

# To Understand A Man Fully Meet His Wife—

**Mrs. Tibbett  
Talks to  
Jane  
Raeburn**

**S**OME famous playwright once said, whether in bitterness or sincerity I do not know, that before you can understand a man fully you must first see his wife.

That remark came strongly to my mind last week when I met Mrs. Lawrence Tibbett, charming wife of the world's greatest baritone. I have never spoken to Tibbett himself, or even seen him outside a picture-house, yet I am sure that I caught as accurate an impression of the man's personality in my brief interview as have many others who saw him face to face.

Not that Mrs. Tibbett is at all the sort of person who would lose her individuality in anyone else. Rather, she has the poise and nameless graces of the woman who stands very firmly on her own feet.

All the same, I believed I could see clearly in this very tall, very slim brunette with the friendly eyes and the amusing American neatness of speech, something of her husband's candid outlook, his balance, unusual in a great artist, and the generosity and breadth of his interests.

**T**HIS couple share most things, I imagine, not only the luxuries and pleasures that fame can bring, but also without rancour its numberless obligations and its merciless toll upon nerve and energy.

**F**OR fame is no easy matter, whatever the envious might have you think. I asked Mrs. Tibbett what it felt like to be the wife of an "Idol of Millions."

"If you want to be settled, and have a home and comfort and your children round you," she said, "then my advice is: Don't marry an artist."

"Last time we were home in New York, we spent four and a half months there. Generally it is less. You do get tired sometimes of always living out of suitcases."

Fortunately, Mrs. Tibbett is by temperament and environment peculiarly adaptable to this sort of thing. "All my life I have been a traveller," she told me. "My parents used to spend half their time in Europe, half in America. There isn't much I haven't seen in either of those continents. I love travelling—the stimulation of meeting people, adjusting to different conditions."

"My idea is we are all too ready to slip into easy habit, into seeing the same friends and the same places, so that we can relax and let ourselves go, not bothering. When you travel, you just have to keep alert."

And she added—as if I could not see how the wanderlust had got her—"I know how, if you get the chance, you



"If you want to be settled . . . then my advice is: Don't marry an artist."

Mrs. Lawrence Tibbett with her husband's pianist, Stewart Wille. "I prayed for calm weather on the Tasman and I panick regularly on bumpy air journeys," says the famous singer's wife.

do want to settle down. Once I had to stay two years in California, not in one place, mind, but up and down the West Coast. And, at the end of two years, I thought, if I didn't get out of that place soon I'd go mad!"

I laughed at her. "We can't all afford to feel that way."

Mrs. Tibbett admitted it with her easy smile. She confided that, globe-trotter as she is, she still has a lurking terror of sea and air. She prayed for calm weather on the Tasman, dreads Cook Strait even, and regularly panicks on bump air journeys. "Mentally, I'm a bad sailor; physically I'm never ill."

**A**T that, she turned the conversation from the thought of terrified travel. I asked about entertaining, because if you read any American gossip papers, you will know that the name of Mrs. Lawrence Tibbett stands high on the list of New York hostesses. "Yes, I've had to do plenty of it," she agreed. "I love it, but, of course, there's an art in it, just as there's an art in acting or singing."

"My rule is leave your guests alone. Introduce them, open a topic of conversation, and let them argue it out. People like to go to a place where they will be allowed to please themselves. So often when you are getting into a really interesting talk, along comes the hostess with: 'Oh, I do want you to meet so-and-so!' The result is when you go home you find you've said nothing else, but 'How do you do?' and 'Yes, I do like your country,' and so on."

"Naturally when Mr. Tibbett is in New York, we entertain friends of several different circles—the Metropolitan group, the musical circles, the society crowd, our own particular friends. But I never bother to separate them—each group (Continued on page 25.)