

In the Wake of the War

Sketches by Henry Raleigh

NO matter how much we may wish to lose sight of the war, it can't be done. There will always be reminders of it. You don't suppose that, just because a little thing like peace has been declared, the playwrights, the theatrical managers, and the moving picture producers are going to let a chance like the war get by? Since we have become accustomed to German spies, Red Cross nurse heroines, and motor corps vampires, we could never go back to the prosaic mildness of innocent little country heroines, villains in fur-lined overcoats, and cub reporter heroes. No actor will ever again consent to play a society rôle, in evening clothes with flap pockets and jet buttons, when he can appear in a war play, wearing an aviator's uniform and going around in a property airplane.



There will be few, if any, man-about-town rôles, in the forthcoming plays. The audience will never stand for it, now they have grown used to the gallant colonel—they simply can't call it an evening unless there's a character like this in the play

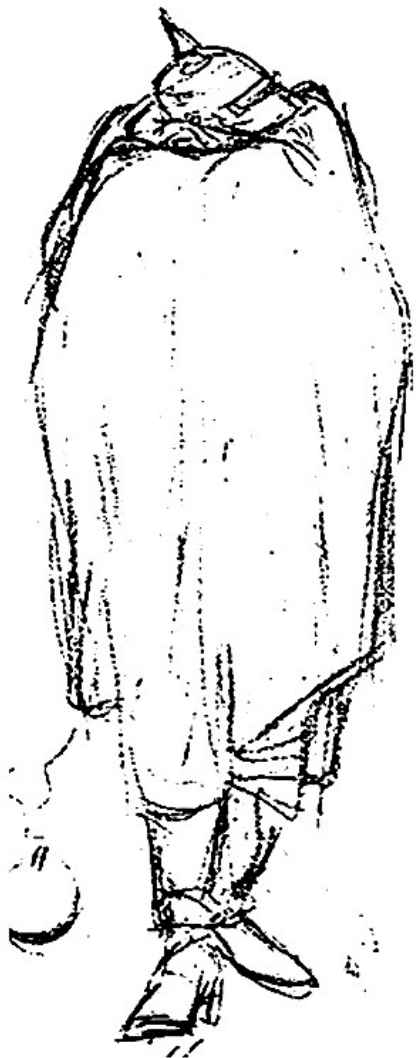
And this is the heroine that we will never be able to get away from—the Red Cross nurse. All other styles—country girls, society belles, ladies with pasts, and all the rest of them—are completely out of date

The newest model in vampires is the motor corps brand; the black-clad ladies of ante-bellum days with the blood-red rose and the handy little dagger, are no longer with us. Since the war, all really successful vamping must be done in uniform. The cannon in the background is highly symbolical, it indicates that the gentle lady is about to get away with murder



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Of course, the villain has to be a German spy—the audience wouldn't feel at home if they were confronted with a villain of any other variety. When you stop to think that the war is responsible for this kind of a villain, in all the Great Modern Dramas, you realize even more fully what a frightful lot the former kaiser has to answer for



The hero must always be an aviator. It doesn't really make the slightest difference about the plot or the lines or anything else—just so long as the daring hero can wear an aviator's uniform and make his entrance in a snorting Lee Lash airplane



Even the chorus isn't what it used to be. No more merry villagers—the yeomanettes are now the only things worth looking at. Here is shown a typical musical comedy costume—another of the evils of war



No longer is the comedian cast as a pickle manufacturer or a traveling salesman or a head waiter—they have all lost their humor, since the war. The only thing that is screamingly funny now, is the raw recruit, and his troubles in the army