

"DR. JAMES BARRY."

A PLAY OF A MASQUERADING  
WOMAN.

Dr. James Barry, concerning whose life Miss Elga Racster and Miss Jessica Grove have written a play, must have been a most interesting person when "he" lived in South Africa a hundred years ago. The simplest course is to describe him in the masculine, for it was not until his death in London 40 years later that the doctor was found to be a woman.

In South Africa he had an adventurous career. He became an Army surgeon and rose to be Inspector-General of the Army Medical Forces. He is reported to have had a quarrelsome temper, to have fought a duel, and to have been guilty of various breaches of discipline. If the play is to be believed, most of the women at the Cape fell in love with him, for languishing ladies used to dog his every step. History records that in appearance Dr. Barry was a beardless lad, with an unmistakable Scotch type of countenance, reddish hair, and high cheek bones, and Miss Sybil Thorndike, who played the part yesterday afternoon, certainly lived up to the description. Her performance of a very difficult rôle was unusually good. One can hardly imagine a more trying ordeal for a young actress than the death scene of a woman of 60 or more masquerading as a man. But Miss Thorndike carried the scene through with considerable effect, and happily she was not too long in dying. In fact, she died in half the time that it takes Mr. Loraine as Cyrano or Miss Marie Löhr as L'Aiglon. An admirable little performance in this scene was that of Mr. Brember Wills, as the Malay slave, whose contempt when he discovered that the doctor he had served for so many years was really a woman provided a very effective close to the play.

The occasion of the production was a special *matinée* at the St. James's Theatre in aid of the Edith Cavell Homes of Rest for Nurses and the St. George's Orphanage at Cape Town, and it was a just compliment to two deserving institutions that so much care had been exercised in providing a cast worthy of the occasion. Mr. Allan Jeanes, Mr. Nicholas Hannen, Miss Noel Mackern, and Miss Margaretha van Hulsteyn all did most useful work.

23. VII. 19 . July 23, 1919  
The Times