Cressy Will Martin

Continuous Vaudeville

Will Cressy
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Cressy Will M.
Continuous Vaudeville

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

THE OLD STAGE DOOR TENDER

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.

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.

"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."

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."

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:

"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*."

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.

"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."

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

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."

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.

"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 —

"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.*"

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.

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

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,

"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

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."

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, 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.

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.

"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.

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*?"

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.

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.

"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,

"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."

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."

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,

"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

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?

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

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.'"

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."

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?"

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