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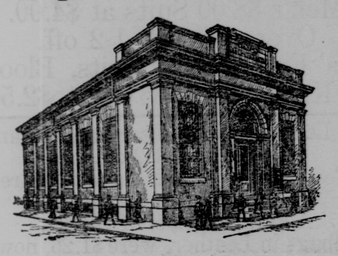
A Savings Account Will Grow!



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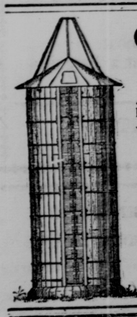

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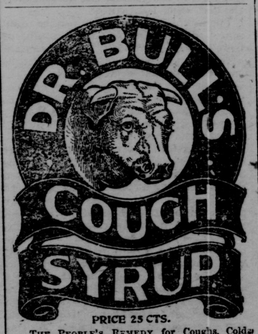

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Fine OYSTERS for sale every day.

Strictly Business

A Partnership For Purely Money Making Purposes

By O. HENRY

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I suppose you know all about the stage and stage people. You've been touched with and by actors, and you read the newspaper criticisms and the jokes in the weeklies about the Rialto and the chorus girls and the long haired tragedians.

Latterly there has been much talk of the actor people in a new light. It seems to have been divulged that instead of being motoring bacchanalians and diamond hungry Loreleis they are businesslike folk, students and ascetics with children and homes and libraries.

Whether the old or the new report of the sock and buskiners be the true one is a surmise that has no place here. I offer you merely this little story of two strollers, and for proof of its truth I can show you only the dark patch above the cast iron handle of the stage entrance door of Keetor's old vaudeville theater made there by the petulant push of gloved hands too impatient to finger the clumsy thumb latch and where I last saw Cherry whisking through like a swallow into her nest, on time to the minute, as usual, to dress for her act.

The vaudeville team of Hart and Cherry was an inspiration. Bob Hart had been roaming through the eastern and western circuits for four years with a mixed up act comprising a monologue, three lightning changes with songs, a couple of imitations of celebrated imitators and a buck and wing dance that had drawn a glance of approval from the bass viol player in more than one house—than which no performer ever received more satisfactory evidence of good work.

One afternoon Bob Hart presented his solvent, serious, well known vaudevillian face at the box office window of a rival attraction and got his d. h. coupon for an orchestra seat.

A, B, C and D glowed successively on the announcement spaces and passed into oblivion, each plunging Mr. Hart deeper into gloom.

But when H came on "the Mustard" suddenly sat up straight. H was the happy alphabetical prognosticator of Winona Cherry in character songs and impersonations. There were scarcely more than two bites to Cherry, but she delivered the merchandise tied with a pink cord and charged to the old man's account. She first showed you a deliciously dewy and ginghamy country girl with a basket of property daisies who informed you ingenuously that there were other things to be learned at the old log schoolhouse besides cipherin' and nouns, especially "when the teacher kept me in." Vanishing with a quick flirt of gingham apron strings, she reappeared in considerably less than a "trice" as a fluffy Parisienne—so near does art bring the old red mill to the Moulin Rouge. And then—

But you know the rest. And so did Bob Hart, but he saw somebody else. He thought he saw that Cherry was the only professional on the short order stage that he had seen who seemed exactly to fit the part of Helen Grimes in the sketch he had written and kept tucked away in the tray of his trunk.

But Bob Hart's sketch was not destined to end in a pickle jar. He called it "Mice Will Play." He had kept it quiet and hidden away ever since he wrote it, waiting to find a partner who fitted his conception of Helen Grimes. And here was Helen herself, with all the innocent abandon, the youth, the sprightliness and the flawless stage art that his critical taste demanded.

After the act was over Hart found the manager in the box office and got Cherry's address. At 5 the next afternoon he called at the musty old house in the West Forties and sent up his professional card.

