

# Entertainments

## TORCH THEATRE

### "CARRIE AND CLEOPATRA"

By H. E. BATES

Ursula Stephens ..... HILDA BRUCE-POTTER  
Fanny ..... AMY DALRY  
Carrie Stephens ..... SYLVIA COLERIDGE  
Charles Lewis ..... ARTHUR YOUNG  
Frank Lewis ..... ALEXANDER ARCHDALE  
Blanche Lewis ..... ELIZABETH MAUDE  
First Workman ..... CLIFFORD BEAN  
Second Workman ..... ARTHUR OWEN  
Third Workman ..... HERWARD RUSSELL  
First Auctioneer's Man ..... ARTHUR OWEN  
Second Auctioneer's Man ..... ALAN GRACE

Mr. Bates sets no problem and offers no advice to the world. He is content to observe it, sometimes ironically, sometimes with compassion, and to write of it always with a precise honesty that saves his scenes of high emotion from giving the effect, nowadays so often admired in the theatre, of contrived violence. His play, particularly towards the end, is a trifle loose in structure. Too many events of importance and too great a part of the development of character happen off stage; there is a consequent awkwardness of retrospect, and the last act, which summarizes a general change of fortune, is overcrowded. In spite of this the story has a rare fascination—the fascination there always is in watching on the stage people whom a dramatist has drawn in the round and of whom knowledge increases from phrase to phrase and from scene to scene.

Two sisters, Ursula and Carrie Stephens, have been left by their father a large house and enough money to maintain it. Carrie is nearly 30, and she is the younger. Their youth has been sheltered, their upbringing attaches them to a moderate and secure way of life, and the play is a story of their failure—their differing failures—to adjust themselves to a new, a harsher, and a more perilous world. Ursula cares so much for security that she is afraid of life. She wants nothing to be changed, is troubled for her investments, and marries a builder who, coming to her as a sound man of business, has his head turned by a marriage above his class, becomes a speculator, and fails. Carrie's judgment is as bad as her sister's, but different in kind. She wants, or believes that she wants, to escape from the life to which she was born, but she has not the character—or, if you will, the luck—to sustain the change. She also chooses the wrong man, is deserted by him, gambles with her money, loses it, and faces a dangerous world with a bitterness at once frozen and defiant. The characters of the two women are beautifully balanced in themselves and in their relationship to each other. Miss Hilda Bruce-Potter makes a moving study of the frightened determination of the elder to hide her fears from herself; Miss Sylvia Coleridge draws an equally skilful portrait of the younger, who is always bold beyond her courage, who gambles with terror in her heart; and upon both sisters one perceives continuously the influence of their father, whose death has taken from them a shelter for which they struggle desperately to find a substitute. Vigorous sketches of the builder and his daughter by Mr. Arthur Young and Miss Elizabeth Maude enrich the dramatist's group, which, though a little marred by minor characters wastefully used, is uncommonly persuasive and complete.