion without knowing about the final scenes,” she objected. “Does the heroine commit suicide or does she marry her admirer and live happily ever after?” . . . “Oh, we’re shooting it both ways!” she was airily informed.

This was not her way of working; so as soon as she was free to do so, she went back to her beloved Broadway, to the supervision of the plays which she herself had discovered or chosen and to the companionship of the actors and authors who spoke her language and who had become her personal friends as well as her professional associates.

Visiting once more at Pine Grove Farm after the lapse of many—far too many—years, she tells endless enthralling stories. She recalls, for instance, that *John Ferguson*, “a rather heavy play” by St. John Ervine, which started late in the Guild’s first season (1919), ran all summer and provided a nest egg which permitted the infant organization to start off in the fall with some badly needed capital, and that this was less because of the play’s popular appeal than because of an actors’ strike which had closed almost every other theatre in New York—“tourists had to see *John Ferguson* or nothing!” She recalls that Bernard Shaw—using a postcard—forbade the production of *Heartbreak House* until after the 1920 election, and that when she tried to persuade him that, in the United States, the election would not affect such a production, he declined to be convinced and said so—on another postcard. She remembers

that Eugene O'Neill dined with her the night that Lindbergh flew the Atlantic in 1927 and that, of course, they completely forgot to discuss the current play; also that after the five-hour opening of *Mourning Becomes Electra* in 1931, one subscriber was overheard remarking to another, as they left the theatre, "Gosh, isn't it good to get out into the Depression again!" She recalls that John Golden called her up one day and said, "Little woman, I got a play for you up here. It's the kind you folks like—trampy, but true." Her recollections—all warm, all vivid, all kindly—of the Lunts, of Helen Hayes, of Maurice Evans, of Rodgers and Hammerstein, of Ferenc Molnar and Elmer Rice and Maxwell Anderson and countless others, go on and on.

When I reminded Terry that the first Guild production I had seen was a very gloomy Russian play (so gloomy that I went to a night club afterward to get cheered up) for which she had given me tickets, saying she had plenty to spare, I found I had started a train of thought—and of conversation—which, briefly and vividly, summarized the three principal periods in the Guild's progress.

"Don't you make fun of that gloomy Russian play, as you call it—probably you mean Tolstoy's *Power of Darkness* and probably you did have to go to a night club afterward to get cheered up. Very likely I was glad enough to give you the tickets, too. Just the same, when that play finished its run, we had a nice little profit although we had started with only \$200 in the bank. We produced mostly foreign plays then, for the simple reason that our management was unknown and that we couldn't afford the road tryouts necessary to ensure success for American plays. In those days, of course, we didn't have the talkies, or the radio, or television with which to compete and, one by one, they've become formidable rivals of the theatre—we may as well face it. But two out of five plays would carry us—in fact, we could get by with one success in a season, if it was a *real* success. All costs were on a much smaller scale then. And from the beginning, we worked on the theory that the play's the thing rather than the star. We chose plays that had real literary value. We believed there was a public for them and we were right. For instance, *He Who Gets Slapped*, *Back to Methuselah*, *Peer Gynt*, and *Saint Joan*. Then I

had a new idea—the idea that something which we had already produced, as a play, like *Porgy*, which inspired Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, might prove the basis for another musical comedy, with a different theme, but still one that was typically American. Well, you know what came of that idea."

I do—indeed we all do. When *Green Grow the Lilacs*, by Lynn Riggs, which was based on an American pioneer theme, was produced as a play in the '30-'31 season, it was pleasantly but temperately received. When *Oklahoma!*, which was based on that play, was produced as a musical in the '42-'43 season, "its color and spirit blew wholesome winds through what was fast becoming a hot-house form, its use of the ballet popularized the dance and set it as a fashion for other Broadway musical productions to copy." And, as Lawrence Langner says, "to Terry goes the full credit for having conceived the idea of producing *Oklahoma!*"

That idea was conceived more than ten years ago. Meanwhile, the Guild has produced *Carousel*, based on Molnar's *Liliom*, *Arms and the Girl*, based on *The Pursuit of Happiness*, and several other musicals, "each adding a new note to the development of the American musical theatre," but none detracting from the perennial success of *Oklahoma!*, which still seems as fresh, as vital, and as buoyant as when the curtain went up on it for the first time.

