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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CONTINUOUS VAUDEVILLE ***

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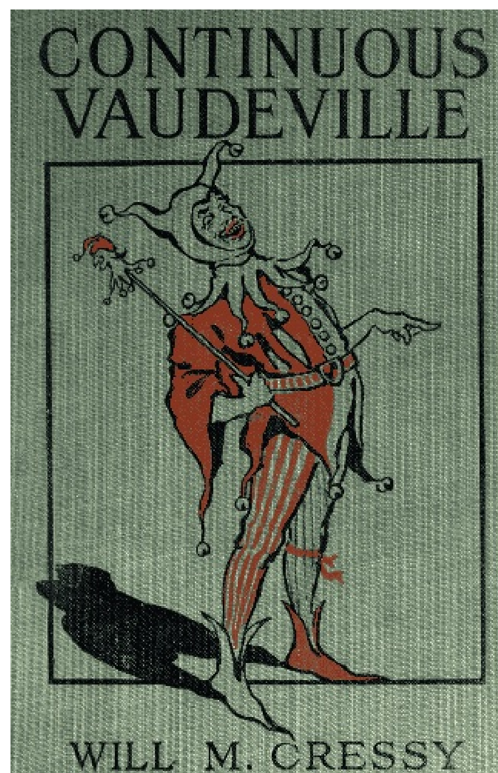

CONTINUOUS VAUDEVILLE

BY

WILL M. CRESSY

With Illustrations by

HAL MERRITT

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INTRODUCTION

When you go into a Continuous Vaudeville Theater you expect to see and hear a little of everything. You see a lot of poor acts, a few good ones and two or three *real* good ones. In seeking a suitable title for this book it struck us that that description would fit it exactly; so we will christen it—

CONTINUOUS VAUDEVILLE.

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THE OLD STAGE DOOR TENDER

[13]

Naturally if you are going back on the stage to get acquainted with its people, the first chap you are going to meet is the old Stage Door Tender. You will find him at every stage door, sitting there in his old arm chair, calm, quiet, doing nothing; he is a man of few words; he has heard actors talk so much that he has got discouraged. He sees the same thing every week; he sees them come in on Monday and go out on Saturday; the same questions, the same complaints, the same kicks. So he just sits there watching, waiting and observing.

He seldom speaks, but when he does, he generally says something.

---

[14]

At the Orpheum Theater in Des Moines there was an old fellow who looked so much like the character I portray in "Town Hall To-night" that everybody used to call him "Cressy." Finally we came there to play and he heard everybody call me "Cressy." He pondered over this for a day or two, then he came over to me one afternoon and said,

"What do you suppose they call you and I 'Cressy' for?"

He expressed his opinion of actors in general about as concisely as I ever heard any one do; I asked him what he really thought of actors; and with a contemptuous sniff he replied,

"I don't."

Nobody in the world could ever convince "Old George" on the stage door of the San Francisco Orpheum that that house would survive a year without his guiding hand and brain. Old George was hired by John Morrisey, the house manager, while Mr. Myerfelt, the president of the Orpheum Company, was abroad. George's instructions were to admit no one back on the stage without a written order from Mr. Morrisey. A month or so afterwards Mr. Myerfelt returned and started to go back on the stage.

[15]

"Here, here," said Old George; "where are you going?"

"I am going up on the stage," said Mr. M.

"You are not," said George, barring the way, "without a pass from Mr. Morrisey."

"What are you talking about?" demanded Mr. M. "I am Mr. Myerfelt, the President of the Orpheum Company."

"Yis, and I am King George, The Prisidint of this Door; and me orders is that no one goes through here without a pass from Mr. Morrisey. And there is nobody goes through."

So deadly earnest is Old George in this matter that, should it be absolutely necessary for him to leave the door for a moment, he has bought himself a little child's-size slate upon which he writes out a detailed account of where he has gone, and why, and how soon he will be back.

"Gone to get a drink of water. Be back in a minute. George."

"Gone out in front to ask Mr. Morrisey a question. Be back in three minutes. George."

"Helping fill Miss Kellerman's tank; don't know how long. George."

"Inside watching Banner of Light Act. George."

[16]

This "Banner of Light" act was Louie Fuller's "Ballet of Light," consisting of eight bare-legged girls dancing on big sheets of glass set into the floor of the stage. George would go in under the stage and watch the act up through these sheets of glass.

He said it was the best act that was ever in the house—for him.

Old "Con" Murphy was on the stage door of the Boston Theater for eighteen years; his hours

were from 9 A. M. to 11 P. M., with an hour off for dinner and an hour for supper.

The theater faces on Washington Street and the stage door is on Mason Street. For eighteen years Con sat in that Mason Street door and only saw Washington Street once in all that time.

One day Eugene Tompkins, the owner of the theater, came along, stopped, thought a minute, then said,

"Con, how long have you been here?"

"Sixteen years, come August," said Con.

"Ever had a vacation?"

"No, sor."

[17] Tompkins looked at his watch; it was ten minutes of twelve. "Well, Con," he said, "when you go out to dinner, you stay out; don't come back until to-morrow morning. Then come and tell me what you did."

Con put on his coat and went out; out to the first vacation he had had in sixteen years; the first opportunity to see what this city he lived in looked like. The first chance he had had in sixteen years to get out into the country; to hear the birds sing; to see the green fields; the trees; the flowers growing.

And what do you suppose he did?

He walked across the narrow alley and visited with the Stage Door Tender of the Tremont Theater all the afternoon.

I asked the Stage Door Tender of Proctor's Twenty-third Street Theater in New York once what he considered the best act that ever played the house; unhesitatingly he replied,

"Joe Maxwell's Police Station act."

I asked him why he considered that the best.

"Ain't no women in it."

An agent for some fangled kind of typewriter was trying to interest the Stage Door Tender of Keith's Theater in Philadelphia in the machine:

[18] "Now this is just what a man in your position wants and needs. You have a lot of writing to do here, and nowhere to do it; now with this machine you don't require any table or desk; you can hold this typewriter right in your lap."

"Not me, Mister," said the Door Man hastily; "I'm married."

There used to be a door man at Keith's Boston House who could tell more in less words than any man I ever saw. One Monday morning some actors came in who had never been in Boston before, and they were asking this old fellow about the different hotels:

"How is the Rexford?" asked the Lady.

"Burlesque," grunted the old fellow.

"What is the Touraine?"

"Headliners."

"How about the So-and-so House?" naming quite a notorious hotel.

"Been open eleven years and had three trunks."

"Where have I seen you before?"
And the Judge at the prisoner leers;
"Why, I taught your daughter singing."
"You did?" said the Judge; "*ten years*."

[19]

Nat Haines was playing Keith's, Providence, R. I. The act on ahead of Nat was Professor

Woodward's Trained Seals. One afternoon Nat, hearing a noise, looked around and there was one of the seals coming out under the curtain behind him. It took Nat just two jumps to get off the stage. An attendant came out and captured the seal. Nat came back. "Well," he said, scratching his head; "I have followed every animal on earth but a skunk and a lizard, and now I have got that. Humph; Professor Woodward's Trained Shad. I think I will learn dressmaking."

I once asked Ezra Kendal how he ever kept track of those seven children of his.

"I use the card-index system," he replied solemnly.

The Depths of Degradation: A man that plays second violin and double alto in the band.

Mary Richfield (Ryan & Richfield) had a headache; the Los Angeles sun had been too much for her. She went in to a drug store and asked the clerk for a headache powder. This clerk was not a first-class drugger; he was just a student; but he knew where the headache powders were, so he got one for her; got his ten cents and started away. Mary looked around; there was no soda fountain, no water tank. [20]

"Well, here," she said; the young man stopped and looked back at her. "Where am I supposed to take this powder?"

"In your mouth, Mam."

One cold, blustery day several of us were sitting in the stage door tender's little room at the Orpheum, Denver, when the door was thrown open and in hurried a boy of fifteen or sixteen.

"Where's Cressy?" he asked briskly.

"Right here," I answered in the same manner.

"I want a sketch."

"All right."

"What do you charge?"

"Five hundred dollars."

"Gee Zip!"

And he was out the door and gone.

At the Minneapolis Orpheum a chap with a jag came weaving his way out from the auditorium and over to the box-office window.

"Shay," he said thickly; "wha' do you want to hire such bad acters for? They're rotten." [21]

The ticket seller asked which ones he objected to.

"Why, tha' ol' Rube, and that gal in there; they're rotten."

"What are you talking about?" said the ticket seller; "that is Cressy and Dayne; they are the Headliners; they are fine."

The man looked at him a moment, as if to see if he really meant it; then he asked earnestly,

"Hones'ly?"

"Certainly."

For another moment he studied, then as he turned away, he shook his head sadly and said,

"I shall never go to another vaudeville show as long as I live."

IT'S HARD TO MAKE THE OLD FOLKS BELIEVE IT [22]

We may be Actors and Actresses (with capital "A's") to the public; we may have our names in big

letters on the billboards and in the programs; but to The Old Folks At Home we are just the same no-account boys and girls we always were. We may be Headliners in New York, Boston, Chicago and San Francisco, but back home we are still just Jimmie and Johnnie and Charlie that "went on the stage."

Charlie Smith, of Smith & Campbell, in his younger days used to drive a delivery wagon for his father's fish market. But tiring of the fish business he started out to be "a Acter." At the end of five years he had reached a point where the team commanded (and sometimes got) a salary of eighty dollars a week. As driver of the fish wagon he had received eight. And he determined to go home and "show them." Dressing the part properly for his "grand entre" put a fearful dent in his "roll"; so much so that he had to change what remained into one and two dollar bills in order to "make a flash." [23]

But when he struck the old home town he was "a lily of the valley"; he had a Prince Albert coat, a silk hat, patent-leather shoes, an almost-gold watch and chain, a pretty-near diamond stud and ring and the roll of ones and twos, with a twenty on the outside.

After supper, sitting around the fire, he started in telling them what a success he was; he told them of all the big theaters he had appeared in; how good the newspapers said he was; what a large salary he received, etc., etc.

All seemed highly impressed; all except Father; finally, after a couple of hours of it, he could contain himself no longer, and burst out—

"Say, when are you going to stop this dumb fool business and come back and go to driving that wagon again?"

Ed Grey, "the Tall Story Teller," went from a small country town on to the stage. It was ten years before he ever came back to play the home town. When he did the whole town turned out *en masse*; the Grey family ditto; after the show the family was seated around the dining-room table, talking it over. Mother sat beside her big boy, proud and happy. The others were discussing the show. [24]

"That Mister Brown was awful good."

"Oh, but I liked that Blink & Blunk the best."

"That Miss Smith was awful sweet."

But not a word did any one have to say about "Eddie." Finally he burst out—

"Well, how was *I*?"

There was an ominous pause, and then Mother, reaching over and patting his knee lovingly, said,

"Now, don't you care, Eddie, as long as you get your money."

Cliff Gordon's father doesn't believe it *yet*. Cliff was playing in New York and stopping at home.

"Vere you go next veek, Morris?" asked Father.

"Orpheum, Brooklyn," replied Cliff.

"How mooch vages do you get dere?"

"Three fifty."

"Tree huntret unt fifty tollars?"

"Uh huh."

Father nodded his head, sighed deeply, thought a minute, then— [25]

"Then vere do you go?"

"Alhambra, New York."

"How mooch?"

"Three fifty."

"Then vere?"

"Keith's, Philadelphia."

"How mooch you get ofer dere?"

"Just the same; three fifty."

Father sighed again, thought deeply for a few minutes, then, with another sigh, said, half to

himself,

"Dey can't *all* be crazy."

Tim McMahon (McMahon & Chapelle) had a mother who did not believe theaters were proper and Tim had a hard time getting her to come to see him at all. But finally she came to see her "Timmite" act. It was a big show, ten acts, and Tim was on number nine. After the show was over Tim went around in front of the house to meet her; she came out so indignant she could hardly speak.

"Why, what's the matter? Wasn't I good?" asked Tim.

"Yis, sor, you was; you was as good as iny of them; you was *better* than any of thim; and they had no right to let thim other eight acts on foreninst ye: *You ought to have come on first, Timmie.*" [26]

The first time Josephine Sabel's father and mother saw her on the stage she was in the chorus of a comic opera company and was wearing tights. Mother ran out of the theater and Father tried to climb up over the footlights to get at Josephine and got *put* out.

Charlie Case had been on the stage for years before he ever got a chance to play his home town; then he came in with a minstrel show; he had a special lithograph, showing him standing beside an Incubator, which was hatching out new jokes every minute.

The house was crowded and Charlie was even more nervous than usual. Everybody else in the show got big receptions; Charlie walked out to absolute silence. He talked five minutes to just as absolute silence; then, discouraged, he stopped to take a breath; the instant he stopped the house was in a pandemonium; they really thought he was great, but hadn't wanted to interrupt him. After that he would tell a joke and then wait; he was a knockout. [27]

Later he was talking it over at home:

"Why, that awful silence had me rattled," he said; "I couldn't even remember my act; I left out a lot of it."

"Yes," said his father; "we noticed you forgot to bring on your Incubator."

UNION LABOR [28]

A Song and Dance Team (recently graduated from a Salt Lake City picture house) got eight weeks booking on the Cort Circuit out through the Northwest. The first show told the story. They were bad: awfully bad. But they had an ironclad, pay-or-play contract and as the management couldn't fire them, it was determined to freeze them out. The manager started in giving them two, three and four hundred mile jumps every week, hoping that they would quit. But no matter how long or crooked he made the jumps they always showed up bright and smiling every Monday morning.

Finally they came to their last stand: and it happened that the manager, who had booked them originally, was there and saw them again. He could hardly believe his eyes, for, owing to the fact that they had been doing from six to sixteen shows a day for the past eight weeks, they now had a pretty good act. As they were getting about as near nothing a week as anybody could get and not owe money to the manager, he wanted to keep them along. He was fearful the memories of those jumps he had been giving them would queer the deal, but he determined to see what a little pleasant talk would do; so he went to them and said, [29]

"Now, boys, you have got that act into pretty good shape; and if you like I can give you some more time. And," he hastened to add, "you won't get any more of those big jumps either. I was awful sorry about those big fares you have had to pay."

"Oh, that's all right," replied one of the boys; "we belong to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and always ride on the engine free anyway."

MARTIN LEHMAN GOES TO NEW YORK [30]

Martin Lehman is the manager of the Orpheum Theater in Kansas City. Martin Beck is the general manager of the Orpheum Circuit. Mr. Beck had wired Lehman to come to New York at

once. What Mr. Beck said went. So Lehman went.

If there is any one thing on earth that Martin Lehman loves better than another it is *not* traveling. He is probably the only man on earth who can get seasick anywhere and everywhere. A sprinkling cart will give him symptoms. His son Lawrence says that he always has to stand by and hold his father's hand when he takes a bath. He always walks to and from the theater because the street car might pass through a mud puddle and he would get seasick. The next worst thing in the world is a railroad train. He dies twice a mile regularly. *But*—Martin Beck said, "Come at once."

[31] So, with his suit-case full of Green River, Hermitage and other well-known mineral waters, a couple of lemons (who had been playing for Louis Shouse at Convention Hall the previous week), and his Orpheum pass, poor Lehman boarded the night train for Chicago, hoping for the best but expecting the worst—and getting it.

He got on board early so he could get into his berth before the train started. Lower seven, right in the middle of the car. He placed his bottles of life preservers in the little hammock beside him, punched a little hole in the end of one of the lemons, closed his eyes and said his evening prayer.

The train started. So did his troubles. The train gained headway. Ditto the trouble. But, like his forefathers in far-away Prussia, he fought for freedom. He brought all the strength of his powerful mind to bear. He tried "The New Thought," "Self-Hypnotism," "Silent Prayer"; he tried every religious belief he could think of except Mormonism. And finally he slept; or died; he was not sure which; and he didn't mind; he lost consciousness; that was all he cared for.

The next thing he knew somebody was shaking him and telling him to "Change cars!" It seemed that this car had developed a hot box and passengers would have to change to the car ahead, [32] taking the same numbered berth in the new car that they had occupied in the first one.

Poor Lehman's getting up and dressing was absolute proof of the power of mind over matter. But finally, with part of his clothing on his back and the rest over his arm, he managed to stagger into the other car, only to discover that he had lost his berth ticket.

The conductor said that the only thing to do was to wait until the other passengers got located, and the berth that was left would naturally be his. It doesn't take a mind reader to see what he got. Upper number one; right over the wheels: just beside a smoky kerosene lamp.

As in all good novels we will now have a line of stars.

* * * * * * *

Arriving in Chicago, he varied the misery of the trip by a taxicab trip across the city to catch the New York train: this time drawing lower nine.

"Troubles never come single." In the seat back of him was a woman with a baby. The lady in front of him indulged in perfume of a most violent type. The weather and the porter were warm and humid.