By daylight, in a secular shirt waist and a plain volle skirt, with her hair curbed and her Sister of Charity eyes, Winona Cherry might have been playing the part of Prudence Wise, the deacon's daughter, in the great (unwritten) New England drama not yet entitled anything.

"I know your act, Mr. Hart," she said after she had looked over his card carefully. "What did you wish to see me about?"

"I saw you work last night," said Hart. "I've written a sketch that I've been saving up. It's for two, and I think you can do the other part. I thought I'd see you about it."

"Come in the parlor," said Miss Cherry. "I've been wishing for something of the sort. I think I'd like to act instead of doing turns."

Bob Hart drew his cherished "Mice Will Play" from his pocket and read it to her.

"Read it again, please," said Miss Cherry.

And then she pointed out to him clearly how it could be improved by introducing a messenger instead of a telephone call and cutting the dialogue just before the climax while they were struggling for the pistol and by completely changing the lines and business of Helen Grimes at the point where her jealousy overcomes her. Hart yielded to all her strictures without argument. She had at once put her finger on the sketch's weaker points. That was her woman's intuition that he had lacked. At the end of their talk Hart was willing to stake the judgment, experience and savings of his four years of vaudeville that "Mice Will Play" would blossom into a perennial flower in the garden of the circuits. Miss Cherry was slower to decide.

"Mr. Hart," said she, "I believe your sketch is going to win out. That Grimes part fits me like a shrinkable flannel after its first trip to a handless hand laundry. I can make it stand out like the colonel of the Forty-fourth regiment at a little mothers' bazaar. And I've seen you work. I know what you can do with the other part. But business is business. How much do you get a week for the stunt you do now?"

"Two hundred," answered Hart.

"I get $100 for mine," said Cherry. "That's about the natural discount for a woman. But I live on it and put a few simoleons every week under the loose brick in the old kitchen hearth. The stage is all right. I love it, but there's something else I love better—

WILL JONES

"READ IT AGAIN, PLEASE," SAID MISS CHERRY.

that's a little country home, some day, with Plymouth Rock chickens and six ducks wandering around the yard.

"Now, let me tell you, Mr. Hart, I am strictly business. If you want me to play the opposite part in your sketch I'll do it. And I believe we can make it go. And there's something else I want to say. There's no nonsense in my makeup. I'm on the level, and I'm on the stage for what it pays me, just as other girls work in stores and offices.

"If you want to make this a business partnership, Mr. Hart, with all nonsense cut out of it, I'm in on it. I know something about vaudeville teams in general, but this would have to be one in particular. I want you to know that I'm on the stage for what I can cart away from it every pay day in a little manila envelope with nicotine stains on it where the cashier has licked the flap. It's a kind of hobby of mine to want to cravenette myself for plenty of rainy days in the future. I want you to know just how I am. I don't know what an all night restaurant looks like. I drink only weak tea, I never spoke to a man at a stage entrance in my life, and I've got money in five savings banks."

"Miss Cherry," said Bob Hart in his smooth, serious tones, "you're in on your own terms. I've got 'strictly business' pasted in my hat and stenciled on my makeup box. When I dream of nights I always see a five room bungalow on the north shore of Long Island, with a Jap cooking clam broth and duckling in the kitchen and me with the title deeds to the place in my pongee coat pocket, swinging in a hammock on the side porch."

The subsequent history of "Mice Will Play" is the history of all successful writings for the stage. Hart and Cherry cut it, pierced it, remodeled it, put the sketch through all the known processes of condensation and improvement.

They rehearsed it by the old fashioned boarding house clock in the rarely used parlor until its warning click at five minutes to the hour would occur every time exactly half a second before the click of the unloaded revolver that Helen Grimes used in rehearsing the thrilling climax of the sketch.