Governor Kerr, now Senator Kerr, came on to the opening of the National Company in Washington, as did large numbers of other prominent Oklahomans. But they felt that not enough of their fellow Oklahomans were seeing it; nothing would do but that Mohammed should go to the mountain, so to speak. A private car was put at the disposal of the directors and in this Mr. and Mrs. Langner, Mr. and Mrs. Mamoulian, Miss de Mille, Miss Helburn, Mr. and Mrs. Rodgers, and Mr. and Mrs. Hammerstein traveled in state. The president of the road and a party of other invited guests traveled in equal state in an adjoining private car. Upon arrival in Oklahoma City, the train was met by the governor and his suite, and the honor guests were escorted to their hotel to the music of a brass band. Cowboys had foregathered, tribes assembled, schools closed, and a holiday atmosphere prevailed. Unfortunately, a storm of unprecedented proportions necessitated the cancellation of

the mammoth parade which had been planned. But at the dinner which took place after the opening performance, prodigality was the order of the day. Gifts took the form of tea sets made from local pottery, Indian costumes fashioned in soft white leather, miniature covered wagons. Ceremonial dances were presented with the participants in full regalia, and afterward Miss Helburn danced a *pas de deux* with the chief. Then she was inducted into the nation and given a tribal name which means "The little woman who sees far."

I can think of no designation which could be more appropriate. Even before Terry began to talk to me about the future plans, hopes, and projects of the Guild, I realized that the third stage of its progress was linked to its first, just as surely as its second had been, though in a different way. The Guild had already produced two of Shakespeare's plays—*The Taming of the Shrew* with the Lunts and *Twelfth Night* with Helen Hayes and Maurice Evans—before the revolutionary experiment which culminated in *Oklahoma!* And even the electrifying success of this did not divert its producers from their predilection for the classical. *Othello* with Paul Robeson, *The Winter's Tale* with Henry Daniell and Florence Reed, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* with Charles Coburn, and *As You Like It* with Katharine Hepburn followed each other in orderly and majestic progression; and out of this superb sequence came the conviction that there should be a nationally endowed Shakespearean Festival Theatre and Academy in America similar to the one in England.

This conviction has already resulted in tentative plans and preliminary arrangements. The project calls for a modern adaptation of Shakespeare's own Globe Theatre, in which such a Festival could be held, and the chosen locale is Connecticut, where the Langners and Miss Helburn both have homes; its accessibility to New York and other large centers, and its natural and climatic attractions also, make it a logical choice for such a venture, as the state authorities have been swift to recognize—indeed, Governor Lodge has already signed a bill incorporating this foundation under the laws of Connecticut. But the Festival would not function only there and only in the summer; during the winter the acting company would tour in all the larger cities of the United States. In other words, if

hopes are fulfilled, Shakespearian drama, no less than musical comedy, and presented with equal skill and beauty, would be available for theatre lovers from Oregon to Florida and from Louisiana to Maine.

"And you'd produce some of the less-known plays, too, wouldn't you?" I asked Terry after she had told me this. I had put another log on the fire and adjusted the screen, and was still standing pensively between the hearthstone and the sofa where she sat.

"Yes, of course. . . . Which one did you have in mind, especially?"

"Well, perhaps *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and—"

"*Measure for Measure*?"

"Yes, that's it."

"They've never been popular successes yet, you know, like—well, like *Twelfth Night*, for instance. But then, you liked *The Winter's Tale* best of all our Shakespearian productions, didn't you? Come to think of it, so did some other people, and that's not generally regarded as popular material, either. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Measure for Measure* . . . well, I don't see why not! Sometime. . . ."

For a few moments after that, Terry said nothing as she sat gazing into the fire. At least, she seemed to be gazing into the fire. But presently I knew she was not. I knew that "The little woman who sees far" was already watching the two gentlemen as they prepared to serenade Silvia, and Isabella pleading for her brother's life before a corrupt magistrate.

I am as sure as I can be of anything in this uncertain world that all America will be seeing them, too.