[33] He went up into the smoking room, but some rude drummers were smoking in there so he had to come back to his seat. The lady in front of him said something about people "reeking with tobacco smoke," and took another perfume shower-bath. Then the porter leaned over him to open the window.

So the day passed, and the night came; and Lehman went to bed. About two o'clock in the morning the end of the world came. Or so Lehman thought for a moment. It was afterwards discovered that the car he was on had broken a wheel and jumped the track. Upon coming to and taking account of stock, Lehman found that his injuries consisted of one fractured bottle, a dislocated vocabulary and a severe loss of temper.

For the second time on this awful trip he was invited to "change to the car ahead." The first thing he did was to hunt through his clothes for his ticket. No more of that upper number one business for your Uncle Martin! No sir! Having at last found it, he placed it in his mouth, picked up what there was left of his clothes and made his way up ahead to the other car.

"Tickets!" said the conductor.

[34] "You bet!" said Lehman, taking the ticket from his mouth and handing it to the conductor.

The conductor took it, copied the number on to his plan, handed the ticket to the porter and the porter took him in and put him to bed *again*.

Lehman tried to say his evening prayer again, but couldn't remember it. While he was thinking it over the door at the ladies' end of the car opened and something came down the aisle. As this "something" came out of the ladies' apartment, it was presumably a woman. But Lehman disputes that fact to this day. She was about six feet long, nine inches wide, all the way, and about the color of a cowhide trunk. Her hair was in curl papers, her teeth in her pocket and her trust in Heaven. Like a grenadier she marched down the aisle until she came to the berth where Lehman was trying to die as painlessly as possible. Upon arriving here she pulled the curtains aside, sat down on the edge of the berth, jabbed Lehman in the stomach with her elbow, and said loudly—

"*Lay over!*"

Lehman groaned, got one look at the female, then placed both feet in the small of her back and shot her out on to the floor, yelling loudly for the police.

The car was in an uproar in an instant. Lehman was lying on his back, shouting "Police!" The female was screaming and hunting for her teeth. The conductor, the porter and the brakeman came running in to see whether it was a political discussion or just a murder. All the old lady could do was to mumble and hunt for her teeth. A man across the aisle swore that he saw Lehman stab the old lady with a bowie knife and throw her out into the aisle. The woman with the baby corroborated him, excepting that she thought he hit her with a piece of lead pipe. [35]

By this time the old lady had found part of her Fletcherizing outfit and informed the congregation that she was neither struck nor stabbed; but that her husband in the berth there had certainly gone crazy.

There was a sympathetic chorus of "Oh!s" from the other passengers and the conductor jerked the curtains aside and asked Lehman what he meant by treating his wife this way.

"*My wife?*" screamed Lehman. "Why you —— —!$!—&—$&'o$—! Are you calling that old goat face *my wife*?"

"Sure that's your wife! Don't you suppose she knows?"

"Well, don't you suppose *I know*! Do I look as if I would be the husband of anything that looks like *that*?" [36]

The old lady now caught sight of Lehman for the first time.

"Why," she gasped; "that isn't my husband."

"I know darn well it ain't," said Lehman.

"Then what are you doing in my berth?" demanded the old lady.

"I am not in your berth!"

"You *are* in my berth!"

"Let's see your tickets," said the conductor.

"Here is mine," said the old lady. "Lower seven."

"And here is mine," said Lehman. "Lower seven."

The conductor looked at them closely; then stepped back under a lamp and looked at them closer. Then he handed the old lady's back to her. Then he turned to Lehman and, handing him his ticket, said,

"That is your yesterday's ticket from Kansas City to Chicago." Lehman looked at it dazed for a moment, then dressed and went up into the baggage car where he sat on a trunk all the way to New York.

[37]

E. M. Chase, a Norfolk (Va.) newspaper man, has for years been collecting newspaper clippings. The following are from some of his rural exchanges:

"The funeral was conducted at the home by the Rev. Mr. Browles and was afterwards buried in the old family burying ground."—*Lebanon (Va.) News.*

"Mrs. W. G. Neighbors is suffering with a rising corn on her foot."—*Lebanon News.*

"J. N. and Alfred Quillen were grafting in our neighborhood a few days last week."—*Gate City Herald.*

"Rev. W. C. Hoover preached an excellent sermon at the Union Chapel on last Sunday, his subject being entitled, 'I go to prepare a place for you.' Rev. Hoover and family then spent the rest of the day with Mr. Luther Armentrout and family."—*Shenendore Valley Newmarket.*

"The members of Moore's Store String Band met Saturday evening and rendered some very fine music, as follows: W. E. Lloyd, H. E. Weatherholtz, V. M. Weatherholtz, B. H. Golliday, C. S. Moore and 26 spectators."—*Shenendore Valley Newmarket.*

"Selone Sours is out after a severe cold.

"Her daughter Emma Sours is still nursing her risings. [38]

"Your scribe took a trip to Louray one day last week and purchased three sacks of fertilizer, one peck of clover seed and a half bushel of timothy seed.

"We remarked to our little son the other day that it was going to rain, as certain birds were singing, and he said, 'Pa, rain don't come out of a bird.'"—*The Page News.*

There is a sign over in Newark that somehow doesn't just strike my fancy; it reads—

P. Flem. Delicatessen.

A couple of young country chaps wandered into the lobby of Shea's Theater in Toronto and stood watching the people go up to the ticket-office window and purchase tickets; finally they got into the line, worked their way up to the window, then one of them laid down a two-dollar bill and said,

"Give me two tickets to Hamilton, Ontario."

"Irish Billie Carrol" was standing in the wings at the old Olympic Theater in Chicago, watching the show. There was a chap on who was one of those men who can never let well enough alone; if he said or did anything that the audience laughed at, he would immediately say or do it right over again. Billie watched him awhile, then turned to his friend and said, [39]

"All the trouble with him is, he always takes three bases on a single."

Barney Reiley, then with the Old Homestead Company, now the manager of a theater in Indianapolis, and I were walking down the street in Baltimore, when the sun, shining through a magnifying glass, set fire to an oculist's show window.

"By Golly," said Barney, "it's a lucky thing that didn't happen in the night, when there was nobody around."

Boston newspapers one week contained the following interesting announcement:

"At Keith's; Cressy and Dayne; Don't fail to bring the children to see the Trained Dogs."

[40]

At the Majestic Theater in Chicago they have a big, two-sided, electric sign upon which are displayed the names of the acts playing there. They place the names of two acts on each side and use no periods. One week the two sides read—

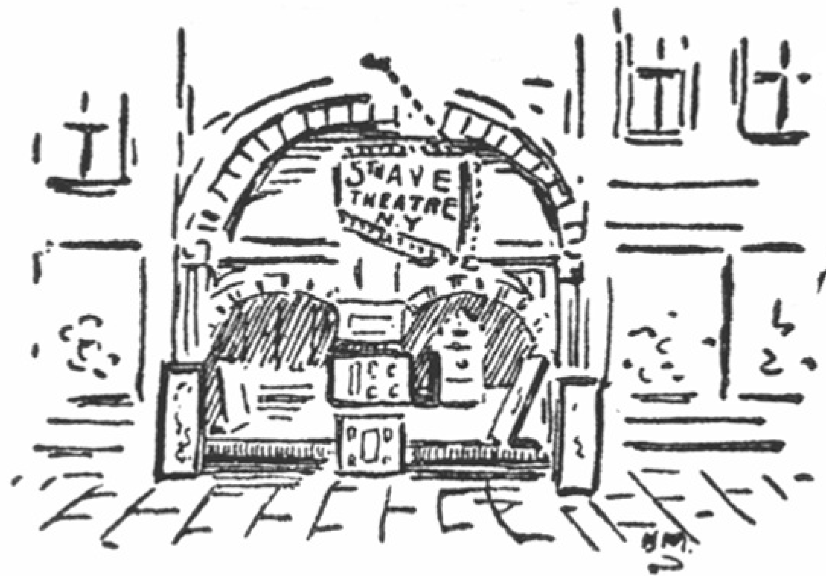
"CRESSY & DAYNE THE VAGRANTS."

and

"ELBERT HUBBARD NIGHT BIRDS."

Said the Actress to the Landlord,
  "Want to see 'The Billboard,' Mister?"
Said the Landlord to the Actress,
  "I'd rather see the board bill, Sister."

[41]



An English actor, just over, was playing at the Fifth Avenue Theater in New York City. He was in love with America and wanted to see it all—quick. One night he came to me and said,

"I think I will take a run over to Buffalo Bill's place in the morning, before the matinée."

I told him I would; it would be a good run for him.

Buffalo Bill lives in North Platte, Nebraska.

One of the provincial music halls in England has the roof arranged like a roll-top desk, so that in hot weather it can be rolled back, thus making a sort of roof garden out of it. An American Song and Dance Team was making their first European appearance there; their act was a much bigger hit than they had anticipated; and when they came off at the end of their act one of them said delightedly to the other, [42]

"Say, we just kicked the roof off of them, didn't we?"

"I beg pawdon, old chap," said the stage manager, overhearing him; "it rolls off, you know."

James Thornton and Fred Hallen were coming out of the Haymarket Theater in Chicago; Jim, who was ahead, let the door slam back against Fred.

"Oh, Good Lord," howled Fred, hanging on to his elbow; "right on the funny bone."

Jim looked at him, and in that ministerial way of his said,

"You haven't a funny bone in your body."

A young man asked me recently what spelled success on the stage. I told him the only way I had ever found of spelling it was W-O-R-K.

SOME HOTEL WHYS

[43]

Why are porters and bellboys always so much more anxious to help you *out* than *in*?

Why do so many hotel bathrooms have warm cold water and cold hot water?

Why is it that on the morning you are expecting company you can never find the chambermaid? And every other morning she tries your door every fifteen minutes regularly.

Why does a hotel clerk always try to give you some room different from the one you ask for?

Why does a hotel cashier always look at you pityingly?

Why does a bellboy always try to get two quarts of water into a quart pitcher?

Why do hotels feed actors cheaper than they do folks?

Why is a mistake in the bill always in the hotel's favor?

Why does the landlord's wife always have theatrical trunks?

Why do drummers always leave their doors open? [44]

Why does my wife always try to get a corner table, and then put me in the chair facing the wall?

Why do "American" hotels always have French and Italian cooks?

Why does the fellow in the next room always get up earlier than I do?

Why does the elevator boy always go clear to the top floor and back when the man on the second floor rings for him?

Why is the news stand girl always so haughty?

Why does the night clerk always dress so much better than the day clerks?

Why do I think I know so much about running a hotel?

IT ISN'T THE COAT THAT MAKES THE MAN [45]

A seedy-looking chap came up to Roy Barnes in Toronto and said in an ingratiating way:

"I don't know as you will remember me, Mr. Barnes, but I met you down at Coney Island last summer."

"Yes, sure, I remember you easy," said Barnes, grasping his hand in both his own. "I remember that overcoat you have on."

"I hardly think so," said the seedy party, trying to draw his hand away; "I did not own this overcoat then."

"No," said Barnes, "I know you didn't; but I did."

Grace Hazard has a washlady. Washlady has a thirteen-year-old son. Son became infected with the acting germ and ran away to go with Gertrude Hoffman's Company. His mother was telling Miss Hazard about it.

"'Deed, Mis' Hazard, yo' know 'tain't right for dat po' li'le innocent child to be pesterin' roun' dem theater houses dat er way. 'Twas jes' dis ver' mo'nin' dat he's Sunday-school teacher wuz sayin' to me: 'Dat boy has got too much—too much—intelligence to be in dat stage bus'ness nohow.'" [46]

Hanging in each room of the Great Southern Hotel at Gulfport, Miss., is a small sign stating—

GUESTS CAN HAVE BATHS PREPARED
ON THEIR FLOOR BY APPLYING
TO THE MAID ON THEIR FLOOR.

A friend of mine in St. Louis is a Police Captain. One day he went into a bank to get a check cashed. He was in citizen's clothes and the paying teller did not know him anyway; so he said,

"You will have to be identified, sir. Do you know anybody here in the bank?"

"I presume so," said the Captain cheerfully; "line 'em up and I'll look 'em over."

Seen from the car window: "Shuttz Hotel. Now open." [47]

On Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo: "Organs and Sewing Machines tuned and repaired."

At the St. James Hotel, Philadelphia:

Mrs. Cressy. "Waiter, have you any snails today?"

Waiter. "No, mam."

Mrs. C. "What's the matter? Can't you catch them over here?"

ONE-NIGHT-STAND ORCHESTRAS

My idea of what not to be is Musical Director of a Musical Comedy playing one-night stands. This is the real thing in the Trouble line.

Max Faetkenheuer was musical director with an opera company that was playing through the South. They arrived in one town at four in the afternoon, and Max found the orchestra waiting at the theater. They looked doubtful; they sounded dreadful. Individually they were bad; collectively they were worse. During the first number the cornet only struck the right note once and that frightened him so he stopped playing. The clarinet player had been taking lessons from a banjo teacher for three years and had never made the same noise twice. There were six French horns, all Dutch. The trap drummer was blind and played by guess and by gorry.

Max labored and perspired and swore until 7:15; then he had to stop because the audience wanted to come in and didn't dare to while the riot was on.

"Now look, Mister Cornet Player," Max said; "I'll tell you what you do; you keep your mute in all through the show."

"Yes, well, I shan't be here myself, but I will speak to my 'sub' about it."

"What's the reason you won't be here?" asked Max.

"I play for a dance over to Masonic Hall."

"So do I," said the bass fiddler.

"We all do, but the drummer," said the flute player.

"*You do?* Then what the devil have you kept me here rehearsing you for three hours for?" demanded Max.

"Well," said the cornet player, "we knew this was a big show, and we presumed you would be a good director, and we thought the practice would do us good."

"It will," said Max.

On another occasion he struggled all the afternoon with a "Glee Club and Mandolin Serenaders'" orchestra. Finally, by cutting out all solos, playing all the accompaniments himself, and confining the "Glee Club" to "um-pahs," he got everything figured out except the cornet player; he was beyond pardon; so Max said to him,

"I am awful sorry, old man, but you won't do; so you just sit and watch the show to-night."

"Oh," said the Not-Jule-Levy, "then I don't play, eh?"

"You do not play," said Max.

"All right then; then there'll be no show."

"Why won't there be a show?" asked Max.

"Because I am the Mayor, and I will revoke your license."

He played.

At some Southern town we played once with "The Old Homestead"; the rehearsal was called for 4:30. At 4:30 all the musicians were there but the bass fiddler.

"Where is your bass fiddler?" asked our director.

"Well, he can't get here just yet," replied one of the other players.

"When will he be here?"

"Well, if it rains he is liable to be in any minute now; if it don't rain he can't get here until six o'clock."

"What has the rain got to do with it?"

"He drives the sprinkling cart."

The worst orchestra I ever heard was with an Uncle Tom's Cabin show playing East St. Louis. It consisted of two pieces; a clarinet and a bass fiddle, each worse than the other.

At North Goram, Maine, I once hired an entire brass band of twenty-two pieces to play for an entire evening of roller skating in the town hall, for three dollars. They were worth every dollar of it.

In one of my plays I issue a newspaper called *The Wyoming Whoop*. At the top of the first column are the words—"In Hoc Signo Vinces." One day one of the stage hands came to me with a copy of the paper in his hands, and pointing to this line, said,

"That means 'We Shoot to Kill,' don't it?"

My wife was in a hair-dressing parlor in Cleveland; the girl who was doing what ever she was doing to her, discovered that she was the Miss Dayne at Keith's Theater.

"Oh, say," she said, "I wish you would tell me something." [52]

"Yes? what is it?" asked Miss D.

"Is that old man that plays on the stage with you as homely as he looks? His face is just like one of those soft rubber faces that the men sell on the street; the ones you pinch up into all sorts of shapes. He doesn't look as bad as that all the time, does he?"

Miss D. told her that there was not much choice.

Jim Thornton was playing his first engagement for Kohl & Castle in Chicago. As he came off from his first show, he stopped in the wings to watch the next act. A gentleman came along, touched him on the shoulder and said,

"You are not allowed to stand in the wings here."

Jim looked at him a moment, then said,

"And who are you?"

"Who am I? I am Kohl."

"You belong in the cellar," and Jim turned back to watch the show.

William Cahill was playing Paterson, N. J., and living at his home at the furthermost end of Brooklyn. Three hours and a half each way, twice a day. A friend meeting him on the ferry said, [53]

"You are playing Paterson this week, aren't you, Bill?"

"A little," replied Bill, "but I am going and coming most of the time."

I met Fred Niblo on Broadway:

"Hello, Fred," I said; "I went by your house this morning, and—"

"Thank you, Bill," he said, grasping my hand and shaking it heartily.