Yes, that was a thriller and a piece of excellent work. In the act a real 32 caliber revolver was used, loaded with a real cartridge. Helen Grimes, who is a western girl of decidedly Buffalo Billish skill and daring, is tempestuously in love with Jack Valentine, the private secretary and confidential prospective son-in-law of her father, "Arapahoe" Grimes, quarter million dollar cattle king, owning a ranch that, judging by the scenery, is in either the Bad Lands or Amagansett, L. I. Valentine (in private life Mr. Bob Hart) wears puttees and Meadow Brook Hunt riding trousers and gives his address as New York.

There were only two parts and a half in "Mice Will Play." Hart and Cherry were the two, of course, and the half was a minor part always played by a stage hand.

There was another girl in the sketch—a Fifth avenue society swelless—who was visiting the ranch and who had sirened Jack Valentine when he was a wealthy clubman on lower Third avenue before he lost his money. This girl appeared on the stage only in the photographic state—Jack had her Sarony stuck up on the mantel of the Amagan of the Bad Lands droring room. Helen was jealous, of course.

And now for the thriller. Old Arapahoe Grimes dies of angina pectoris one night—so Helen informs us in a stage ferryboat whisper over the footlights—while only his secretary was present. And that same day he was known to have had $647,000 in cash in his (ranch) library just received for the sale of a drove of beeves in the east. (That accounts for the prices we pay for steak!) The cash disappears at the same time. Jack Valentine was the only person with the ranchman when he made his (alleged) croak.

"Gawd knows I love him, but if he has done this deed"— You sabe, don't you? And then there are some mean things said about the Fifth avenue girl, who doesn't come on the stage.

But wait. Here's the climax. Helen Grimes, chaparralish as she can be, is goaded beyond imprudence. She convinces herself that Jack Valentine is not only a falsetto, but a financier. To lose at one fell swoop $647,000 and a lover in riding trousers with angles in the sides like the variations on the chart of a typhoid fever patient is enough to make any perfect lady mad. So, then!

They stand in the (ranch) library, which is furnished with mounted elk heads. (Didn't the Elks have a fish fry in Amagansett once?) The denouement then begins.

Helen thinks Jack has taken the money.

Goaded beyond imprudence (as before said), Helen says to Jack Valentine, "Robber and thief, and, worse yet, stealer of trusting hearts, this should be your fate!"

With that out she whips, of course, the trusty 32 caliber.

"But I will be merciful," goes on Helen. "You shall live. That will be your punishment. I will show you how easily I could have sent you to the death that you deserve. There is her picture on the mantel. I will send through her more beautiful face the bullet that should have pierced your craven heart."

And she does it. And there's no fake blank cartridges or assistants pulling strings. Helen fires. The bullet—the actual bullet—goes through the face of the photograph and then strikes the hidden spring of the sliding panel in the wall, and, lo, the panel slides, and there is the missing $647,000 in convincing stacks of currency and bags of gold. It's great. You know how it is. Cherry practiced for two months at a target on the roof of her boarding house. It took good shooting. In the sketch she had to hit a brass disk only three inches in diameter, covered by wall paper in the panel, and she had to stand in exactly the same spot every night, and the photo had to be in exactly the same spot, and she had to shoot steady and true every time.

Of course old Arapahoe had tucked the funds away there in the secret place, and of course Jack hadn't taken anything except his salary (which really might have come under the head of "obtaining money under," but that is neither here nor there), and of course the New York girl was really engaged to a concrete house contractor in the Bronx, and necessarily Jack and Helen ended in a half nelson, and there you are.

After Hart and Cherry had got "Mice Will Play" flawless they had a tryout at a vaudeville house that accommodates. The sketch was a house wrecker. It was one of those rare strokes of talent that inundates a theater from the roof down. The gallery wept, and the orchestra seats, being dressed for it, swam in tears.

After the show the booking agents signed blank checks and pressed fountain pens upon Hart and Cherry. Five hundred dollars a week was what it panned out.

That night at 11:30 Bob Hart took off his hat and bade Cherry good night at her boarding house door.

