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She Acts Alone RUTH DRAPER'S ART

(Continued from page 15.)

party at which Ruth Draper was a guest. Finding an empty chair beside her, she amused herself, and others, by carrying on a lively conversation with the absent guest. It was so good the host asked her to repeat it. That gave her the idea for her act.

To-day she earns as much as £2000 a week. A rich woman now, she gives much of her money to charity—no other actress, it is said, is so willing to oblige with charity performances.

In London she is so well known that she has only to drift into the city, put up a few posters announcing that a new Ruth Draper season is about to start, and in about three days every seat in the Vaudeville or Haymarket Theatre is sold out for the entire season of five or six weeks. In Australia where, until about two months ago she was just a name, the experience has been much the same.

IT is to be noted that, overseas anyway, her audiences are mostly women, many of them just the women she "guys" in her remarkable character sketches. She has a genius for satirical portrait painting—but it is a kindly, gentle kind of satire.

This is how the London "Times" wrote of her art: "It is not mimicry, it is not caricature; it is not, in the world's representative sense, acting. It is fluid criticism, drawing its strength less from Miss Draper's power to represent a particular woman in particular circumstances, or to suggest the presence of things invisible in her drama, than from the genius with which she draws her audience, which is mankind, into her critical net..."

Miss Draper admits that she asks a lot from her audiences. It is hard work for them; they have to think hard and fast; but generally she finds them remarkably responsive, even in this part of the world where her art is unfamiliar.

THE task of Miss Draper's manager is an easy one. Most actors and actresses and theatre managements employ large staffs of men and women to think up publicity stunts and new ways of intriguing public interest. It is a side of show life that is practically inseparable from the show itself. But with Ruth Draper it is different. Although she realises that publicity is necessary, she does not court it. In fact, she almost fears it. Certainly, she shuns any attempt to interview her, and off-stage is most inconspicuous and unassuming.

She must have liked the Australians. It is said that the interviews which she gave the Australian Press during her current tour were the first of her career—but even they were brief and sketchy.

"For personal reticence, Greta Garbo is a gregarious chatterbox in comparison," wrote one journalist.

Apart from publicity, however, Miss Draper's manager has an easy life. Not for him the worry of keeping a cast together and smoothing out their differences of opinion. No worry about