Clifford & Burke were playing Shea's, Buffalo. There was also a bare-back riding act on the bill. There is a very old lady who comes around the theater every night selling laundry bags, money bags and such stuff to the actors. She had seen Clifford & Burke's act several times and knew that they finished up their act with a dance.

Friday night she was sitting in our dressing room; Clifford and Burke were on the stage when she came in but had finished their act and gone to their room, although the old lady didn't know this. The horse act was on and the old horse galloping around the stage "clickerty clack; clickerty clack; clickerty clack," when suddenly the old lady stops talking, pricks up her ears, listens a minute, then said, [54]

"By garry, thim byes is doin' a long dance this night."

There was a German artist playing on the bill with us in Buffalo. He was a very polite chap, but his English was very Berlin. One night, after holding a rehearsal with a German acrobat, who was not much better off than he was as to the English language, he came over to my wife, and very slowly and laboriously he said,

"Goot evening, Madam Mees Dayne; eet iss colder than h——, don't it?"

Charlie Case was telling me how bad his teeth were:

"Why, Will," he said, "I have indigestion something awful. I can't chew a piece of meat to save my life. I just bite it hard enough to make sure it is dead, and swallow it."

Chick Sale comes from some one-night stand up in Illinois, I have forgotten the name of it; but there are two rival hose companies in the town. As fires are scarce, every once in a while they have a "contest." The two companies line up side by side, somebody counts three and away they go across the square to the watering trough. Upon arriving there they unreel their hose, stick one end into the watering trough, man the pumps, and the first one to get a stream on to the flag pole wins. [55]

Last summer there came a real fire. As the fire was nearest to their engine house the Alerts got there, and got a stream on to the fire before the Reliables arrived. As they came panting and puffing up the hill the captain of the Reliables saw this, stopped, waved his hand back at his company and said,

"They have beat us, boys; you can go back."

There is one good thing about Des Moines, according to the advertisements they are running in the magazines. There are twenty railroads running out of it.

On 125th Street in New York City there is a piano dealer by the name of Wise. On every window of his store he has painted— [56]

"What is home without a piano? Wise."

And he is correct.

One week in Omaha, Neb., the advertising in front of the Gaiety Theater read—

"The Midnight Maidens.
15 to 75 cts."

A Montreal furrier advertises—

"Fur cap, $1.00.
Good Fur Cap, $1.25.
Real Fur Cap, $1.50."

"HEART INTEREST" [57]

When you go into a Continuous Vaudeville show you expect to see all sorts of acrobatic marvels,

trained animals, and funny people. You expect to hear sweet singers, talented musicians, and funny comedians. But once in awhile you see and hear some little gem of sincere, heart interest.

And so, just in order to give that little touch of the "heart interest," I am going to tell you of a couple of little incidents that came into our lives at different times.

One night several years ago we were playing in a little town way up in the mountains of Pennsylvania. The night telegraph operator at the railroad station was an old schoolmate of mine. And so after the show was over I went over to the station to have a visit with him. It was a still cold night in the middle of winter and we sat around the little stove in his office, talking over our boyhood days back in New Hampshire.

[58] Along about midnight the outer door opened and a poor, ragged, hungry-looking young chap of twenty-two or three stepped in and walked to the stove. After he had got his hands thawed out a little he came over to the window of the telegraph office and handed the operator a piece of paper. It was just a piece of common wrapping paper with a message written on it in lead pencil.

"How much will it cost me to send that message?" he asked.

The operator counted the words.

"Ten words; twenty-five cents."

The young fellow withdrew his closed hand from his pocket and emptied out exactly twenty-five cents in pennies and nickels, sighed and went out.

The operator sat down and sent the message. Then he sat looking at the paper for quite a few seconds; then he turned to me and said,

"Well, I have been jerking lightning quite a while now, but there is the biggest ten words I ever sent."

He handed me the message; it read—

"Kiss Mother good-by; I am too poor to come."

[59] The second is just a letter which Miss Dayne received in Pittsburg, from a poor old mother who thought she recognized in Miss Dayne her erring daughter.

McKeesport, Pa., Mar. 5.

Dear Daughter Blanch.

i recognized your picture in one of the Pittsburg papers. Blanchie will you write me a few lines and releived my heart and mind. if it is concealment you dont want any one to know from me if you will only write me a few lines i am your mother how i have longed to see you my health is failing me the children often ask about you and wonder dont fail me dear child you are just the same to me as the rest love to you Blanchie from your heart broken mother

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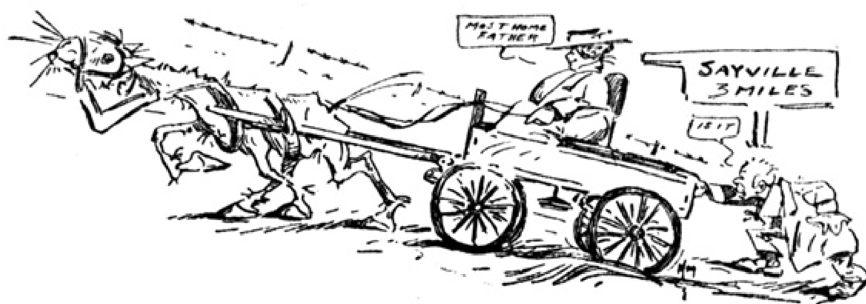
[60]



Mag Haggerty's Horse.

TOMMIE RYAN'S HORSE

Tommie Ryan and his wife (Mary Richfield) live in a very charming house at Sayville, Long Island. The Ryan horse lived in the barn. Although, if Mrs. Tommie had had her way, he would have lived in the parlor. For "Abner" was the pride of her heart.

Abner had been in the family so long he had become a habit. He had grown so old that Tommie had to go out at night and fold him up and put him to bed; then in the morning he would have to go out and pry him up on to his feet again.

When Mrs. Ryan wanted to go for a drive, Tommie had to go along on his bicycle, to push the horse up the hills and hold it back going down the hills.

[61] Abner's teeth had grown so long that he looked like a wild boar. Tommie vows that he chewed all his hay for him for two years.

Finally Tommie got tired of acting as wet nurse to Abner and wanted to dispose of him some way; but Mrs. Ryan absolutely refused; she said Tommie had given her that horse "to keep" and she was going to keep him.

But finally, along towards fall, when it was time for them to start out on their winter's tour, Tommie evolved a deep, dark scheme. So he framed it up with the local livery stable man, that, as soon as they were gone, he was to dispose of Abner; sell him, if he could; if not, then give him away to some one who would treat him kindly and see that his last days were spent in peace and plenty. And, in order to cover up his duplicity, he left three letters with the livery stable man to be copied and mailed to him on stated dates.

Everything went off as planned; Abner was disposed of, and upon the first stated date the Ryans received the first letter; it stated that the distemper was rather prevalent among the best circles of Long Island Horse Society, but that as yet Abner was free from it.

Two weeks later a letter came to St. Louis stating that Abner was afflicted, but very slightly. [62]

At Milwaukee a week later the third letter came, describing in detail the last sad rites attending the death and burial of Abner.

As the weeks passed by Mrs. Ryan grew resigned and Tommie grew happy. And then came their engagement at Buffalo. Upon arrival at the theater, Tommie found eleven letters; one was from the livery stable man at home; this one he slipped into his overcoat pocket for a private reading later on. While he was reading the other ten, his turn came to rehearse his music; he slipped the ten letters into the same pocket with the livery stable man's letter, and forgot all about the whole lot.

Arriving at the hotel, Mrs. Ryan asked him for the mail and he handed the whole lot over to her. The first one that she opened was the livery stable man's. It stated that the family he had given Abner to, according to Tom's directions, had just been arrested for beating and starving Abner.

I can't tell the rest; it is too sad; but to this day, every time Mrs. Ryan thinks of Abner, she looks at Tommie, and he goes out and sits in the Park. [63]

"Thou Shalt Not Steal," said the sign in the car.

The conductor looked at it and laughed "ha ha."

And he pinched four dollars, and whistled the air,

"None but the brave deserve the fare."

After six weeks' travel the Harry Lauder Company had reached San Francisco; every night of that six weeks Hugo Morris had taken Lauder out to some restaurant to exhibit and feed him. On this first night in San Francisco, the show had been an uncommonly large success, and "Spendthrift Harry" was feeling generous. So he said to Hugo,

"Wull, Hugo, I bane thinkin'; every nicht sen we left New York you ha' taken me oot as your guest; you ha' entertained me grand; I ha' never seen anything like it in ma own country. An' I ha come to the conclusion tha' it is not richt for me to let yo' do a' the treatin'. An' so to-nicht I wi' toss yo' a penny to see who pays for the supper."

He did so, and Hugo got stuck.

[64]

Wouldn't Alan Dale feel at home in a "Pan"tages theater?

"Shun Licker."

One morning in Chicago I received a pressing invitation to come over to the police station and bail out "A Fallen Star." Upon arriving there I found the aforesaid Star sitting on the edge of his bunk holding his head in his hands and wishing it had never happened.

Like all Good Samaritans I started in delivering a Frances Murphy to him; I told him how he was ruining his health, fortune and reputation; I was really making quite a hit—with myself. Suddenly a rat scampered along the corridor by the door. The Fallen Star saw it, started, glanced sharply at me, then regained his composure. I was going ahead with my temperance lecture, when he glanced up at me a second time and said sharply, [65]

"I know what you think; you think I think I saw a rat—but I didn't."

One summer we took our Property Man up on the farm in New Hampshire with us; one day my wife was trying to describe a man that she wanted him to find over to the village:

"He is a rather stout man," she said; "has reddish hair, wears blue glasses and has locomotor ataxia."

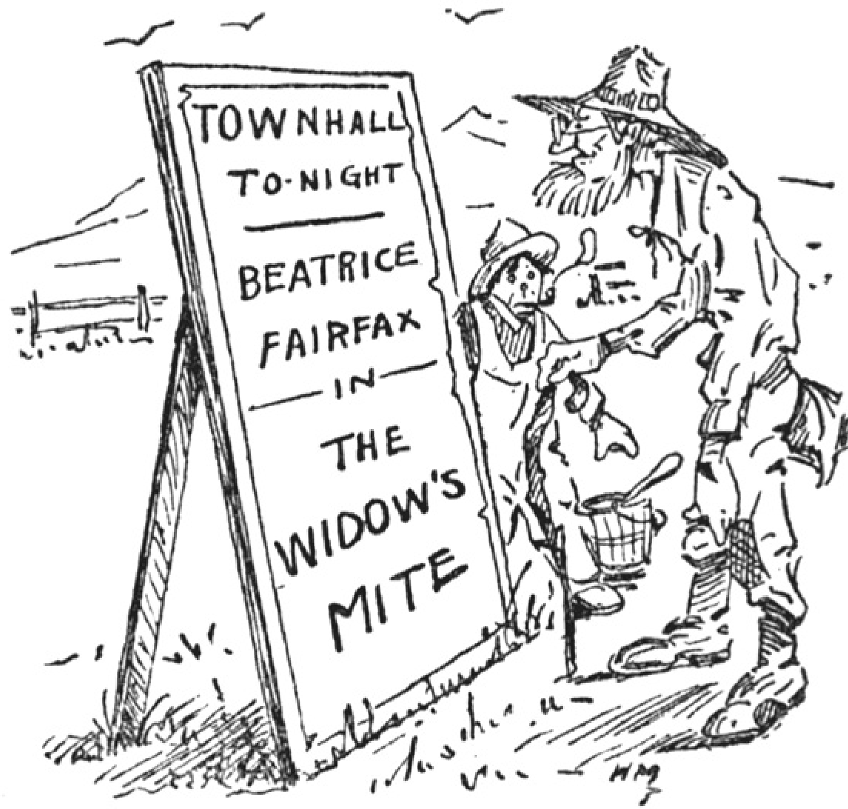
"Oh, yes," interrupted the Property Man, "I seen it; he keeps it up in George Blodgett's barn; I see it every night when I go after the cow."

The manager of a little theater in Des Moines closed an act on a Thursday; I asked him what the matter was with the actor:

"Too officious, front and back."

B. F. Keith had two theaters in Philadelphia; one on Eighth Street and one on Chestnut Street. [66] One week while we were appearing at the Chestnut Street house one of the papers had a picture of me. Not having space enough for the whole name of the theater, they cut it down so that the announcement read—

"WILL M. CRESSY. KEITH'S CHESTNUT."



The Widow's Mite.

The train had stopped at Reno for a few minutes; it was just at dusk and as the night was warm we got out and were walking up and down the platform. There was a billboard at the end of the station and the bill poster was pasting up some paper advertising the coming of "The Widow's Mite" Company. An old chap came along, stopped and looked at it, but, owing to the poor light could not quite make out what it was; so he said to the bill poster, [67]

"What show is it, Bill?"

"The Widow's Mite."

The old fellow pondered on it for a moment, then as he turned away he said, half to himself,

"Might? They *do*."

One night in San Francisco, Bonnie Thornton woke up, heard a suspicious noise in the next room, and nudged Jim, her husband.

"What's the matter?" inquired Jim.

"There is a burglar in the other room," said Bonnie.

"How do you know?"

"I can hear him."

There was a pause, then she whispered excitedly,

"*Jim, he is under the bed.*"

"No, he isn't," said Jim.

"How do you know he isn't?"

"Because I am under there."

[68]

Jack Wilson went into an auto supply store in New York and wanted to buy a pedometer for his car.

"A speedometer you mean, don't you?" said the clerk, smiling.

"No; I want a pedometer," said Jack.

"But," persisted the clerk, "a pedometer is for registering how far you have walked. You don't want that on your car."

"Humph," said Jack, "you don't know my car."

A Critic had criticized me rather severely, and then, not satisfied with that, had come around to see me and tell wherein I was wrong.

"See here," I said, "how is it that you, a newspaper man here in a small town; a man that never wrote a play; never produced a play; and never played a part in your life; how is it that you feel competent to give lessons to me, who have made a life's study of this line of work?"

"Well," he said slowly, "it is true that I never wrote, produced or took part in a play. Neither have I ever laid an egg. But I consider myself a better judge of an omelette than any hen that ever lived."

There was a kind of a R.S.V.P. in his tone but I did not have any answer to make right at the time. [69]

Far from Home and Kindred.

It was at a little station way out on the plains of Nebraska. There were exactly sixteen houses in sight. Two men met just outside our window.

"Why, hello, Henry," said one; "what are you doin' down town?"

VAUDEVILLE VS. THE LEGITIMATE

[70]

A few years ago a handsome, immaculate young man came over to me as I was sitting in the office of the Adams House in Boston and said,

"Mr. Cressy, my name is so-and-so; I am an actor; a good actor too, and I have always been very proud of my profession. My mother is one of the most popular actresses in America to-day. But last summer I had an experience that set me to thinking a little. As you were mixed up in it I am going to tell it to you.

"Last season I was out with a company that made one of those 'artistic successes,' but which did not seem to interest the public very much. As a result, when the merry springtime came around, I had a trunk full of good clothes, good press notices and I.O.U.'s from the manager, but not a dollar in money.

"But I was fortunate enough to receive an invitation from a luckier actor friend to spend a month at his summer home on the shores of Lake Sunapee, N. H. Did I went? I did went! *Quick*. [71]

"He had a beautiful home. And I was certainly some class; I had linens, flannels, yachting clothes, tennis clothes, evening clothes; in fact I had everything but money.

"One night we were sitting down on his little wharf enjoying our—no, his—cigars, and a very

pretty little launch passed by.

"'Whose launch is that?' I asked.

"'Oh, it belongs to some Vaudeville player by the name of Matthews, I believe. They live over on the other side of the lake. I don't know them.'

"Pretty soon another little launch came into the bay, cruised around the shore, and went.

"'Whose boat is that?' I inquired.

"'That belongs to a Vaudeville fellow by the name of Merritt. I don't know him.'

"A little while after a big cabin launch came into the bay and cruised slowly around. Out on the deck was a party of young folks: two of the girls were playing mandolins and they were all singing.

"'By Jove!' I exclaimed. 'That's a beauty! Whose is it?'

"'Oh, that is Will Cressy's boat,' replied my friend impatiently. 'He is another of those Vaudeville people. There are a number of them over across the lake there, but we don't know them at all.' [72]

"I sat for a while—thinking. Here I was, a recognized Broadway player of legitimate rôles, a man who could play any juvenile Shakespearian rôle without a rehearsal, a member of The Lambs and The Players Clubs. And here I was sitting out on the end of a wharf because I didn't have money enough to hire even a bum rowboat. And the three first launches that had passed by were all owned by *Vaudeville players*—whom my legitimate friend 'did not know at all.' I thought it all out and then I turned to my friend and said,

"'All right, Tom, but you want to make all you can out of this visit of mine. For the next time I come up here you won't be speaking to me.'

"'Why won't I?' he asked in surprise.