"Mr. Hart," said she thoughtfully, "come inside just a few minutes. We've got our chance now to make good and to make money. What we want to do is to cut expenses every cent we can and save all we can."

"Right," said Bob. "It's business with me. You've got your scheme for banking yours, and I dream every night of that bungalow with the Jap cook and nobody around to raise trouble. Anything to enlarge the net receipts will engage my attention."

"Come inside just a few minutes," repeated Cherry, deeply thoughtful. "I've got a proposition to make to you that will reduce our expenses a lot and help you work out your own future and help me work out mine, and all on business principles."

* * * * * * *

"Mice Will Play" had a tremendously successful run in New York for ten weeks—rather neat for a vaudeville sketch—and then it started on the circuits. Without following it, it may be said that it was a solid drawing card for two years without a sign of abated popularity.

Sam Packard, manager of one of Keetor's New York houses, said of Hart and Cherry:

"As square and high toned a little team as ever came over the circuit. It's a pleasure to read their names on the booking list. Quiet, hard workers, no Johnny and Mabel nonsense, on the job to the minute, straight home after their act, and each of 'em as gentlemanlike as a lady. I don't expect to handle any attractions that give me less trouble or more respect for the profession."

And now, after so much cracking of a nutshell, here is the kernel of the story:

At the end of its second season "Mice Will Play" came back to New York for another run at the roof gardens and summer theaters. There was never any trouble in booking it at the topnotch price. Bob Hart had his bungalow nearly paid for, and Cherry had so many savings deposit bank books that she had begun to buy sectional bookcases on the installment plan to hold them.

I tell you these things to assure you, even if you can't believe it, that many—very many—of the stage people are workers with abiding ambitions, just the same as the man who wants to be president, or the grocery clerk who wants a home in Flatbush, or a lady who is anxious to flop out of the count pan into the prince fire. And I hope I may be allowed to say, without chipping into the contribution basket, that they often move in a mysterious way their wonders to perform.

But listen.

At the first performance of "Mice Will Play" in New York at the new Westphalia (no hams alluded to) theater Winona Cherry was nervous. When she fired at the photograph of the eastern beauty on the mantel the bullet, instead of penetrating the photo and then striking the disk, went into the lower left side of Bob Hart's neck. Not expecting to get it there Hart collapsed neatly, while Cherry fainted in a most artistic manner.

The audience, surmising that they viewed a comedy instead of a tragedy in which the principals were married or reconciled, applauded with great enjoyment. The cool head, who always graces such occasions, rang the curtain down, and two platoons of scene shifters respectively and more or less respectfully removed Hart and Cherry from the stage. The next turn went on, and all went as merry as an alimony bell.

The stage hands found a young doctor at the stage entrance who was waiting for a patient with a decoction of American Beauty roses. The doctor examined Hart carefully and laughed heartily.

"No headlines for you, old sport," was his diagnosis. "If it had been two inches to the left it would have undermined the carotid artery as far as the red front drug store in Flatbush and back again. As it is, you just get the property man to bind it up with a flounce torn from any one of the girls' valenciennes and go home and get it dressed by the parlor floor practitioner on your block and you'll be all right. Excuse me; I've got a serious case outside to look after."

After that Bob Hart looked up and felt better. And then to where he lay came Vincente, the tramp juggler, great in his line. Vincente, a solemn man from Brattleboro, Vt., named Sam Griggs at home, sent toys and maple sugar home to two small daughters from every town he played. Vincente had moved on the same circuits with Hart and Cherry and was their peripatetic friend.

"Bob," said Vincente in his serious way, "I'm glad it's no worse. The little lady is wild about you."

"Who?" asked Hart.

"Cherry," said the juggler. "We didn't know how bad you were hurt, and we kept her away. It's taking the manager and three girls to hold her."

"It was an accident, of course," said Hart. "Cherry's all right. She wasn't feeling in good trim or she couldn't have done it. There's no hard feelings. She's strictly business. The doctor says I'll be on the job again in three days. Don't let her worry."

