

# THE HEAD-HUNTERS; AND HULL HOUSE

EDITORIAL BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

WHILE in Chicago recently I visited the Field Museum on one afternoon, and on one evening I went to see the Hull House Players in Galsworthy's "Justice."

Everything was interesting at the Field Museum—the zoölogical collections, the ethnological exhibits concerning our own Indians, the exhibits concerning the Philippines, the material accumulated from China and Tibet. In one hall there was a tablet to the memory of a martyr to science, a young naturalist and ethnologist named Jones, who on behalf of the Field Museum had been sent to the Philippines and there had been killed by savages. His story, as told me, doubtless with substantial though not with minute accuracy, was a story of what could have happened only in our own age, with its extraordinary juxtaposition of the highest civilization and of savagery, and the no less extraordinary suddenness with which some small part of a race of immemorial savagery in its growth becomes deflected into a part of the current of advance of an old civilized race.

Jones, who was of mixed blood, white and Indian, had studied at Hampton Institute. He then went to some New England school, I think Andover, and finally to Harvard. When he graduated from Harvard he had become a scientific man. The Field Museum sent him to the Philippines, where he penetrated into the interior of one of the wilder islands and joined a tribe of head-hunting savages, with whom he soon came to be on the most intimate and friendly terms. Head-hunting was merely one of their conventions, and was compatible with great gentleness and simplicity of life in many other matters.

Jones speedily became thoroughly identified with them. They told him all the intimate circumstances of their strange psychic and mental life, and for a year he lived with them collecting invaluable material in his notebooks. Then he told them that he must leave them.

They were greatly grieved; they hated to have him depart. Some of their number who were especially friendly accompanied him to the confines of the tribal domain. Then their feelings overcame them (at this point of the narrative readers of Frank R.

Stockton will be startlingly reminded of the possible attitude of the griffin toward the minor canon). They felt that they really could not bear to part with Jones, so they killed him and took back his head to their village. My informant, a profound student of wild ethnology, told me that he was convinced that their main feeling was friendship, that they had become devoted to Jones, that they liked him and liked to talk with him, and hated to have him go away; and so they felt at the end that, as they would otherwise lose him entirely, it would be far better to take his head back and have that permanently with them, because no doubt they would somehow or other get counsel and inspiration and friendship from it.

Wide as the poles apart from the phase of life of which I thus got a glimpse was that phase of life shown in the play produced by the Hull House Players. It was played in a delightful little theater, which I am sorry to say on the evening I was there was not as full as it ought to have been. The play was Galsworthy's "Justice," which he had given the Hull House Players special permission to play without a royalty.

The play itself is a most powerful indictment of that cruel legalism which not merely is divorced from justice but which may do the most frightful injustice. Any man or woman seeing it cannot but be intensely interested and at the same time roused to generous indignation against the forcing of the forms of law into the service of injustice—this forcing, mind you, being done, not by men who are scoundrels, but by men who have no idea that they are doing anything wrong, who, on the contrary, feel that they are upholding the cause of civilization, but who lack vision, sympathy, understanding.

The players were all men and girls from among the frequenters of Hull House. Their names showed them to be of Jewish, German, Irish, and native American origin. They played astonishingly well. How well they played is testified to, in the first place, by the fact that they appealed so much to Mr. Galsworthy that he gave them the right to play "Justice" free, and, in the second place, by the fact that they have been asked to come to Ireland by the remarkable group of men and women who within the

last few years have done so much for a national Irish stage. The "star" was a young Jew engaged in the manufacture of tobacco at \$17 or \$18 a week. What the Hull House Players were doing and the way in which it was being done showed the immense possibilities for enjoyment and usefulness open to all our people if they only have the right initiative, and the right guidance to enable them to take advantage of the opportunities.

These players one and all were hard-working young men and young women, but they had in

them the quality that enabled them to take advantage of the chance that offered itself, and fortunately there were those prepared to offer the chance. In consequence, they now represent one of the appreciably valuable assets of American life. They are rendering service and giving enjoyment to others, and as an incident doing service and getting enjoyment for themselves. A window has been opened for them into the larger life of the Nation, and they are not merely lookers-on at this life ; they are doing their full part in making this life larger and better and more beautiful.