"'Because the next time I come up here I am going to be "one of those Vaudeville players." I am going to have some money in my pocket; and I am going to have a boat; and I am going to sail by here every evening and make faces at you "Legits."'" [73]

Copy of a letter received from the proprietor of a hotel in Youngstown, Ohio:

"To the Manager of the —— Company.

"I can highly recommend you to my hotel we get all the best troups our rates are as follows.

One man or one woman in one bed, $1.25.

Two men, or two women, or one man and one woman in one bed, $1.00.

And the hens lay every day.

"—— ——, Proprietor."

Hanging in each room of the Freeman House at Paterson, N. J., there used to hang a neat little frame of "House Rules." Among these rules were the following:

"Towel Service will be restricted to one clean towel for each guest daily. The face towel of the previous day may (and should) be retained for hand use the following day."

"Gentlemen will not be allowed to visit ladies in their sleeping rooms, nor ladies to visit gentlemen in their rooms *except under extenuating circumstances*."

[74]

"Why?"

A little boy playing around the stage door of the Orpheum Theater in Kansas City spoke to me as I came out one afternoon.

"Hello, Mister."

"Hello, young feller."

"Do you work in there?"

"Yes."

"Are you an actor?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

And I couldn't tell him of a single reason.

A SOCIAL SESSION

Being "An Outsider's" Views of an Elks' Social Respectfully dedicated to Archie Boyd, a Real Elk.

Have you ever, when benighted
In a strange town, been invited
   To a social of the B. P. O. of E.?
'Twas too early to be sleeping
And the "blues" were o'er you creeping
   And you wished that at home you could be.

But when once you got inside,
Got to drifting with the tide
   Of Goodfellowship that seemed to fill the room;
Was there not a better feeling
That came softly o'er you stealing
   That seemed to send the sunlight through the gloom?

There is magic in those letters;
Binding men in Friendship's fetters,
   Wondrous letters; B. P. O. of E.
There's "Benevolence," "Protection,"
Mark you well the close connection
   As they beam down from above on you and me.

And you listen to the stories
That they tell about the glories
   Of this Brotherhood you meet on every hand.

Of a hand outstretched in pity
To some Elk in foreign city,
   A Stranger, and in a stranger land.

And now the murmur is abating;
And you notice men are awaiting
   For the hour of Eleven's drawing near.
'Tis the sweetest hour of any;
Each remembered by the many,
   As they drink to "Absent Brothers," held so dear.

And now I want to ask a question,
Or rather make a slight suggestion [77]
   To you "Strangers" that these invitations reach.
When you're asked to entertain them
Do not bashfully detain them
   With that chestnut that you cannot make a speech.

You may not be a dancer;
Or your voice may have a cancer,
   And as a singer you may be an awful frost.
But if you can't do recitations
Or other fancy recreations,
   Don't consider that you are completely lost.

For somewhere in your travels
You've heard a story that unravels
   All the kinks you had tied up in your heart.
And can't you, from out the many,
Tell one, as well as any?
   It will show them that you want to do your part.

So do get up and make a try;
You can't any more than die;
   And if it's rotten, your intentions will atone. [78]
And you'll show appreciation
For the greatest aggregation
   Of "Good Fellows" that the world has ever known.

"Time All Open. Indefinite."

Several years ago the Quigley Brothers, Bob and George, were living at a boarding house on Fourteenth Street, New York. One afternoon George was standing in front of the looking glass, shaving, and at the same time practicing a new dance step. Bob was seated on the floor, writing letters, on his trunk, to different managers for "time." He stopped, looked up and said,

"How do you spell eighty, George?" [79]

"Who are you writing to?" asked George.

"Huber."

"*F-o-r-t-y.*"

All Artists, while playing "the Provinces" in England, stop at "lodgings," that is, private houses. The landlady always keeps a book, in which she has the visiting Artists write their autographs, and a line telling how much they have enjoyed her "lodgings."

E. J. Connelly got into one house where he did not feel like writing just what he thought about it; but the landlady was so insistent that finally he took the book and wrote—

"Quoth the Raven; E. J. Connelly."

One night at the Vaudeville Comedy Club the conversation drifted around to Stage Tramps. It happened that there were several of this style of the genus homo present and they began a good-natured dispute as to which had been playing tramp parts the longest.

Nat Wills went back as far as 1885. Charlie Evans said that "Old Hoss" Hoey could beat that, as he was at it in 1881. John World said they were mere novices; as he was playing a tramp part in 1874. [80]

Just then Walter Jones wandered in, and the matter was referred to him.

"Boys," he said, stifling a yawn, "you are all Pikers; Mere Johnnie Newcomers. Why, I played a tramp part in '1492.'"

BIGALOW AND THE BIG SIX

[81]

Charles Bigalow, the Hairless Comedian, has passed away; and when you stop to consider that he put in a whole season in a company with Pete Daily, Willie Collier, Lew Field, Joe Webber, John T. Kelley and Edgar Smith, you can't wonder that he passed away. I never could see how anybody lived through that season. I wouldn't put in a season with that sextette for all the money Lee Harrison has got. What one of them wouldn't think of another would; and generally they all thought of it at once.

One of the scenes that season took place on the deck of a yacht. Daily and Collier had a scene where they leaned over the rail of the boat, this rail running across the stage right down next to the footlights, and while pretending to be looking down into the sea, made fun of the leader, the members of the orchestra and the audience.

Daily would point down to a couple of chaps and say to Collier,

"Oh, look! there are a couple of sharks." [82]

"How do you know they are sharks?" Collier would ask.

"I was playing poker with them last night," Daily would reply.

Then Collier would get his eye on a party of girls.

"And look at the school of minnies!" he would say.

"Those are not minnies," Daily would say.

"What are they?"

"Rebeccas."

Now as this was a scene that didn't start anywhere nor go anywhere, there had to be some sort of an interruption occur to get them off the stage. So it was arranged that Bigalow should come rushing on calling for help; Collier and Daily ask what is the matter. Bigalow says his wife has fallen overboard and the three rush off to save her.

This version was played for several weeks; then Daily and Collier began to fear that Bigalow was beginning to become mechanical in his work so they decided to make a change in the scene; but they did not tell him so.

That night the scene went on as usual, up to the time of Bigalow's entrance. He came rushing, wild eyed and excited shouting— [83]

"Help! Help!"

But instead of turning and asking what the matter was, Collier and Daily kept right on with their kidding the audience. Again, and louder, Bigalow yelled—

"*Help! Help!*"

Collier discovered a red-headed girl down in front and called Daily's attention to the "Red Snapper" over on the right.

"*Help!* Help! Help-Help!!"

Daily called Collier's attention to the marcel waves beating on a fellow's shoulder over in the left-hand box.

Bigalow was getting madder every minute. "Oh, say, for the love of Lee Shubert, come and help a feller, will you?"

Collier pointed to a man in the front row and said, "Look at the gold fish down there! See his gold teeth?"

By this time Bigalow was so mad he couldn't speak at all; so he just stood and glared at the other two. Having accomplished their desires, Daily now took Collier by the arm and they started off stage. Just as they were about to exit, Collier stopped, held up his hand, listened a moment, then said, [84]

"I thought I heard something!"

They both put their hands to their ears and listened. Then Collier turned and saw Bigalow, looked at him a moment and said,

"Er—I beg pardon! Did you speak?"

Bigalow just looked at him angrily.

"Something about 'help,' was it not?" continued Collier.

Still no reply.

"Help? Help?" said Daily, briskly; "what help do you want?"

"Oh, my wife fell overboard—an hour ago," said Bigalow in tones of disgust.

"Is it possible?" said Daily; and, taking Collier's arm they walked off unconcernedly, leaving Bigalow there alone.

For a full minute he stood there, looking off after them, too angry and disgusted to speak. And then, at the top of his voice he yelled after them—

"Well, say, you know I don't give a damn either."

And walked off.

[85]

Upon another occasion several of the Webber & Fields Stars were engaged to appear at a function given by some millionaire up on Fifth Avenue. They were to meet at the theater, dress there, and go up to the house in taxicabs. As usual, Bigalow was late. But as this always happened nobody bothered about it. They simply got dressed and went on their way, leaving him to come as best he could.

But, in order that he should not feel neglected, they fixed things up for him. In rummaging through his trunk Daily had come across a can of burnt cork, that he had used in a minstrel show at St. James, L. I., the previous summer. So while Collier wrote a note for Bigalow, telling him that at the last minute it had been decided that everybody should "black up," Daily daubed some of the burnt cork around the wash bowl and on to his and Collier's towels. This done they all went up to the house where they were to appear.

Can you see the next picture? Daily, Collier, Kelly, and the others all in immaculate evening dress, sitting in the host's drawing room, chatting with the host and a few friends, when the door burst open and Bigalow dashed in—as black as burnt cork would make him! [86]

Poor Charlie. May he rest in peace. And that is more than he would ever have done in that company.

There was an English musical act playing over here last summer. The wife carried the money. She had to; if she hadn't there wouldn't have been any to carry. She had a time lock on the pocketbook and the time did not expire until they got back to England. She had been brought up under a free trade government and she did not like our protective tariff prices.

Hubby had one hat; a straw one. As Hubby had red hair and the hat was a dirty white, he looked like a fried egg in it. For weeks he had been trying to get a requisition on the treasury for a new one. But wife had vetoed the appropriation every time.

Finally Hubby had a scheme. He went to Joe Apdale, the animal trainer, for assistance.

"Now, Joe," he said, "Hi'll tell you wot we'll do; Hi will go down hand set on the hedge of the dock

there, hover the ocean. Hand you come along hand say, ''Ullo, old chap!' and slap me on the back. Hi'll jump, and the bloomin' 'at will fall hin the water." [87]

"All right," said Joe; "set your stage."

Hubby went down to the edge of the wharf, leaning over and looking at the water below.

Joe sauntered down that way, saw him, started, went over to him, said, "Hullo, old chap!" and slapped him on the back.

Hubby started—and lost his glasses into the ocean, while the hat remained firmly on his head.

The Four Blank Sisters were playing the Columbia at Cincinnati; Mama Blank traveled with the act; Mama was about five feet long and four wide; and she was built too far front; she was at least fifteen inches out over the building line.

On this particular night the German Consul was to be in front to see the girls. Coram, the English Ventriloquist, was doing his act in "One." The girls came next. Mama spied a peek hole in the curtain; this peek hole was about the center of the stage. Mama said, "So; I should see if the Consul iss dere already yet."

So she went to the peek hole; it was just about two inches too high; so, in order to make it, Mama had to stand on tiptoe; this change in her "point of support" threw her center of gravity still further front, so that by the time she got her eyes up to within a foot of the peek hole, her front piazza was right up against the curtain; but she didn't know it; she kept stepping forward to get nearer to the peek hole, and her stomach kept shoving it further and further away. [88]

Meanwhile she was crowding poor Coram, out in front, further and further into the footlights. Finally, in desperation, he brought his elbow back against the curtain with a whack. It struck poor Mama where she was the most prominent, and knocked every bit of breath out of her. With a groan she collapsed, and it took the four daughters all the rest of the evening to get her pumped up again.

Hanging on the walls of the old S. & C. House in Seattle were the following rules:

If you don't like the Laundry, tell the Property Man, and he will put a washtub and clothes line in your room.

If you don't like the way the stage is run, join the Union and run it yourself.

[89]

If you don't like the Manager, tell him, and he will resign.

If your act don't go well here it is because you are over their heads.

In case of fire all Artists will please gather in the center of the stage and wait orders from the Stage Manager.

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[90]

"Good Morning."

NEVER AGAIN

Harry Fox, with his two little pardners, the Millership Sisters, Flora and Lillian ("Lillian is the one in yellow"), were playing at the New Orleans Orpheum. As it was Mardi Gras week and everything was crowded, Harry "doubled up" for the week with a Contortionist by the name of Marseilles, and they took a large room with two beds in it.

It was Harry's first visit to New Orleans, and his first meeting with the Contortionist. But the Contortionist was well acquainted, and after the show Monday night he took Harry out to meet some of his friends. Harry says he never met a man who knew so many bartenders in his life. The result was that when Harry woke up in the morning he did not remember going to bed. [91]

Now all the beds in New Orleans have mosquito nets over them; this was also a new wrinkle on Harry. And when he woke up it happened that his face was right close up to this mosquito netting as it hung down at the side of the bed. He opened his eyes, but he could not see; he winked several times and shook his head; but it was no use; everything was blurred to him; the fearful thought came to him,

"I am going blind; everything looks misty and blurred to me."

Cold chills began to run up and down his back at the horror of it; he seemed paralyzed; he could not move. And then, from somewhere out in that blur of misty light a voice said,

"Good morning."

Harry peered closer out through the mist before him, and after a moment's search he gave a yell and started upright in the bed with a scream of fright. For there, standing in the center of the room was the Contortionist, "limbering up." He was standing with his toes pointing toward Harry, but he had bent himself over backwards until his head was way down between his legs, with his face sticking out through in front, looking at Harry with a cheerful grin. [92]

This was at eleven forty-five; at twelve ten Harry was over at the office of a justice of the peace, taking the pledge.

THE ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT [93]

Some folks are of an artistic nature; some folks are satisfied if things are useful, while others like to have them ornamental as well. A lady friend of ours, up in New Hampshire, belongs to this latter class. She likes to see things about the house look neat and pretty.

One of the things that grated on her artistic sense was the bath tub; it held water all right, and it was clean enough; but it was a plain, unpainted tin affair and she shuddered every time she looked at it. Every time she took a bath she shuddered twice.

One evening while reading *The Ladies' Home Journal*, she came across the heading—"How to Enamel a Tin Bath Tub." "Ah ha! At last!" She read the article; then she read it again; it was simple enough; she could do it; she knew she could. And she also knew that if it was done, she would *have* to do it; for Hubbie didn't have the Artistic Temperament worth a cent. He wouldn't have cared if the bath tub was made of old rubber boots; he didn't use it much anyway. [94]

So the next morning she took the clipping from the paper down to the paint store, bought a can

of enamel, a bottle of varnish and a paint brush, and after dinner went after that bath tub. First she scrubbed it thoroughly; then she dried it; and then she put on the white enamel; a good job too. But as she stood back and looked at it, it did not quite fill the bill; it was rather thin; the tin showed through in spots. Well, if one coat was good, two coats ought to be better; so she went back and put on another coat. It was a great improvement; wonderful, in fact; a third coat would make it look like the finest marble; so on went a third coat.

The next thing, according to the printed directions, was the coat of varnish. Now the man that wrote those directions probably took it for granted that any one using them would know enough to let one coat dry before putting on another; so he did not mention that fact in his directions. And so now, according to directions, our lady friend, not content with putting on three coats of enamel, all at one sitting, proceeded to put on the coat of varnish.

The directions then were to fill the bath tub with cold water and let it set for twenty-four hours. [95]

As this was on a Wednesday, and of course there could be no use for the tub before Saturday, she let the water set until that time, in order to let the paint get "set" good and firm.

Saturday night she went in and let the water out and after admiring the white and gleaming tub for awhile she proceeded to take her bath. Usually, on account of her hatred for the old tin tub, she made this ceremony as short as possible; but to-night, sitting there in this beautiful white tub, she lingered; she could almost close her eyes and imagine herself Cleopatra reclining in her alabaster bath, waited on by slaves; she reached up and got a bottle of perfume from a shelf over her head and perfumed the waters. And she decided that in addition to the regular Saturday night performance she should hereafter play a Wednesday matinée.

But all good things come to an end; and finally she decided to arise; with a sigh she placed her hands on the side of the tub and lifted; with a scream she took her hands off the side of the tub and settled back, and felt. She discovered that this "good thing" had "come to an end" in more [96] ways than one; and that as far as she was able to discover "the end" and "the good thing" were liable to remain together indefinitely; for she had settled into that mess of paint, enamel and varnish, until she and that bath tub had formed an attachment that nothing short of a doctor or a plumber could separate.

For purely personal reasons she did not want to call for either the doctor or the plumber. And much less did she want to explain her predicament to her husband. She always had been in the habit of facing her troubles bravely; but here was a situation where this rule was hard to follow. Another rule she had always tried to follow was to put her troubles behind her; but, although she was now following this rule, somehow it brought no relief.

Meanwhile, while she sat there thinking all these things over, the paint was setting harder than ever; ditto the lady. Something must be done; and she had got to do it herself. So she began a sort of rocking movement; back and forth, side to side, she twisted and writhed. She realized, more than ever, how much she had become attached to that old tin bath tub; she realized how it [97] was going to pain her to break away from it; sometimes she doubted as to whether she *could* go away and leave it; she wondered if she would have to go through life wearing that darned old tin bath tub.