"Man," said Sam Griggs severely, puckering his old, smooth lined face, "are you a chess automaton or a human pincushion? Cherry's crying her heart out for you—calling 'Bob, Bob,' every second, with them holding her hands and keeping her from coming to you."

"What's the matter with her?" asked Hart, with wide open eyes. "The sketch 'll go on again in three days. I'm not hurt bad, the doctor says. She won't lose out half a week's salary. I know it was an accident. What's the matter with her?"

"You seem to be blind or a sort of fool," said Vincente. "The girl loves you and is almost mad about your

WILL JONES

"IT'S TOO LATE, SAM; IT'S TOO LATE."

hurt. What's the matter with you? Is she nothing to you? I wish you could hear her call you."

"Loves me?" asked Bob Hart, rising from the stack of scenery on which he lay. "Cherry loves me? Why, it's impossible!"

"I wish you could see her and hear her," said Griggs.

"But, man," said Bob Hart, sitting up, "it's impossible. It's impossible, I tell you. I never dreamed of such a thing."

"No human being," said the tramp juggler, "could mistake it. She's wild for love of you. How have you been so blind?"

"But, my God," said Bob Hart, rising to his feet, "it's too late. It's too late, I tell you, Sam; it's too late. It can't be. You must be wrong. It's impossible. There's some mistake."

"She's crying for you," said the tramp juggler. "For love of you she's fighting three and calling your name so loud they don't dare to raise the curtain. Wake up, man!"

"For love of me?" said Bob Hart, with staring eyes. "Don't I tell you it's too late? It's too late, man. Why, Cherry and I have been married two years!"

WOOD PULP PAPER.

Forced into Use by the Scarcity of Rag Stock.

In the early days of printing it was hardly possible to employ anything but first class paper in making books, for the reason that wood fiber and wood pulp paper had not then come into use. At that time good cotton and linen rags were turned into fine, firm, pure white paper, well able to withstand indefinitely the yellowing and disintegrating effects of time.

As the increase in the demand for printing paper grew apace it was soon found that there were not enough rags to go round. Thus wool pulp came into use.

All vegetable fiber is suitable for paper making, whether it be obtained from rags, wood, esparto grass, straw or other substances. When these fibers are torn apart they are clogged with gum, a substance that must be thoroughly dissolved and washed away by chemicals if the best results are to be obtained.

Wood pulp paper is made of finely ground wood, usually spruce, the grinding being done with a beating engine, run at high speed, and huge stones between which the wood is reduced to a kind of pulp. That done, it is made up into paper without any preliminary removal of the gum or other deleterious ingredients.—Harper's Weekly.

A Mere Trifle.

The young lady had won the philopena. "Well," said the gentleman who had lost, "I've lost; what shall I give you?" "Your photograph, nothing but your photograph," she answered. "In a pretty little gold mounting set in a gold bracelet, with a sprinkling of emeralds and just one solitaire—one only, mind you—no more!"

Habit is the deepest law of human nature.—Carlyle.

STAGE ANECDOTES

The London Debut of Edmund Kean, the Great Tragedian.

A SUCCESS AND ITS PATHOS.

The Tearful Meeting With His Wife After His Triumph on the Boards. Snubbing a Noble Lord—An English Critic on Edwin Forrest's Macbeth.

Edmund Kean's London debut was made in 1814, at a time when his financial affairs were at a very low ebb. With his wife and one child he was lodging in an attic. His reception as Shylock was most encouraging and flattering. In an almost frenzied ecstasy he rushed through the wet to his humble lodging, sprang up the stairs and threw open the door. His wife ran to meet him. No words were required—his radiant countenance told all—and they mingled together the first tears of true happiness they had as yet experienced. He told her of his proud achievement and in a burst of exultation exclaimed, "Mary, you shall ride in your carriage, and Charley, my boy"—taking the child from the cradle and kissing him—"you shall go to Eton and"—a sad reminiscence crossed his mind, his joy was overshadowed and he murmured in broken accents, "Oh, that Howard (his dead child) had lived to see it!—but he is better where he is."

