

JOHN BARRYMORE IN PETER IBBETSON

I saw the great geniuses Paul Orleeff and Eleonora Duse.

It is to be at once observed that here is a keen pictorial mind, a mind which visualizes perfectly for itself the chiaroscuro aspects of the emotion, as well as the spiritual, for Barrymore gives them with an almost unerring felicity, and rounds out the portrayal which in any other hands would suffer, but Barrymore has the special power to feel the value of reticence in all good art, the need for complete subjection of personal enthusiasm to the force of ideas. His art is akin to the art of silver-point, which, as is known, is an art of directness of touch, and final in the instant of execution, leaving no room whatever for accident or untoward excitement of nerve.

We shall wait long for the silver suggestiveness such as Barrymore gives us when Peter gets his first glimpse of Mary, Duchess of Towers. Who else could convey his realization of her beauty, and the quality of reminiscence that lingers about her, of the rapt amaze as he stands by the mantel-piece looking through the door into the space where he sees her in the midst of dancers under a crystal chandelier somewhere not very distant? Or the moment when he finds her bouquet neglected on the table in the drawing-room, with her lace shawl not far from his hands? Or when he finds himself alone, pressing his lips into the depth of the flowers as the curtain gives the finale to the scene with the