But she kept weaving back and forth and from side to side and little by little, inch by inch, she could feel *something* giving way; she was not sure, yet, whether it was the tub, the paint or herself; but something was giving way. And at last, with one agonizing jerk, she broke away and arose to her feet. And then she turned and looked down into the tub to see what had happened; and what she saw there brought a sigh of relief to her lips; for she discovered that she was still intact; and the tub was all there; what had given way was the paint; and gleaming up at her from the bottom of the bath tub, like a full moon through the clouds, was a bright and shining circle of the tin, free from all encumbrance in the shape of paint or varnish.

As I say, she gave a sigh of relief; but almost instantly this sigh of relief was followed by a gasp of dismay. *If the paint was gone from the tub, where was it?*

Again she discovered that, although her troubles were all behind her, they were still with her. [98] Frantically grasping soap, scrubbing brush and towel she tried to erase the foul stain from her character. But after five minutes' frantic labor she discovered that her trouble was too deep seated for soap and water.

She tried toilet water; witch hazel; bay rum; listerine; any and everything in reach; and the villain still pursued her. Every moment was getting precious now; Hubbie was about due to come home, and if Hubbie ever found out about this—well—life would be one grand sweet laugh to him "from thence henceonward forever." Hastily wrapping her bathrobe about her she went to the telephone and called up the paint store, and in frantic tones asked the paint man what she could use to remove paint from anything. The paint man asked what the paint was on. She said it was on her fingers; and it was—some of it. The man told her to use spirits of turpentine. And she did.

When the lady recovered consciousness—but what's the use; this was told to me in confidence anyway, and I promised not to say a word about it. So I won't.

[99]

We were calling on some German friends of ours in Minneapolis. Their daughter's husband had

just purchased an automobile and the old folks were all fussed up over it. It was all they could think or talk about. Finally Mother asked me which I considered the best make of car.

"Well," I said, "it is rather a peculiar thing, but our best American cars all seem to have names beginning with the letter P. There is the Pierce Arrow, the Peerless and the Packard—"

"Ja," said Mother eagerly, "and the Puick."

Oh You Pinkie!

"Miss Pink Bump, of Hickory Grove, is visiting at the home of George Flemming."—*Milledgville (Ill.) Free Press.*

The "Bobbie" Richardsons had just moved from Kansas City to Kalamazoo. They had brought their old colored cook with them, but had had to secure a "local talent" nurse-maid for the two little girls. On the afternoon of their second day in their new home two ladies dropped in to pay their respects to their new neighbors. Mrs. Bobbie hurriedly sent the new nurse-maid upstairs to prepare little Alice and Mary for inspection and went in to receive her visitors.

Everything was progressing finely, when all at once a clear, shrill little voice came floating down the stairway—

"I don't care! company or no company, I will *not* be washed in spit."

(Wanted: A Nurse-maid. Baptist preferred.)

Tom McRae is the leading lawyer of Prescott, Ark. Before the War the McRaes were large slaveowners; and to this day if one of the colored people gets into any trouble he immediately comes to "Mars' Tom" to help him out. One day last summer the village barber, a big, sporty kind of a young colored chap, came in to Tom's office and said,

"Mars' Tom, I reckons as how I'll have to have you get me a devose frum dat wife of mine."

"A divorce? What are you talking about? If you ever get a divorce from Caroline you will starve to death. You have got one of the best wives in this town."

"No, suh, no, suh, Mars' Tom. Youall don't know dat woman. Dat woman is de mos' 'stravigant woman in the whole State of Arkansas. Mo'nin', noon an' night dat woman is pesterin' me fo' money. Dollar hyar—fo' bits dere—two bits fo' dis and a dime fo' that. I don' dare go home no mo'. No, suh, de only thing that is goin' do me no good is a devose."

"Well, I am astonished," said Tom. "I never dreamed Caroline was that kind of a woman. What does she do with all this money?"

"God knows, Mars' Tom. I hain't never give her none yet."

We were playing in New York. Preceding us on the bill were the Martin Brothers, playing for twenty-two minutes on Xylophones. After the show a friend of ours from Hartford, Conn., joined us at lunch. We were discussing the show and finally he said,

"Will, do you know I could live a long time, and be perfectly happy, if I never heard one of those picket-fence soloists again."

My wife was drinking a glass of iced tea; he kept glancing at it and finally he said,

"Do you know, I can understand anybody drinking that stuff *at home*; or if somebody had given it to you. But the idea of anybody *buying* it! and *paying* for it."

Solomon and David were merry kings of old,
About whose pleasant fancies full many a tale is told.
But when old age o'ertook them, with its many, many qualms,
King Solomon wrote the Proverbs and King David wrote the
Psalms.

In a restaurant window on Thirteenth Street, St. Louis:

"Small Steak, 20 cents. Extra Small Steak, 25 cents."

In a bakery window in Omaha:

"Homemade pize fifteen cents."

"Married: At East Walpole, Mass., Jan. 27th, 1912, Robert P. Bass, Governor of New Hampshire, and Miss Edith Harlan Bird."

(The members of the New Hampshire Fish and Game League will now arise and sing: "What Shall the Harvest Be.")

[103]

The hardest luck story I have run across lately was a fellow playing a moving picture house in Salt Lake City who had a check come to him by mail. The check was for twenty-five dollars; and the only man in town who could identify him was a man he owed thirty dollars.

I see there is an act playing in Vaudeville this year by the name of Doolittle & Steel. Make your own jokes.

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[104]

HOW MIKE DONLIN SHRUNK

The management of the Majestic Theater in Chicago always have a small sign at the side of the stage announcing the headline act for the following week. Upon this particular occasion this sign announced the coming of Mabel Hite and Mike Donlin.

There was a chap sitting down in front with his girl, who wanted her to think that he knew everybody and everything in Vaudeville. You know, one of those people who call all actors and actresses by their first names, and can tell you (incorrectly) all about their private affairs.

Finally it came time for Melville & Higgins to appear; and in order for you to appreciate this incident, I will mention that Mr. Higgins is built on the same general principle as a string bean; he has been known to conceal himself behind an umbrella.

[105] Now when it is time for this act to come on, all the lights in the house are thrown out, and a spot light is thrown on the stage over near the entrance from which they are to come on. It so happened on this occasion that the light just covered the sign announcing "*Mabel Hite & Mike Donlin*" but did not light up the words "Next Week."

The Bureau of Mis-information down in front, with his lady-love, had just started to look at his program when the lights went out, so that he had been unable to make out who came next. Now he looked up and saw that sign for the first time—"Mabel Hite & Mike Donlin."

"Why, I thought they were here next week," he said. "Now you will see something good."

Just then Melville & Higgins walked out on the stage. The chap down in front started to applaud, then his jaw dropped, and he gasped out,

"*My God, how Mike has fallen away.*"

The manager of a small Moving Picture and Vaudeville Theater in Lincoln, Nebraska, was watching the opening show of the week. A Horizontal Bar came on, two men, one a straight acrobat, the other a clown. As soon as the act was over the manager went back and fired the clown.

[106] "Fired?" said the clown in amazement; "what for?"

"Because you can't do nothin'; you missed every trick you went after; t'other feller is all right; he can work."

Joe Keaton, "the Man With the Table, a Wife and Three Kids," was in three hotel fires inside of fourteen months. But he always managed to get his little family out safe. In addition to doing that, he always managed to save something; and that something was the same every time. When they had all got down the fire escapes, and had reached a place of safety, Joe would find clutched tightly in his hand—*a cake of soap*.

One night Ezra Kendal left his wife at the elevator in the Union Hotel in Chicago, saying that he would be right up in a few minutes. Two hours later he came up to the room.

"Where have you been all this time, Ezra?" asked his wife.

"I met a couple of Interlocutors downstairs, and I have been doing End Man to them," said Ezra. [107]

It Isn't the Coat that makes the Man.

Fred Niblo and his wife (Josephine Cohan) were playing at Proctor's 23d Street Theater in New York. Fred always wore a Prince Albert coat in his act. On this day he had considerable trouble in getting his necktie to suit him. Finally he got arranged, slipped on the Prince Albert, buttoned it, took one final look into the glass, and started for the door.

"Where are you going, dear?" asked Mrs. N. in that wifely tone that always makes a man shrink.

"Why, I am going out to do my act," said Fred. "Why?" [108]

"Oh, nothing," said Mrs. N., "only I thought perhaps you would want to put some trousers on."

A NIGHT IN BOHEMIA

[109]

When George W. Day got married he took awful chances. Well, of course, we all do, for that matter; but George took more than usual, for he married into a Scotch Presbyterian family, and anybody knows that Actors and Scotch Presbyterians were not originally created for Affinities. But George, in addition to being an Actor, is a Musician, an Artist and a Corking Good Fellow, and the wife's folks, after taking him on probation for ten or fifteen years, finally decided that they would accept him into the family.

Up to two or three years ago, Mother-in-law was the only one of the family who had visited Mr. and Mrs. George in their New York home; the rest of the family had continued to reside in Peaceful Valley, or wherever it was, and hope for the best for that poor erring daughter who had fallen victim to the wiles of "a Actor." But finally Mr. and Mrs. George and Mother-in-law had [110] persuaded Mother-in-law's two sisters and one of the sister's husbands to come down to New York and visit the Days.

Uncle Abinidab was a tall, ministerial appearing man, "ninety years of age, and whiskers down to here"; he dressed in a black pair of trousers, a black Prince Albert coat, black tie, and a black

slouch hat.

The two aunts wore the black silk dresses that their father had brought from India sixty years ago. Mother-in-law was also dressed in black.

George worked in as many "neutral tints" on his own wardrobe as he could, trying to "tone down" to fit the occasion. The ice box was used for the sole purpose of storing food; George's cigars, pipes and tobacco were locked up in an old trunk in the storeroom. The family Bible was hunted up, dusted, and placed in a conspicuous position on the centertable in the front room. George carefully censored his drawings which were stuck up on the walls all over the house; and any lady who did not have on a Buffalo overcoat and rubber boots was placed out in the trunk with the pipes.

The week that followed was "one round of gayety" for the folks. George walked off over five pounds showing them the Brooklyn bridge, Central Park, Grant's tomb, Fifth Avenue, Fleischman's bread line, Macy's store, the post-office, Tammany Hall, and every church in the city. [111]

It took them the first five days to play this route. And then on Friday night Mother-in-law horrified George by informing the others that on the next day she and George would show them Coney Island. By going out early in the morning, and in the evenings, and rehearsing his day's route in advance, George had managed so far to conduct his little Company around the city without running them into any "High Life." But he knew that if that crowd ever struck Coney Island on a good busy afternoon, his hopes of becoming a favorite son-in-law were gone.

But Mother insisted, so the next morning he took Deacon Abinidab and the three "sisters in black" and started for Coney Island. Although I have examined him closely on this point, he does not seem to have any very clear idea yet as to where they went that day, or what they did. All he can say is that "it was awful." They insisted on Hot Dogs, Pop Corn, Peanut Brittle, Dreamland, Luna Park, and all the rest; they went through the Old Mill, and they made George come down the "Bump the Bumps," "Shoot the Shoots" and such other exhilarating devices as they did not dare to tackle themselves. [112]

They had supper in Henderson's, watching the Vaudeville show on the stage as they ate. They watched the fireworks, and it was ten o'clock before George could get them started toward home. When he got them on the train, homeward bound, he heaved a sigh of mighty relief, but afterwards regretted wasting a sigh of that sort in that way.

Arriving in New York, they were wending their way up Broadway, near Twenty-ninth Street; Uncle Abinidab had been sort of hanging back for a block or two, looking here and there in a searching kind of way, and finally he took George's arm and said confidentially: "George, laddie, do ye ken a place where we can get a wee nippie?" George didn't know whether the inquiry was on the level, or whether it was a sort of "feeler" to find out how he stood on the temperance question. But he decided to "play safety" so he stated promptly that he did not know of such a place in New York City.

But Mother! Ah ha! That mother-in-law, that since Creation's dawn has been abused and vilified, that mother-in-law, that through all those years George had feared and dreaded; that mother-in-law, at whose approach he had hidden his pipe and tobacco; that mother-in-law that he had never approached without a clove and a stage fright. Now, it was she who spoke up like Horatio at the Bridge and said: [113]

"*I know a place.*"

George was stunned; speechless; if the statue of Horace Greeley just passed, had spoken those words, he couldn't have been more surprised. He looked at her in amazement and asked her what "place" she knew. "Right down this street here," she said; "come on."

And if you guessed a thousand years, you never would guess where that blessed old lady steered those innocent Presbyterians. Into "*Bohemia*," one of the swiftest, all-night restaurants and dance halls in New York City. Neither Mr. or Mrs. George has ever had the courage to this day to ask how on earth Mother came to even know of the existence of such a place, much less of its locality.

Down Twenty-ninth Street they marched; Mother in the lead, the two sisters next, then Uncle Abinidab "with whiskers down to here," and last, and making himself the "least," he could, with his two hundred and seventy pounds, came George, wondering what the finish would be. The Orchestra, one of those Austrian Table-Dote-with-Red-Wine Affairs, consisting of half a dozen crazy fiddlers and a girl beating one of those woven wire mattress pianos with a couple of sticks, was whooping it up for all they were worth; the loud shrill voices of the women and the hoarse voices of the men, the shouts of the waiters and the clatter of dishes made a very babel of sound. [114]

And then the Presbyterian convention walked in.

The crowd gave one look—and every sound stopped. The Orchestra died away in a discordant wail; the guests stopped, with glasses raised half way to their lips; the waiters stood as if petrified. Old Bohemia had seen many strange sights in its career; but no stranger cavalcade had ever marched in through its portals than this "Peaceful Valley Quartette." The three aged women, dressed in all the simplicity of their village home; Uncle Abinidab, tall, austere and with the snow-white whiskers, and behind them, a big, smooth-faced, broad-shouldered young chap that [115]

looked like a Plain Clothes Man in charge.

Four pale, anemic, shifty-eyed young fellows who were seated at a table near the door, took one look at George, reached under their chairs for their hats, and faded away through the door into the night. Mother, with a happy smile, piloted her little brood over to an empty table, and with a graceful gesture, motioned them to be seated. Then, with expectant faces, they all looked at George. Every eye in the place was still focussed on them. The silence and air of expectation which pervaded the room was so tense that everybody jumped when George mustered up courage at last to stammer,

"Er-er-what'll you have?"

The silence grew still more tense as everybody leaned forward to hear the answer. Uncle Abinidab glanced at the sisters nervously, then cleared his throat and said:

"Er-er-hem; I think I'll take a wee drop of whiskey."

There was a deep sigh of relief went up from the whole room, a sigh which swelled to an almost articulate cry of joy as Mother-in-law chimed in, "I think I will too." [116]

The two sisters voted with the majority and George made it unanimous.

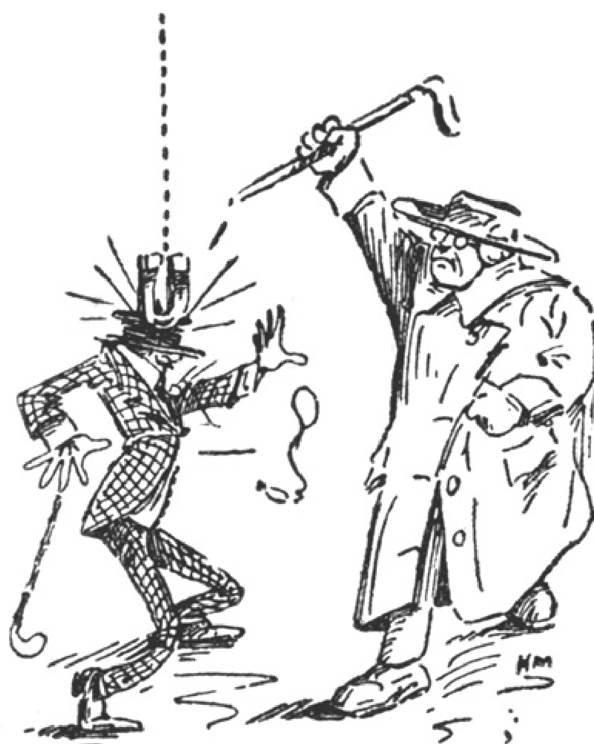
Every person in the room, guests, musicians and waiters, as if they could not really believe it yet, watched the drinks brought, and disposed of. Then Mother arose and majestically and calmly led her little flock to the door and out on to the street again. As the parade turned on to Broadway, George looked back, and every doorway and window in Bohemia was crowded with faces. And as the cavalcade passed from sight the Orchestra struck up their wild discordant clamor, the voices and the laughter broke out again, and Bohemia became herself again.

One day in June three sweet country Maids
  Decided at home no more they'd reside.
So all three together sat out on a tramp
  And the tramp died.

I asked the old Gate Tender at a park in Columbus, Ohio, what time the electric cars left for the city.

"Quarter past—half past—quarter of and 'at,'" he replied.

[117]



"Vengeance Is Mine."