On the night of Edmund's first appearance as Richard a group of idle actors in the greenroom were discussing his merits in anything but a liberal spirit. "I understand," said one, with an elaborate sneer, "that he is an admirable harlequin." Bannister entered at that moment, overheard the remark and retorted, "I am certain of that, for he has jumped over all our heads."

It seems that the great tragedian, Edmund Kean, and Charles Incledon, the popular singer, were one day walking in Bond street when they met Lord Essex, who bowed coldly to Kean, though they were on terms of intimate friendship.

The next day Kean found a note at the theater from my lord desiring him to call at his house. When there the nobleman said to the tragedian, "My dear Kean, you will pardon me. You know how greatly I admire your genius, but I was surprised yesterday to see you in company of that singing man, Incledon." "My lord," said Kean with flashing eye. "Pray don't excite yourself, now, my dear Kean," interrupted my lord, "but the respect, I may say reverence, I have for your wonderful genius prompts me to speak thus." "Lord Essex," cried Kean, drawing himself up and casting a withering glance at his noble patron, "twelve years ago my family were in want of bread and Charles Incledon, my friend, supplied the means to procure it, and when Edmund Kean forgets his friends may God forget him." And from that hour the two men never exchanged courtesies.

Kean, from early manhood, had an internal complaint, for which he had always been his own physician and prescribed that sovereign balm called "brandy," from which it generally found relief, and at least it always proved an alternative. While traveling from London to Belfast, on quitting the coach at Donegal Arms, he missed his sovereign balm and he called out to the Irish waiter to search the lately abdicated vehicular conveyance as he had left his pocket pistol behind. "The devil a pistol can I find," cried the searching Hibernian, "or anything else but this," producing the leather covered charm. "Why, that's it, you blockhead," exclaimed Kean, suiting the action to the word and tasting to be convinced. Pat scented the cordial and, laughing, cried: "Do you call that a pistol, sir? Why, then, faith, though I'm a peaceable man, I wouldn't mind standing a shot or two of that pistol myself."

When Edwin Forrest went to London he was received in anything but a cordial way. One critic wrote:

"Our old friend Mr. Forrest afforded great amusement to the public by his performance of Macbeth on Friday at the Princess. Indeed, our best comic actors do not often excite so great a quantity of mirth. The change from an inaudible murmur to a thunder of sound was enormous, but the grand feature was the combat in which he stood scraping his sword against that of Macduff. We were at a loss to know what this gesture meant until an enlightened critic in the gallery shouted out, 'That's right, sharpen it!'"

A good story is being told at the expense of a certain local theater whose "Standing Room Only" notice is no longer needed. One night after the curtain was rung up a small boy was discovered in front of the box office. The manager of the theater went to the lad and kindly asked him what the trouble was. "I want my money back," sobbed the boy in answer to the query. In surprise the manager asked his reason for such a request. "Because—because I'm afraid to sit up in the gallery all alone!" he wailed. His money was returned.—Franklin Barry in St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

A Boomerang.

"What's the matter with your head?" asked the first bunko man.

"A farmer I met today just banged me there with his carpetbag," replied the other.

"It must have been a pretty hard carpetbag."

"Yes; it had a gold brick in it that I sold him yesterday." — Catholic Standard and Times.

Anyhow, They're Gone.

Mr. Jawback — That boy gets his brains from me. Mrs. Jawback—Somebody's got 'em from you, if you ever had any, that's a cinch.—New York American.

The Old, Old Story.

"Daughter, has the duke told you the old, old story as yet?"

"Yes, he says he owes about 200,000 plunks."—Pittsburg Post.

For himself doth a man work evil in working evil for another.—Hesiod.