

THE WOMAN OF 10,000 DEATHS

A Fact Story of Grim Make-Believe That Surpasses Any Record in History—If There Is Any Death That Sarah Has Not Died She Is Unaware of It.



To Death in the River.

How would you like to die and die and die again and then again, and to keep on dying until your death had totaled many thousands? And what if none of these deaths were of the conventional sort, but instead were brought about by means of pistol, poison, dagger, dirk, despondency, drowning, remorse, ransacking or some dread and mysterious malady?

What if you knew that tonight you were to "shuffle off" this classic "mortal coil," which all of us cling to so closely, by the simple method of drinking hemlock or some equally convenient poison, while you fully realize that tomorrow evening you must fulfill the demand of Nature by barbing your bosom to the assassin's blade?

Probably if such a proposition were made to you you would unhesitatingly decline it, yet no less a person than the world's greatest actress, Madame Sarah Bernhardt, has found that dying frequently is one of the sources of a long and busy life.

At least, such might be inferred from her record, for Madame Bernhardt has publicly died considerably more than 10,000 times in the course of her long and distinguished career before the footlights.

An ingenious statistician some time ago computed the number of death scenes she had enacted in her life and found them to be far in excess of this number. Her deaths by self-administered poison, it was calculated, totaled over 5000; she had jumped into the scenic artist's being no less than 2000 times; had sent approximately 1500 bullets into her head; and her deaths by stabbing, consumption and in other forms totaled many thousands more.

Dying Night After Night.

All told the estimate was far in excess of the number here given, and 10,000 is an exceedingly conservative figure at which to place the number of



Poison.

Poniard.

deaths the great French artist has simulated. And it must be remembered that she has been "dying" night after night and season after season now for more than 60 years.

It is her versatility in this respect, as well as her wonderful gifts in other branches of her art, that has made her position so supreme in the realm she has chosen to rule. Imbued with the spirit of eternal youth, she yet knows how to "die" more effectively and in more different ways than any other woman in the world.

In "Camille" she seems visibly to waste away with consumption; in "La Tosca" she is stabbed to death; in "Phedra," where in the original Greek tragedy the heroine hangs herself, in the adaptation made by Racine, which Madame Bernhardt acts, she drinks a deadly drug; in "Adrienne Lecouvreur," in which the "Divine Sarah" made her debut in this country, the death of Adrienne is brought about by a psychological poison—the haunting fear of madness.

And so on to the end of the immense repertoire of plays which Madame Bernhardt has interpreted. In nearly all the supreme moments in the death scene, and it is here that the great

actress invariably reaches the summit of her art. There are those who say that Sarah Bernhardt is morbid; that in spite of her gaiety of exterior she is essentially a creature of somber moods. They hold that this constant portrayal of deaths in divers forms has had a strange psychological effect on the mind of the great artist and that it has produced many eccentricities.

Selecting Own Casket. In proof of which they point to her magnificent mausoleum in the cemetery of Pere la Chaise, erected under her direction and supervision and after her own design, and to the coffin which she has long kept in her home, to be ready when the last death scene is enacted—the final lowering of the curtain on the great artist's career.

But those who know her best declare that none of these things are indicative of any morbidity of mind, but of her artistic sense of the fitness of things, which makes even the selection of a casket and the erection of a tomb a necessary task of life.

It is the artist in her that demands that her surroundings, even in death, shall be in consonance with her tastes and ideas when living. The tomb, which was finished in

1906, will be a classical resting place for its creator. It is of marble, faced on its four sides with open arches, and across the top of the arch, which forms its front is the name Bernhardt. And around the tomb are always garlands for the living—garlands which are kept fresh.

When it was finished the great actress determined that it was necessary for her also to have her casket made ready—one that would be artistically in accord with her newly designed mausoleum in the cemetery of Pere la Chaise. So she had one constructed under her own direction, and when it was finished brought it home and kept it in her boudoir.

Death Is Simulated. Then there came a time when she desired to be photographed in her casket. She wished to see herself as she would look in death.

She had an overwhelming desire to lie down in the coffin and remain there until she had composed her features in a semblance of death. And straightaway she went and did it.