Gene Ellsworth (Ellsworth & Burt) was playing the part of Dunston Kirk in the play of *Hazel Kirk*. At the end of the last act Dunston, who is supposed to be blind, strikes down the villain with his cane. On this occasion, just as 'Gene had his cane raised to strike him, a horseshoe fell from the

flies above, struck the villain square on the top of the head, and knocked him cold. 'Gene saw the climax of his scene going, but quick as a flash raised his hand on high and said solemnly,

"Struck down by the hand of an outraged Providence." [118]

One Sure (?) Fire Revolver.

James J. Corbett was indulging in one of his semi-annual attacks of acting, and it came along to a place where the villain was to say—

"Then die, you dog," and shoot Jim, who fell, wounded, to the floor.

Upon this occasion the villain spoke the line, pulled the trigger, and Jim fell. *But the gun did not go off.* Instantly Jim raised himself on his elbow and said in agonized tones—

"My God; shot with an air gun."

Mrs. Filson (Filson & Errol) had lost a ring in the Pullman car; after quite a search the porter found it and brought it to her.

"My Goodness, Lady," he said, "but you certainly is mighty lucky; there was some acters in this cyar las' night, an' ef one of *them* had found it—*good-by ring*." [119]

BREAKS

[120]

Marshall P. Wilder had just come off the stage at Shea's in Buffalo. His act had not gone at all to suit him, and he stood shaking his head and wondering what was the matter. A big, fat acrobat who was closing the show noticed him and said,

"What's the trouble, Kid?"

"I don't know," said Wilder, "but I can't seem to make them laugh."

"Augh, don't you worry about that; you ain't supposed to; you draw 'em in; *we'll* make 'em laugh."

A girl who was opening the show at Keith's Providence house stood in the wings watching the Four Fords in their wonderful dancing act. At the end they came off, panting and gasping from their violent exercise. The girl watched them a moment pityingly, then said,

"Tough work, ain't it? I used to do all that stuff; but I found there wasn't any money in it, and I cut it out." [121]

"Give 'Em the Gravy."

Robert Hilliard came off the stage at the Fifth Avenue Theater in New York; the house was small and he had not gone very well. A big, rough, knockabout comedian stood waiting his own turn to go on, and seeing Hilliard looked worried, said to him,

"What's the matter, Bo?" [122]

"They did not seem to care much for my offering," said Hilliard.

"Why sure they don't; you don't hand it to 'em right. Give 'em the Gravy, Cull, give 'em the Gravy. *I do.*"

William Hawtry had made his début in Vaudeville and his friends at the Lambs' Club were asking him how he liked it.

"Well," said Mr. Hawtry, "I must say I found the audience very responsive; and the theater employés were very kind; but I met some of the strangest people, among the Artists, that I ever saw."

Upon being asked wherein they were strange, he replied,

"Why, there is a fellow dressing with me who has the largest diamonds and the dirtiest underwear I ever saw."

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NEW YORK AND CANANDAIGUA [123]

We were touring in our auto from New Hampshire out to Buffalo. For several days everything had gone well. And then, within ninety miles of Buffalo, everything went wrong at once. I had had two blow-outs the previous day, and had bought two casings. Then, just as we were coming into Canandaigua my whole transmission went. This was ten or twelve years ago, and the nearest thing Canandaigua had to a garage was a tin shop. I got the car pulled in under a wagon shed and put in eighteen hours building a new transmission out of an old copper pump and a rainspout.

Buying the two casings had "broke" me, and now I had a two-days' hotel bill for four people, and nothing to pay it with. Fine! But with my most winning way I went up to the desk and said to the old landlord,

"Mr. Landlord, I am in rather an embarrassing fix. I owe you a bill and I have no money." [124]

The landlord was a quaint, silent old fellow, with thick glasses and a very disconcerting stare. He now used this stare hard and said nothing. So I hastened to add—

"Of course I have got money, but I haven't got it with me; and I shall have to give you a check."

He just gave a little sniff and turned his head and glanced up at a framed card above the desk which read—

NO CHECKS CASHED.

"But," I hastened to add, "I'll tell you what I would like to have you do. You telegraph, at my expense of course, to Mr. Murphy, of the Genesee Hotel, or Mr. Shea, at Shea's Theater, and I think they will assure you that Will Cressy's check is good."

He sniffed again and looked at me through those big glasses, and I began to get rattled in earnest. There must be some way; I must have something that will convince this man I am not a crook. I have it! My Identification Card from my insurance company. Hastily getting out my pocketbook I showed him this card. [125]

"I can show you all right that I am Will Cressy. See? Here is my picture; and how heavy I am; and how tall; and the color of my eyes; and hair; and my signature."

Anxiously I looked up at him again. And I hadn't touched him. I began to get desperate. Frantically I searched through my pocketbook for *something* that would show my identity. I dragged out my different Club Cards.

"See!" I said, "I belong to the Lambs' Club, in New York; and the Friars; and the Green Room Club; and the Touring Club of America; and the Vaudeville Comedy Club."

I stopped; almost tearfully I looked at him. I could do no more. He sniffed again, shifted his weight from one foot to the other and said,

"You're a hell of a feller when you're home, ain't ye?"

As I was going to the theater in Indianapolis I passed two ladies who were busily discussing a third.

"You know she can't hear very well," said one. [126]

"No, I see she can't," said the other.

"Bobbie" Richardson was not feeling very well, and for the past four nights had been taking a couple of pills each night. The fifth night Mrs. Bobbie happened to glance over toward him just as he was about to take his two pills.

"Bobbie," she said with a gasp, "what are you doing?"

"I am taking a couple of my pills," replied Bobbie.

"My Goodness," said Mrs. Bobbie, "those are not pills; that is a bottle I gave Alice to keep her beads in."

Julius Tannen and his wife were—er—talking it over. That is, *she* was; Julius was playing he was the audience. Finally Julius got an opening and said,

"Say, what would you think if you and I ever thought the same about something?"

Quick as a flash Mrs. Julius answered,

"I should know I was wrong."

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[127]

The Band of Hope.

LET US HOPE

"The Normal School Band uniforms will consist of a coat and cap at first, with the probable addition of trousers at a later date."—*Kalamazoo Gazette.*

At the Seelback Hotel in Louisville, Ky., I asked the colored waiter if they served a table d'hôte meal in the morning. He hesitated for a moment, then picked up the bill of fare, studied on it for a moment, then said,

"Er—no, suh; we haven't got table doe meal, but we have got oat meal."

[128]

I saw a wedding announcement in a Kansas City paper the other day and I didn't blame the girl a bit. Her name was Leafy Gose.

Al Fields' (Fields & Lewis) mother and father came from Berlin. Father teaches stuttering people not to stutter. One day he was busily beating time for a pupil to talk to, when the bell rang; he went to the door and a boy handed in a bundle, saying,

"Frank Brothers."

A couple of days afterwards Mother said to him,

"Papa, haf you seen a pair of slippers come by der house for Mama?"

No, Papa had seen no slippers.

"It iss funny iss," said Mama. "Two days ago yet I buy me a pair of slippers from Frank Brothers; unt they say they vill sent them by a boy to the house."

"From who iss it?" asked Papa anxiously.

"From Frank Brothers."

"Gott in Himmel; I thought the boy said 'Frankfurters'; they are the ice box in."

[129]

Al and his father were sitting at the breakfast table.

"Where iss it that you go next veek?" asked Papa.

"Birmingham," said Al shortly.

At this moment Mama came in from the kitchen, and overheard.

"No, Allie," she said quickly, "it iss not the ham vat iss burning; it iss the eggs."

In the "George Washington, Jr.," Company there was a young lady who laid great stress on the refined atmosphere in which she had been brought up. Everything in her home had been just a little more refined than any one else had ever enjoyed. One day at the table the subject of coffee-drinking came up; some thought it harmful, others did not; finally Carter De Haven asked this young lady what she thought about it.

"Well," she said, in her precise way, "I don't think it hurts anybody. I know Papa always drank five and six saucersful every morning, and it never hurt him."

THE OLD SHIP OF ZION

[130]

Old Dennie O'Brion had looked upon the wine when it was red in the cup so long that he was about down and out; no one would hire him any more, even in the most menial capacity. His poor, hard-working wife had at last taken the pledge not to support him any longer in idleness, so it was up to Dennie to do something desperate. The most desperate thing he could think of was to swear off. So before the priest he took a solemn vow not to touch a drop of liquor for one year.

And he managed to retain his seat on the wagon splendidly—for thirty-six hours.

On the evening of the second day Mrs. O'Brion, in appreciation of his desperate efforts to conquer the demon rum, took Dennie and their twelve-year-old-son Mickie to the theater. It was a rollicking, up-to-date, musical comedy. The boys and the girls of the chorus at the rise of the curtain gayly quaffed huge quantities of imaginary wine from near-golden goblets. The Comedian [131] was a jolly, jovial souse who never, during the first two acts, got sober but once, and then got into trouble by it.

The first act took place in a Parisian café, where the chorus men were all American millionaires buying wine for the Chorus Ladies.

The second act took place in a brewery, where the Comedian fell into a beer vat and was only saved by the number of champaign corks he had in his pockets, which acted as life preservers.

'Twas a fine play to take a man to who was only thirty-six hours on the water wagon.

At the end of the second act, when the Comedian had just been rescued from the beer vat, Dennie scrambled to his feet and began climbing for the aisle.

"Where are ye's goin', Dinnie?" asked Mrs. O'Brion anxiously.

"Let go me tail," says Dennie. "Me foot's asleep; I must get out." And tearing his coat-tail away he hurried up the aisle.

"Mickie, darlin'," said Mrs. O'Brion to her young hopeful, "follow your father! Don't let him get into a saloon! And if he does, stick to him! Bring him home! Hurry, now."

Mickie hurried out and caught the old man just as he was making the swinging doors. [132]

"Here, Father, Father, come out av that!" he cried, catching Dennie by that muchly pulled coat-tail.

"Oh, to h—— wit you!" says Dennie. "Go back to your mother!"

"But, Father, you promised the priest! You took a solemn vow not to touch liquor for a whole year."

"What av it?" says Dennie.

"Well, the year is not up," says Mickie.

"G'an!" says Dennie. "Go back to school! read your program! Look," and Dennie pointed to the program which he still clasped in his hand; "read that! '*Two years elapses between the second and third acts.*'"

Leaving the dumbfounded Mickie there on the sidewalk, Dennie hurried into the saloon; but he did not hurry out. Meanwhile Mrs. O'Brion went home and Mickie waited at the door.

An hour later Dennie came out—endways. With a number nine boot just behind him. Mickie tenderly assisted his father to his feet and started him homeward. Dennie had now reached the [133]

crying stage; nobody loved him; he thought he should commit suicide; in the morning.

Now it so happened that on this night the Salvation Army were conducting an all-night session at their barracks. Dennie and Mickie had to pass these barracks on their way home. The lights and the music caught Dennie's wandering attention, and he insisted on going in. Mickie tried to tell him that it was no place for him, a good Catholic, but Dennie shook off his detaining hands and staggered into the hall, down the center aisle, tripped over an umbrella handle, and fell flat on his face right up against the platform. Mickie meanwhile stood back near the door horror-stricken.

The old, white-haired officer who was speaking as Dennie made his unexpected appearance at his feet, was quick to seize the opportunity and he delivered a beautiful and touching oration on the Heavenly hand that had guided the feet of this poor erring brother here to the Throne of Grace, and he finished up by saying,

"And now, brothers and sisters, let us all rise and sing that beautiful hymn, 'The Old Ship of Zion.'"

Three minutes afterwards little Mickie burst into his own home and threw himself into his mother's arms, sobbing as if his heart was breaking. [134]

"What is it, me darlin'; what is the matter? Where is your father?"

"He's dead; he's dead," sobbed Mickie. "He wint into the Salvation Army, and he fell onto the flure, and they all stood up and begun to sing—'The Ould Mick Is Dyin'!'"

From a letter published in *The Player*:

"The theater is a dump, owing to the unsanitary condition of the house and management."

Little Miss Muffet
Sat down on a tuffet
  In Churchill's new Café.
A Pittsburger spied 'er
And sat down beside 'er
  And they couldn't drive Miss Muffet away.

Special attention is called to the fact that this is the only collection of stories about actor folks ever published, that does not have the one about the man in the spiked shoes stepping on the actor's meal ticket. [135]

From an English Theatrical paper I clip the following names:

Price & Revost; Bumps the Bumps.
Niagara & Falls; French Acrobats.
Boston & Philadelphia.
Merry & Glad.
Willie Stoppit.

Nat Haines was playing poker; Laloo was one of the players. Laloo was a freak that came to this country some years ago, and at one time commanded a salary of a thousand dollars a week. He was a very handsome young fellow, but had growing out from his breast the body of a small female. He had no muscular control of this secondary body, but could take hold of its hands and arms and work them all about.

After they had been playing a while Nat discovered that Laloo was cheating; he said nothing at the time, simply throwing his hand down and passing out. But when the hand was over and some one else was dealing, Nat leaned over to Laloo and said, [136]

"Say, Kid; you do that again and I'll give your sister a kick in the neck."

FIREMAN, SAVE MY CHILD

[137]

A comic opera company was playing Moose Jaw, Canada. I don't have to say what kind of a company it was. The fact that they were playing Moose Jaw is enough.

(And by the way, who knows how that town got its name? And a bright little boy at the foot of the class held up his hand and said—"I know!" And the teacher said, "All right, Willie, you may tell us how Moose Jaw got its name." And Willie said—"It is derived from an Indian expression which means, 'The-Place-Where-the-Man-Fixed-the-Wagon-With-a-Moose's-Jaw-Bone.'")

There was no regular theater there, so the company appeared in the fire station. The engines were run out in the street and the show was given there. There were big corridors on the second and third floors where the firemen slept; there was a brass rod running down from the upper to the lower floor for the firemen to slide down in case of a fire. The firemen all slept up on the third floor this night, giving the second floor up to the ladies for a dressing room. [138]

It was at the end of the first act. The girls were changing for the second act. The change was complete; tights and all. And an alarm was rung in. B-r-r-r-r!! went the big gong downstairs. And swish! swish! went the red-shirted firemen down the pole. The girls thought the firehouse itself was afire and ran shrieking around the room begging to be saved.

There were eighteen firemen upstairs that night and only two of them got to the fire.

On the stage of the Orpheum Theater in Montreal hangs this sign:

WHERE THERE'S SMOKE THERE'S
FIRE. YOU DO THE SMOKING AND
I'LL DO THE FIREING. MANAGER.

I came near leaving the stage while playing in Montreal and going into the portering business; said change being suggested by the following advertisement in the *Montreal Star*: [139]

"Wanted: A porter to drive bus and a dining room girl."

GOT ANY EXPERIENCED BABIES?

Wanted: Nursing; experienced babies. 10X Globe Office.—(*Toronto Globe.*)

PLAYING THE ENGLISH MUSIC HALLS

[140]

An American talking act going over to England to play has got a big job on hand. The trouble is going to come from a totally unexpected source too. It is because we do not speak the language. We say that we speak English; but we don't; that is, mighty little of it. We speak mostly plain, unadulterated, United States language, which is very different from English. So when we go over there, in addition to talking about things that they do not understand, we are also using a language that they don't know.

For instance: We opened up in Manchester with a play called *The Wyoming Whoop*. Now out of that title they understood just one word—"The." They did not know whether "Wyoming" was a battleship or some patent skin food. And "Whoop" was still worse.

During the progress of the play one of the characters speaks of having left the day's ice on the steps all the forenoon; I say— [141]

"Has that piece of ice been out in that Wyoming sun all the forenoon?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, you take a sponge and go out and get it."

After two or three shows the manager came to me and asked me what that line about the ice meant; was it supposed to be funny? I told him it was in America. He wanted to know why.

"Well," I said, "you know Wyoming is the hottest place in America, don't you?"

"No; is it?"

"Well then, you know that if you left a piece of ice out in the sun all the forenoon it would melt, don't you?"

"No; would it?"

Upon investigation I found that there was probably not one person in ten thousand in those

manufacturing towns of England who ever saw a piece of ice. They didn't know but that you could bake it.

It took me only three days to discover that I was in wrong with *The Wyoming Whoop*. So the next week in Liverpool I switched to *Bill Biffin's Baby*. Now we were on the right track. We had a subject, Babies, that they understood and liked. But on the second show I began writing it over—into the English language. I found that in twenty-four minutes I was using thirty-two words that they either knew nothing of, or else meant something entirely different from what I intended they should. [142]

For instance: Take the words Trolley Car. An American player spoke of having seen a lady riding on a trolley, and the audience went into fits. The player was astounded; he hadn't told his "gag" at all yet—(and, by the way, it isn't a "gag" there; it is a "wheeze")—and the audience was laughing. And then when he finally told his "gag" not a soul laughed. Upon investigation he found that over there what he meant by a trolley car was "*a tram*." And what they called a "trolley" was the baggage truck down at the railway station that they hauled trunks around on.

Another of their "gags" was—

"I saw you coming out of a saloon this morning."

"Well, I couldn't stay in there all day, could I?" [143]

Received with more chunks of silence.

He meant a place where they sold liquor. He should have said "*a Pub*."

A "saloon" there is a barber shop.

The ticket office is the booking office.

The ticket agent is the booking clerk (pronounced "clark").

A depot is the railway station.

You don't buy your ticket; you "book your ticket."

A policeman is a "Bobbie."

You drive to the left and walk to the right.

An automobile is a motor car.

The carburetor is the mixer.

The storage battery is the accumulator.

Gasolene is petrol.

Ask your way and instead of saying "second street to the left" they will say "second opening to the left."

If they bump into you instead of saying "excuse me" or "pardon me" they say "sorry."

Your trunks are "boxes," and your baggage checks are "brasses."

Your hand baggage is "luggage."

I found English audiences just as quick, just as appreciative and even more enthusiastic than our American audiences—*if you talked about things they understood and in words they understood*. [144]

But the average American talking act is talking what might just as well be Greek to them. I never realized until I played in England what an enormous lot of slang and coined words we Americans use.

Another thing that we Americans are shy on, both in speaking and singing, is articulation. I always had an idea that I enunciated uncommonly clearly—until I went over there, when I learned more about speaking plainly in three days than I had in a lifetime here.

You will notice you can always understand every word and syllable uttered by an English singer.

One of the funniest things I saw over there were English actors trying to play "Yankee" characters. The only "Yankee" they had to it was to spit and say "By Gosh."

Upon the occasion of our first show in England, at Manchester, I said to my wife,

"Now we are closing the show, so let's get made up early and watch the other acts, and in that way we can get sort of a line on the particular style of humor that appeals strongest." [145]

So when the show started we were right there in the wings, watching and listening.

The first act was a typical English "Comic Singer" of the poorest type, although we did not know that then. He had a pair of trousers six inches too short, white hose, an old Prince Albert coat,

buttoned up wrong, a battered silk hat (called a "topper," by the way) and a violently red nose. His first song was about his recent wedding; he had evidently married an old maid of rather sad appearance. The first verse told of the wedding and the wedding dinner; and how they then went upstairs to their room, and, as soon as they got into the room she wanted him to kiss her. But he looked at her and said—

(Chorus)

"Not to-night, Josephine; not to-night;
  Not to-night; not to-night.
For I've had such a lot of pork and beans;
Gorgonzola cheese and then sardines.
  And now you ask for a kiss
    On a face like yours, old kite. [146]
Well, I wouldn't like to spoil the lovely
  Flavor of the beans,
So not to-night, Josephine, not to-night."

Wife and I looked sadly into each other's eyes, clasped hands, and walked sadly to the dressing room. We knew we didn't have anything strong enough to compete with that.

After three weeks "in the Provinces," as they call everything outside of London, we went into the Palace Theater, London. We had had time to learn the language and sort of get acclimated so we did very well there.

But we kept bumping up against new quirks in the language. For instance, somebody asked me if we didn't "play two houses a night in Portsmouth?" and I said No. But I then discovered that "two houses a night" did not mean playing two different theaters a night, but playing two different shows in the same house each night.

I also discovered that several words which had a perfectly innocent meaning in America had entirely different meanings in London. I nearly got licked twice for using improper language.

[147] I discovered that what we would call a Tramp over here was a Moocher over there. I could see a lady *in* the street but I mustn't see her *on* the street. I could go up the street two squares but I mustn't go up two blocks. I did not get my salary; I got my treasury. You did not "kid" anybody; you "schwanked" them (spelling not guaranteed) or perhaps you were "spoofing" them.

The big Artists are all "Toppers" or "Bottomers." A "Topper" is one who is always billed at the top of the list of players. A "Bottomer" is the act that is considered next in importance to the "Topper," and is billed in big type at the bottom of the billing.

One thing that makes it hard to please an English Music Hall audience is its widely different classes. Admission to the gallery is from four to six cents while the orchestra seats are two dollars and a half.

While you can see a first-class Vaudeville show for four cents, it costs you twenty-four cents to sit in the gallery of most any Moving Picture show; and sixty-two cents downstairs.

The Palace Theater in London is probably the highest class Vaudeville theater in the world. This is very nice, but it has its drawbacks. [148] The audience applauds by gently tapping two fingers together and nodding heads approvingly.

Oscar Hammerstein asked Mrs. Cressy how she liked the London audiences.

"First-rate," replied Mrs. C., "only you have to look at them to see whether they are applauding or not."

"Look at them?" said Mr. H. "*You have to ask them.*"

George Whiting had just had his hat cleaned.

"How does it look?" he asked of his partner, Aubrey Pringle.

"Looks all right enough," said Pringle, "but it smells like a monkey wedding."

It was Tuesday afternoon in St. Paul; the show was going very badly; the first three acts had gone on and come off, without a laugh; then Frank Moran went on. After he had come off, and was on his way to his room, one of the ladies who had been on before him called from her dressing room,

"Did you succeed in waking them up, Mr. Moran?"

"Um—yes—I woke up a couple of them," said Frank. [149]

"What did they do?" asked the girl.

"Went out," said Frank.

We had received a letter from a European Booking Office requesting us to play an engagement at Glasgow, Scotland.

"I would like to know what they think we could do in Scotland," I said; "those chaps never could understand me."

"Well, my goodness," said my wife, "if they can understand each other they shouldn't have any trouble understanding us."

Probably the line that has been jumbled up and spoken wrong more times on the stage than any other is

"I am still fancy free and heart whole."

Try it; and see how many ways there are to go wrong on it.

At Keith's Theater in Boston one week the program announced that two of the acts to be seen that week were— [150]

"Cressy & Dayne; The latest importation in trained animal acts."

and—

"Barron's Dogs, in Mr. Cressy's one act play, *Bill Biffin's Baby*."

"WOODIE" [151]

"Woodie," of the old musical act, "Wood & Shepard," has grown quite deaf, and he tells many funny stories at his own expense. Upon one occasion he came into the Orpheum Theater at San Francisco and met Jim McIntire, of McIntire & Heath.

"Hello, Jim," said Woodie.

"Hello, Woodie," said Jim; "how are you feeling?"

"Half past ten last night," said Woodie.

Woodie was playing at Pastor's Theater in New York. He was living on Thirty-eighth Street. One night about two o'clock in the morning he got on to a Third Avenue elevated train to go home. The only other passenger in the car was a drunk, asleep in the corner. At Twenty-third Street Charlie Seamon, "the Narrow Feller," got on.

"Where are you living?" asked Seamon. [152]

"Thirty-eighth Street," said Woodie; "where are you living?"

"Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street," said Seamon.

"Where?"

"*Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street*," said Seamon, louder.

"Can't hear you," said Woodie.

"*One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street*," howled Seamon.

"Gee Whiz," yelled the drunk, as he scrambled to his feet, and made for the door, "I've gone by my station," and off he got at Twenty-eighth Street.

Woodie was practicing on his cornet in the San Francisco Orpheum. The management sent back word that they could hear him way out in front; Woodie laid down the cornet, thought a moment, sighed, and said,

"Well, perhaps I can't play very good any more, but I must play loud."

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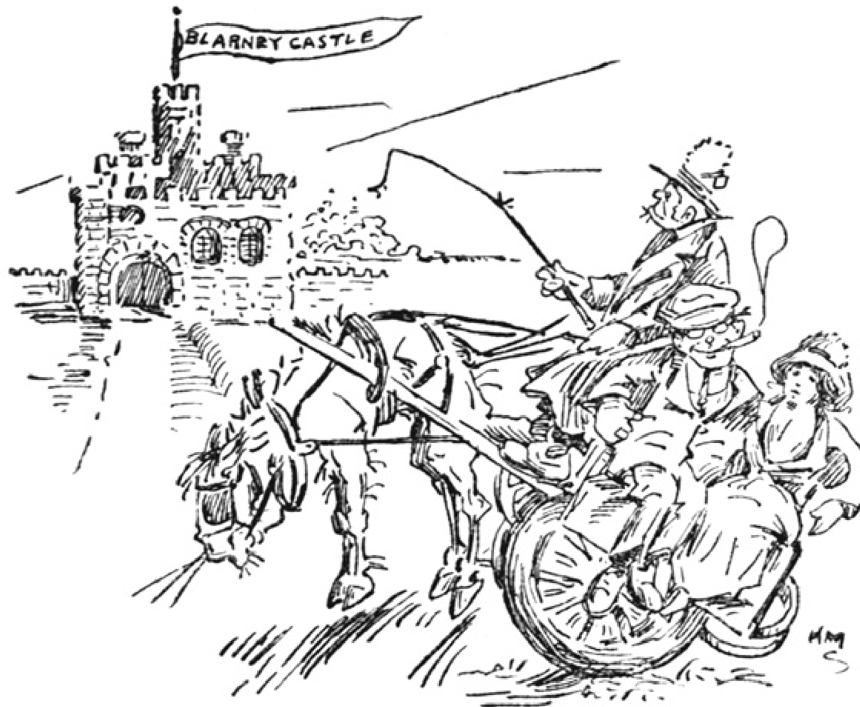
[153]



The Cressys in Ireland.

A CORK MAN

We were going out to visit Blarney Castle. Not that I felt any particular need of kissing the Blarney Stone myself, for I had managed to talk my way through life so far without so doing, and saw no reason to doubt my ability to do so in the future, providing the United Booking Offices would continue to book us. But of course when you go all the way from New Hampshire to Ireland you just sort of have to see all these things. And then, of course, it would sound kind of cute to say, "Oh, yes; I kissed the Blarney Stone." And I still think it would sound cute; only I am [154] not saying it. For when I took one look at that dinky little piece of rock stuck in the side of a wall one hundred and twenty feet above terra firma, and looked at the hole I was supposed to hang down through to get at it, I said to myself—"*Not guilty.*" So any Lady-Manager or Booking Agent can still converse with me with perfect safety. I have *not* kissed the Blarney Stone.

But that is not what I started in to tell. Of course I could have gone out there in our automobile; but that would be a fine way to visit Blarney Castle, wouldn't it? Yes, it wouldn't. When you are in Ireland do as the Romans do. So we put the auto in a garage (and over there that word does not have any of the French curlicues we put on it, with the last syllable accented. It is pronounced to rhyme with the word carriage) and embarked in a jaunting (or jolting) car.

Our driver was a regular lad; several years ago I wrote a monologue for Marshall P. Wilder, and during this trip this driver told me the whole monologue. And then he had some other encore stuff too.

[155] We were passing an insane asylum and he said that the previous summer he had driven a doctor from Philadelphia out to this asylum; and while there a very funny thing had happened. As the doctor was passing along through one of the wards—Now the driver of an Irish jaunting car sits way up in front, right over the horse's tail, and the passengers sit back of him, facing off sideways; so the driver has to turn his head to talk to the passengers. Up to this point of his story this driver had been turned toward me, telling his story to me; but now he happened to think that it would be more polite to tell it to the ladies; so he turned around back to me and told the rest of it to them. I did not hear a word of it; but when the finish came, and the ladies laughed, I laughed, just to be polite.

And when the laughter had died down I said,

"That puts me in mind of a story I heard over in America. A man was passing an insane asylum and he noticed a clock up on one of the towers; but there was some half hour's difference between his watch and the clock; and while he was standing there trying to figure out which was right, one of the patients stuck his head out of a window right beside the clock. The man below saw him and called up to him,

"'Hey, there: is that clock right?'"

[156] "And the patient replied,

'No; if it was it wouldn't be in here.'"

Honest, if I hadn't known I was in Cork, Ireland, I should have thought I was playing Toronto, Canada; there wasn't a ripple; the driver gave me one disgusted look, hit the horse a cut with the whip and drove on in silence. My wife looked at me angrily and shook her head.

"All right," I said to myself. "You are a Mutt audience and I shall relate no more episodes of a comic nature." And I didn't.

When we had reached our rooms that night my wife turned on me and said sharply,

"What did you do that for?"

"What did I do what for?"

"What did you tell him that story for?"

"Well, why in thunder shouldn't I tell it to him? What's the matter with that story anyway?"

She looked at me curiously for a moment, then said,

"Don't you know what you did?"

"No."

"Why that was the same story he had just told you."

[157]

E. J. Connelly has got a summer home at Lake Sunapee, New Hampshire. He also owns several building lots around there. As building lots without buildings on them do not bring in much cash, Edward was seriously contemplating building some cottages on the lots, furnishing and renting them. I met him one evening this fall and asked him how the cottages were coming on.

"It's all off," he said; "nothing doing in the cottage line for me."

I asked him what had happened to change his mind so suddenly.

"Well, Bill," he said, "you know I am not a chap who goes hunting for trouble; I'm nervous; I don't like to be troubled with other people's troubles. This afternoon I was over to Bob Eaton's, and you know he has got some cottages up at the other end of the lake that he rents, furnished."

"Yes, I knew that."

"Well," continued Connelly, "while I was over to Bob's this afternoon a man who has rented one of these cottages came down there. He had left his cottage and driven twelve miles down to Bob's house to make a kick; and what do you suppose the kick was?"

"Haven't the least idea." [158]

"There wasn't any nutmeg grater in the cottage. Twelve miles to make a five-cent kick. And my cottages would be only two hundred feet away. No landlord business for your Uncle Edward. No, sir."

THE TROUBLES OF THE LAUGH GETTERS

[159]

It is a solemn business, this getting laughs for a living. Supposing the people don't laugh. Then how are you going to live? Take an act that you have been doing for weeks. Every afternoon and every night the audience laughs at exactly the same lines; this goes on night after night, week after week and city after city. Then you go into some city like Toronto or St. Paul and Hamlet's soliloquy would get as many laughs as you do. Now what are you going to do? Other players on the bill are getting laughs right along and you, in the language of the stage, are "dying standing up."

I have had the same experiences off the stage. I once tried to tell an old German gentleman in St. Louis a story that had been highly recommended to me as being funny. It was about a man going up to a St. Louis policeman and asking him the quickest way to get to the Mt. Olive hospital. The [160] policeman told him to go over to Grogan's saloon and call the bartender an A. P. A.

Then I waited for the laugh. And immediately I knew I had a Toronto audience. The old man studied a moment, then said,

"Why did he not tell him to take an Olive Street car?"

An old lady from Brooklyn was visiting us. I told her one of Lew Dockstader's stories. How he had a girl over in Brooklyn. Her father was an undertaker. And Lew could always tell how business was with the old man by the looks of the table. If he had had a good job lately there would be flowers on the table, and ice on the butter.

I waited for the laugh. "But the giggle that he longed for never came." The old lady looked up with a look of interest and said,

"Did he say what their name was? Perhaps we knew them."

I met a banker in Toronto. I tried to tell him a story referring to the banking business, hoping against hope that I might get one laugh in that city. I told him about a colored man who went into a colored bank down South and wanted to draw out his deposit of twenty dollars that had been in there for eight years. And the colored cashier told him he did not have any money in there. That the interest had eaten it up long ago. [161]

"Yes," said the banking gentleman, with a pitying smile, "very clever. But he was wrong, you know; interest adds to your principal, not detracts."

Playing Hoboken.

William Cahill was playing Hoboken. Hoboken is entirely Dutch. William is entirely Irish. Result, William, on his opening show, did not get a laugh or a hand. After his act was over he stood around, dazed, for a few minutes; then he made his way over to the "peek hole," looked out and sized up the audience carefully, then turned away, muttering to himself, [162]

"This is a h—— of a place for an Irishman."

Carrying "The Old Man" With Her.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Foy carried a nurse-maid for their little girl. When I came in to the theater I would always go in and speak to the nurse-maid and the baby. Then after I was made up I would come in again and visit them. But the maid never knew that I was the same fellow; and along the last of the week she began to wonder what ever became of that old chap she saw around the stage during the show, but never afterwards. So she went over to Miss Dayne and said, [163]

"Say, do you carry that old man with you or do you get a new one in every town?"

"Well," said Clarence Drown, manager of the Los Angeles Orpheum, "she is one of those women you are always glad to learn is the wife of some man you don't like."

Freddie Niblo, Jr., sat on the floor in their New York home one day, thinking it over. Finally he looked up at his mother (Josephine Cohan) and said,

"Say, Mama, wouldn't it be nice if you had a regular husband instead of an actor husband? Then perhaps he would be at home sometimes."

A well known Booking Agency had just transferred one of the stenographers from the New York office to the Chicago office. On her first morning in the new office she came over to the manager and said,

"I suppose you start the day the same here as they do in the New York office?" [164]

"Why—er—yes—I suppose so," said the manager.

"Well, kiss me then, and let me get to work."