She washed really to feel the cold clutch of death through her imagination, thus obtaining the requisite knowledge for the expression of death on the stage. It was not morbidity which led her to make this experiment, she averred. Instead she but fulfilled the demand of her art.

And the pose in the coffin for the photographer was purely the result of necessity. She found that she had acquired the proper death expression, but unfortunately, as her eyes were closed, she was unable to obtain an idea of how she looked. She judged, innately, she accepted the opinions of competent but horror-stricken observers.

Still she wished to know precisely how she looked in death, and so she sent for the photographer and ordered him to take several photographs of Sarah Bernhardt in death—Sarah, with a peaceful and glorious expression on her features and garlands in her hands, and at her feet more garlands, and beside her head a lighted taper.

At first Madame Bernhardt was much averse to the publication of this photograph, though it is said that she was much pleased with it. But while there was a possibility of some day making pictures of her in real death, there was no probability of it, and her manager was beset with requests for the negative. But the "divine Sarah" steadfastly refused to grant permission for the publication of the picture.



Madame Bernhardt.



But this was an entirely different matter. The Parisians retorted that she should not have built for herself either a tomb or a casket. Still she remained adamant.

Then someone, by some secret means, obtained a proof of the photo, and all the world viewed how the great successor of Rachel would look in death. All Paris talked of it, regarding her death likeness with a rapture peculiarly tragic, and by the same token peculiarly Parisian.

For after all it is only Paris that can weep over the morbid semblance of their beloved geniuses in death or can take a thorough delight in a contemplation of their sorrow.

But in spite of the strange fancies that led her to make preparations for the inevitable—long though it be and long may it be deferred—and for all her multitudinous portrayals of death in many forms, Madame Bernhardt has little fear of the Destroyer. Although she is a great-grandmother now and close to seventy she retains all the spirit and buoyancy of youth. By a crowd of admirers she turned to one of them and said: "You make me feel young."

Whether it be Camille, the persecuted Phedra, the beautiful Greek, gentle Adrienne Lecouvreur or any of the host of roles she has played in the past, what matters it? Even at the last she shall triumph as of yore.

And as the "Divine Sarah" herself has said, "What could be more glorious?"

So it is that it may chance one day that this peerless actress shall enact one of her death scenes which have brought her fame, fortune and friends for the last time, and that her audience may see a reality where before was only art.

Others expressed a fear lest she overtax her strength. She smiled. "No, I never really feel tired," she said. "I attribute it to living for but one thing—my art. Nothing else matters to me. I shall never retire. I dream of dying like the great Irving—in the harness. Fancy dying after playing Becket! What could be more glorious?"

Terse Tales From Humorous Pens

ENERGY OF MEN OF AFFAIRS.
Pierre Loti, the famous French author, praised American energy at the Hotel Marie Antoinette in New York. "There's a story," he said, "that illustrates well the energy of your men of affairs."

"A gentleman called at the office of an indefatigable millionaire financier. It was a o'clock in the afternoon, and the financier lay back in the revolving chair with his feet on his desk, and a pictorial magazine in his hand."

"I've worked mighty hard for the last ten years without a day's vacation," he explained. "I feel all run down, and I'm now going to take a long rest."

"And a well-earned rest it will be, too," said the visitor heartily. "He departed, expecting that the millionaire would set out at once for Europe or California; but the next morning he saw him presiding as busily as ever at an important directors' meeting."

"Why, how about that long rest?" he asked.

"The millionaire frowned in amazement. "Didn't I take it yesterday afternoon?" he said.

Quips and Flings

First Bachelor—What's your idea of a hero? Second Bachelor—A Mormon.

—Judge.

"Is she rich?" "Heavens, yes! A specialist gets \$10,000 a year for doctoring her pooodle."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

Dutch Comedian—I played Hamlet once. Choruss—Did you have a long run? Dutch Comedian—About three miles.—Judge.

Editor—Have you submitted this poem anywhere else? Jokesmith—No, sir, Editor—Then where did you get that black eye?—Satire.

First Member—They say Homebody bosses his wife terribly. Second Member—Yes, he certainly wears the skirts.—Philadelphia Bulletin.

George—I told her I was going to kiss her once for every step of the way home. Jack—And what did she do? George—Got awful mad, and then went upstairs and put on a hobble skirt.—Chapparral.

"Darling," whispered the young man, "please rest that lovely cheek on my other shoulder a while." "Is this one tired, Gerald?" "No, dear, but it's getting more than its share of the face powder."—Chicago Tribune.

"So he believes that nearly all present-day reformers are actuated by selfish motives?" "Yes, he even insisted that a bald-headed man started the sweat-the-fly crusade."—Buffalo Express.

Blubb—How did you get along in Paris? Slobb—Not very well. Blubb—Don't you speak French? Slobb—Only enough to make myself misunderstood.—Philadelphia Record.

She—If fashion makes our dresses any skimpier, I really don't know what we women will do. He—I do; you'll wear the dresses.—Boston Transcript.

"John," said the minister of a Scotch parish, "I fear you are growing remiss in your religious duties. I have not seen you in the kirk these three Sundays." "No," answered John, "it's no

Among the Poets of the Daily Press

DA 'MERICANA BEEZ'NESS MAN.
Da Governmant set walk ets beat Eon uniforma blue. For keep an eye upon da street An' watch w't you do. An' Governmant set mak' so mooch You soon w'eat own da town. Eet tak' bannan, peanut an' sooth For keep da profit down.

But gooda beez'ness man He smile da best he can. Tak' off bees hat an' looka pleas' w'en An' ever' minute call. Ees mak' no odds to you Wat Governmant do. Baycassa you know you steel can mak' da peopla pay for all.

Da gooda peopla com' an' buy So long you are so smart For keep politeness een your eye An' beez'ness een your heart. An' dey weell buy da theensa dey want.

An' pay da prices, too, Baycassa dey thank da Governmant ees keep an eye on you.

So gooda beez'ness man He smile da best he can. Tak' off bees hat an' looka pleas' w'en anybody call. Ees mak' no odds to you Wat Governmant do. Baycassa you know you steel can mak' da peopla pay for all.

—T. A. Daily, in New York Sun.

IT'S MAN'S WAY.
I've noticed now for forty years, have read and listened with my ears To things that people say. And everywhere and all the time men have dropped into prose and rhyme. Well, nearly every day. To hand a package to the girls, to criticize their puffs and curls. Their ribbons and their rats; To laugh at them about their clothes, their skirts, their gloves, their shoes, their hosiery. And how they wear their hats; Their powder puffs and powder rags, their willow plumes and shopping bags, The beauty patch they wore Way back in my grandfather's time. Their clothes were looked on as a crime In those glad days of yore

Ten Minutes with the Funny Men

SOME of the QUIPS and JESTS FROM PENS of the NEWSPAPER HUMORISTS.

Just as they are looked on today, whatever way was woman's way Was thought absurdly wrong. The galluses they used to wear, the crinolines that made men stare Were jested in prose and song.

Today the bobble is the thing that points the hard's enmeshed sting. And keeps him up at night To think of meaner things to say and build up sentences to flay Their victims when they write. But here's one thing I've noticed, too! From the old days that Adam knew In the first dawn of life, Men barged their trousers at the knees In desperate attempts to please The girls and get a wife! —New York Globe.

THE NEW ENGLAND NOVEL.
To write a New England novel Take Boston, a man and a maid, And start with an erudite chapter On calling a shovel a spade. Work in something soulful and earnest, Such as "What is the Why? And mix with the briny sea breeze— And a dried apple pie.

Make all of your characters drawing In dialect stilted but quaint; Put most of them into eyeglasses; And make them say "hasnt"—not "haint."

Your hero might rush to the army And try hard to die— Mix this with the Mall and the Com— "haint!"

And a dried apple pie.

To write a New England novel Don't overlook history's aid; Use Washington, Webster and Henry. Work in a heroic brigade Of statesman and scholars and sages Of station and scholars and sages. And don't forget any one's accent Or the dried apple pie. —Chicago Post.

QUEERIES.
If a burglar skipped through a basement door To steal a ham, would the furnace roar? If he stopped to learn if the ham was good, Would the coal-chute quick as the kindlingwood? —Satire.