ASLEEP WITH HER SWITCH

[165]

A certain young lady (and Abe Jacobs says he knows she was a lady because she told him so, adding the information that any one who said she wasn't was a —— —— liar) was appearing at the Majestic Theater in Chicago not so very long ago. Owing to conditions over which she, apparently, had no control, the exact hours of her appearance were a little uncertain. Her first entrance was rather a dramatic affair. One of the other characters, hearing a noise behind a certain door, would draw a revolver, aim it at the door, and say—

"Come out! Come out, or I will shoot!"

Upon this occasion everything ran smoothly—up to this point; the gentleman had drawn his revolver and ordered her to appear.

"Come out!" he said; "come out or I will shoot!"

But there was nothing doing; so he repeated,

"Come out or I will shoot!" [166]

And still nothing doing; so for a third time he called,

"If you don't come out I will shoot!"

There was a pause, then, as the curtain started to descend, a disgusted voice came from the stage manager's box,

"Go on and shoot; she's down in her dressing room asleep."

A crowd was sitting around the Vaudeville Comedy Club, and the conversation had drifted around to a discussion of the old-time Vaudeville and that of the present day.

"Well, I can tell you one thing," said James Dolan, of Dolan & Lenhar, "there didn't use to be all these divorces and separations among the old-timers. We didn't use to think that we had to have a new wife every year or two; we stuck to the old ones; the ones that had helped us get our starts. Look at Mr. and Mrs. Mark Murphy; Mr. and Mrs. Tom Nawn; Ryan & Richfield; Cressy and Dayne; Dolan & Lenhar; Filson & Errol. I tell you, boys, we *stuck* in those days."

"Yes, but here; wait a minute," spoke up Horace Wright; "give us youngsters a chance. I haven't been married but three years, but I am sticking as fast as I can. Give me time, and I'll get into your class—sometime." [167]

I JOIN THE SUFFRAGETTES [168]

I am now a suffragette. I don't exactly understand what it is all about yet, but when I was up in New Hampshire a few weeks ago I met a very enthusiastic lady who started in to convert me to "the cause." Finally, after she had talked fourteen minutes without breathing once, I got a chance to speak.

"But wait a minute," I said; "you are wasting time. As I understand this thing, what you want is equal rights—for the sexes; is that correct?"

She said that was it exactly.

"All right then," I said, "I am with you, heart and soul; and, although I haven't known it, I have been with you for a long time. I am willing to fight shoulder to shoulder with you for this glorious cause, for if there is anything that will get a man equal rights with a woman I am for it."

"But," she said, "you *vote*, don't you?"

"*No*," I said, "*I can't! Martin Beck won't let me off to go home.*"

"But," she continued, "you can sit on juries, and we can't." [169]

"Well, good Lord," I exclaimed, "you don't want to sit on juries, do you?"

"We want to do everything that men do."

"Well, I don't know," I replied; "it doesn't look good to me; women on a jury."

"Why not?"

"Well, supposing there should be some big case on, and there were six women and six men on the jury, and the jury should be locked up in the jury room all night. You know darn well the verdict would be 'Guilty.'"

If I had an automobile that was in the last stages of decomposition and I couldn't sell it to anybody else I think I should try to sell it to the chap that painted that automobile on the drop curtain in the Garrick Theater in Chicago.

On this drop curtain there is painted an electric runabout. The chap that painted it knew a good deal more about painting than he did about automobiles. There isn't the slightest symptom of any steering gear on it; the front axle is a straight iron rod without a sign of any joint in it.

One of the passengers is either sitting exactly on the top of the steering bar, or else there isn't any; and with all four wheels set rigidly so it can't turn, the car is just leaving the roadway and [170]

plunging into a flower bed.

There is one theater in Chicago that is going to have an awful time enforcing that "no tipping allowed" rule. The Illinois Theater has a stage manager by the name of Frank Tipping.

My wife says that all the Mormons are not in Utah: only their wives are not on.

Jim Morton says Duluth is a nice little "Street in One."

Fred Wyckoff says the two worst weeks in show business are Holy Week and Milwaukee.

"Tommie" Ryan has got the right idea. He has had himself appointed as a special police officer over at his home in Hohokus, N. J. (Think of any one's having a bright idea in a town with a name like that.) Now when he gets lonesome he runs his automobile up Main Street at full speed (13 miles an hour), arrests himself for overspeeding, collects two dollars for making the arrest, then fails to appear against himself and the case is dismissed. [171]

There is no disputing the fact that education is a great help to a young man starting out in the world. Said bright thought being prompted by the following ad, clipped from a Buffalo, N. Y., paper:

"Help Wanted: Automobile washer, $18.00. Stenographer and book keeper, $12.00."

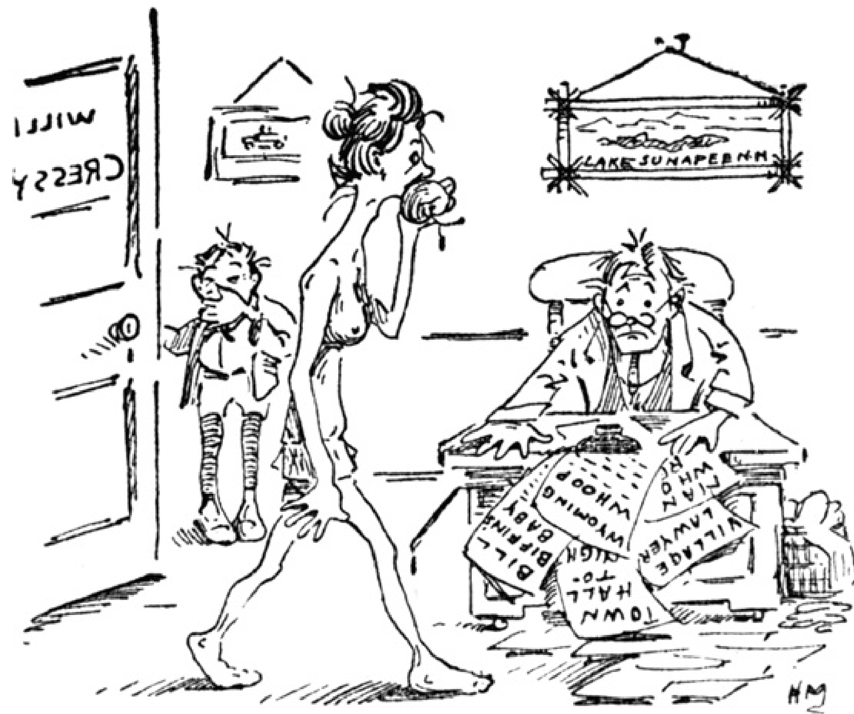
I attended a newspaper men's banquet in Rochester, N. Y. One of the speakers, a quaint, funny appearing little old chap, was introduced as a man who lived in a town of six thousand population, but had a circulation of thirty thousand for his paper.

"And," said the toastmaster, as he introduced him, "I would like to have him tell us where those thirty thousand papers go to."

The little old chap arose, scratched his bushy head and said,

"Well—it goes all over. Of course most of 'em go 'round through New York state. But some of 'em go down to Massachusetts, Maine and New Hampshire. Then a few go down South. I have a few subscribers out through California and Oregon and Washington. Some go to Honolulu; the Philippines and two or three go as far as Australia. [172]

"And," he continued, with a sigh, "along in the earlier days I used to have considerable trouble to keep it from going to Hell."



"Bring her Hither."

A young fellow up in New Hampshire has written a Vaudeville playlet and sent it on for my approval. If he could have kept up the gait he struck on the first page I should have bought it: [173]

Maid: A lady waits without.

Master: Without what?

Maid: Without food or raiment.

Master: Give her food and bring her hither.

The cost of high living has evidently not struck Philadelphia yet; for in the window of a little store on North Ninth Street there is a sign—

"A glass bowl—a goldfish—a tadpole and one seaweed—all for 8 cents."

There must have been a crook around New York this winter, for hanging up over the workmen's lockers in the garage where I keep my car is a sign saying—

"*Keep Out. We Mourn Our Loss.*"

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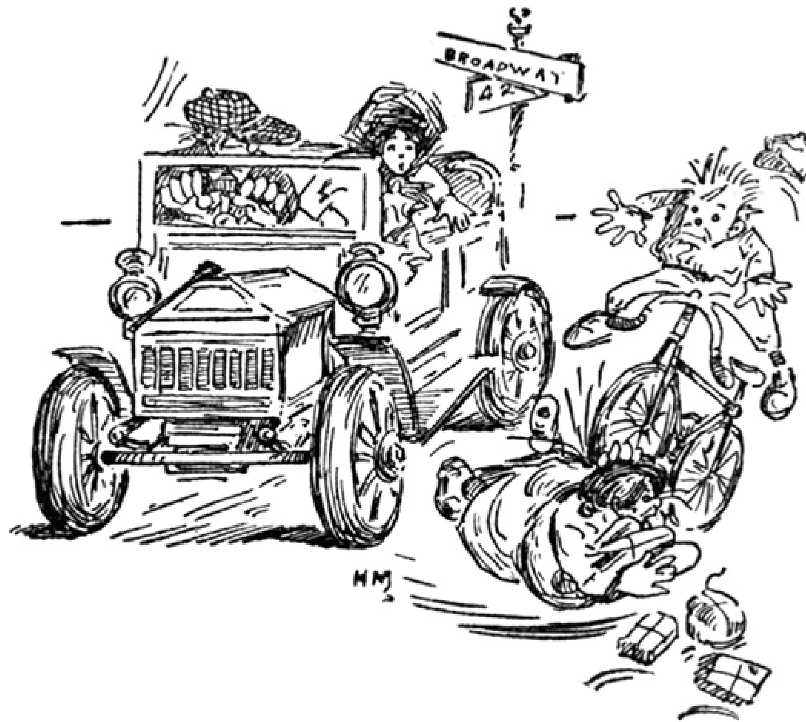
[174]



THE PERILS OF A GREAT CITY

At the corner of 44th Street and Broadway, New York, the street car tracks, in making the turn, swing in quite near to the curb; in fact, there is just room enough for a single vehicle to drive between them.

One night as my wife and I were driving down in our automobile we reached this corner just as an uptown car and a downtown car were meeting there. The uptown car stopped to let off a passenger. The downtown car slowed down, so as not to run down anyone coming around the back of the uptown car. And, not to be outdone in caution, we slowed down also. [175]

An old Irish lady got off the uptown car. She had an armful of bundles, and had on a sailor hat, with no hat pins in it; so that she had to keep tossing her head to keep it balanced and straight. She walked around the back of the uptown car—just in season to walk in front of the downtown car. The motorman sounded his bell, "*Bang! Bang!*" The old lady gave a yell and a jump—and landed right in front of our car. I sounded the horn, "*Squawk! Squawk!*" and she gave another yell and another jump, off to the side, and the sailor hat fell off, right in front of our car.

The old lady started to go back for the hat; I slammed on the brakes and threw out the clutch. When I threw out the clutch the engine raced for a moment—"*W-h-i-r-r-r-r!*" Again the old lady yelled and jumped back. And standing in the gutter, she shook her fist at me and screamed—

"*—— —— you, don't you boomp me!*"

"Go on and get your hat," I said, "I won't bump you."

[176] Cautiously she stooped over and reached for the hat. And at that moment a messenger boy on a bicycle came tearing around the corner out of 44th Street, and struck the old lady where she was, at that moment, the most prominent. In an instant boy—old lady—bicycle—bundles and sailor hat were all mussed up together in the gutter. She had dodged two trolley cars and an automobile, only to be run down by a boy on a bicycle.

As I drove on, I gave one glance back; and the bundles, hat and bicycle lay in the gutter, while the boy was on the dead run up Broadway with the old lady after him.

DO YOU BELIEVE IN SIGNS? [177]

(These are all actual signs that I have come across in my travels.)

Paterson, N. J. "Henry Worms. Vegetables."

Chicago. "I. D. Kay. Fresh Vegetables."

Brooklyn, N. Y. "Kick, the Printer."

Pittsburg, Pa. "Daub, the Painter."

Dalton, Ga. "Tapp, the Jeweler."

Washington, D. C. "Shake, the Grocer."

Oakland, Cal. "Fake, Jeweler."

Philadelphia. "Dr. Aker, Dentist."

Oakland, Cal. "Dr. Muchmore, Dentist."

New York, N. Y. "Mr. Champoo, Dentist."

Chicago. "Artificial Eyes. Open all Night."

Seattle, Wash. "Artificial Limbs. Walk In."

Buffalo, N. Y. "English & Irish. Furniture."

Denver, Colo. "Painless Dyeing."

Salt Lake City. "Come In: The Soda Water's Fine."

Oakland, Cal. "Letts-Love, Florists."

Seattle, Wash. "Dr. Fixott, Dentist."

Boston. "B. Stiller, Photographer." [178]

Boston. "Dr. Capwell, Dentist."

Hartford, Conn. "Best & Smart, Dry Goods."

Boston. "Neal & Pray, Religious Publications."

Newark, N. J. A millinery store announces—"We Trim Free of Charge."

San Francisco. "Coats, Pants & Vests, one half off."

Denver. "The Rothchild Cigar. Ten cents or two for a quarter."

Paterson, N. J. "Coffins made and repaired."

Portland, Ore. "Neer & Farr, Coal Dealers."

Paris, Ky. "Ice Cream & Washing Done Here."

Spokane, Wash. "Bed Bath & Booze 15c. All Nations welcome but Carrie."

Louisville, Ky. "Beds 15cts. Hot cat fish all night."

Atlantic City. "Shoes Shined Inside. Also Ladies."

Spokane, Wash. "Ole Johnson Him Harness Maker."

Brownsville, Ark. "H. Robinson, Tacks Collector." [179]

Chicago. "Precious Stones Setted."

Milwaukee. "Sweet Pickles and N. Y. Sunday papers for sale here."

Denver, Colo. "Hot Roast Chicken served from 11-30 until gone."

Buffalo, N. Y. "Shoes Repaired; neat; Quick & Well."

Chicago (in the Ionia Café). "No meals exchanged."

Philadelphia (in a Japanese café). "No suiciding Allowed Here."

Chicago. "Broken lenses duplicated."

Platte Canyon, Neb. "Private Grounds. You must not shoot or pick the flowers without permission."

CLOSING NUMBER

As I don't know whether this effort is going to get applause enough to take a bow, I am going to finish with a story that has got two bows in it.

There was an old English actor who had struggled all his life for recognition; and never got it. He had never been in a decent company—never had a decent part in his life. And for years he had been reading of the wonderful success many of the English players were meeting with in America, so at last he sailed for that Land of Promise.

But it was the same sad story it had been at home. And dollar by dollar, and penny by penny his money went until at last he was penniless. And then came that longing for HOME that cannot be resisted. And one dark night he went down and stowed away on a steamer bound for Liverpool.

The next morning he was discovered, and put to work helping in the kitchen. This was the last straw; there he sat, in his fur lined overcoat and silk hat, peeling potatoes. That night he decided to end it all. So at midnight he said "Farewell vain world" and went over the rail.

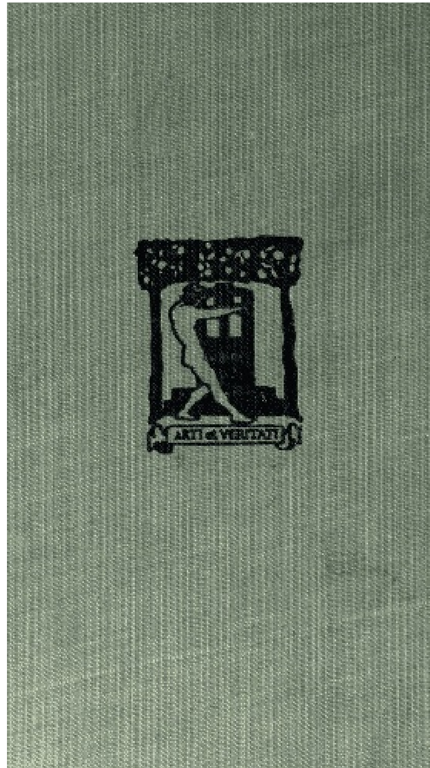
"Man overboard!" cried the Lookout.

The life belts were thrown over. The powerful electric search lights were thrown upon the waters. These life belts as soon as they strike the water begin to burn a bright red light.

The poor old actor came up for the last time—and just between the two life belts with their red fires burning. At the same moment the dazzling stream of light from the search light fell full upon him. The old man opened his eyes; and a look of ineffable joy came over his face. For the first time in his life he was in the spot light.

So he took two bows—and went down—forever.

CURTAIN



Transcriber's note

The following changes have been made to the text:

Page 37: "is the old family burying" changed to "in the old family burying".

Page 37: "V. M. Waetherholtz" changed to "V. M. Weatherholtz".

Page 166: "Doland" changed to "Dolan".

Page 174: "the down car slowed down" changed to "the downtown car slowed down".

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CONTINUOUS VAUDEVILLE ***

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