

Story of a Stage Struck Man.

THE EXPERIENCES OF A SEASON ON THE ROAD IN A COMIC OPERA CHORUS.

"So you want to know something about the inner life of the show business?" said a well-known man to the reporter.

"Ever since I was a boy I have had a hankering after the show life, and a couple of years ago, while I was engaged in a chain store, I felt the fever coming on mightily strong.

"It was the middle of August, so we had about two weeks in which to rehearse our parts. The rehearsal was vacant at the time, and we had little difficulty in getting a suitable place.

"But I enjoyed the life. The girls had not yet worn off the business for me, and I had conquered all traces of nervousness. The only thing we were afraid to face was the empty benches.

"As soon as the manager got his clutches on the door receipts, they were sent off to the banker in New York. Of course the principals, whose reputations made them independent, got their salaries; but the chorus and the rest of us had to wait for our money.

"Why didn't we kick? What was our article like—did it enter into an agreement with the checkbook to take it back for a consideration. Then it would be sent to the box office with the bill.

"The manager thought of nothing but making money, and after the treasurer had skipped with the receipts one night, he became harder than ever on the company.

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The line of evidence which will be furnished by W. J. Limes Maxwell, the Englishman, charged with murdering the companion, C. Arthur Preller, at the Southern Hotel, in St. Louis, last April, and who was brought back on Monday of last week by extradition papers from Auckland, New Zealand.

"When I told him who I was and what I knew of the case, his manner changed at once. He seemed to feel relief and lighting of the burden of his crime, he said: 'You know enough about this case to know there is a mystery in it which has not yet come out.'

"I will tell you frankly that I didn't murder Preller; that Preller is alive to-day, and proof of his existence will be furnished by the train articles and his baggage. You can't blame me for lying to these people. Here is a crowd of reporters, some of whom try to wheedle and others to bully my secrets from me. Then come detectives, and say this thing and that has been discovered, and that they have all this circumstantial evidence against me. Knowing exactly what in the case I do, I know that they are lying and are on an entirely wrong track, so I simply puzzle them more or less by my inventions. They have all got one theory and they are trying to fit facts. They have been in the case for some time, and I have said I did this at such a place, when I know very well that no such occurrence ever happened.

"I have traced me very well in my first visit to this city, because I made no effort to cover my track. I used the same name and the same disguise as a French officer all through from the time I left St. Louis to the time I boarded the Auckland steamer and throughout the voyage. It came to my mind on the train because the people asked me questions and it was amusement to mystify them and tell them stories. This was the origin of the French Captain and all his exploits. It was simply a blind to preserve my identity unsuspected, and to allow me to reach the colonies, which I thought could be easily done before any news of the St. Louis affair could reach there. I didn't know that cable communication was so perfect that the news could be possibly sent to Auckland before the steamer reached there.

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"That wasn't Preller's body found in the trunk at the hotel in which the case comes up for trial. I shall have proof of where the body found in the trunk was procured, who it was bought of, at what hour it was brought to the hotel and all the details of the plot. I can tell you now that the corpse was brought to the hotel in a trunk in broad daylight and was carried up to room 144.

"Everything was arranged to give color to the theory of a sudden murder and hasty flight. Nothing was omitted which I thought would add to this misconception. My design was to get clear out of the country before the body was discovered, and, once in Australia, I thought it would be easy to bury my identity in the East Indies until things had been forgotten. I will show you how entirely I trusted Preller, and how completely I was his assistant in this scheme when I tell you I don't know to-day how large an insurance he carried on his life. I knew it was for a big sum, and gave my help in the enterprise solely because he was an old friend and associate. Where he is or what arrangements I have for communicating with him, of course it is out of the question for me to tell, but you can rest assured of the accuracy of these facts I have given you and they will all be proven on trial."

"Concerning Maxwell's statement one of the prosecuting attorneys says: 'The insurance phase of the case was published some time ago as a sensation, and it is entirely without foundation. We looked into that matter thoroughly, and have not been able to find any insurance on Preller's life. The only insurance he had was an accident policy for \$2,000 which expired when he disembarked from the Cephalonia. If he had his life insured, I think we would have found some trace of the fact among his papers, but I have been all through them, and there is not a scrap relating to life or any other kind of insurance. Again, if he were insured it would be for the benefit of somebody, his family or some body else, and that somebody would have the policy; but we have not been able to find of anybody holding such a document. Maxwell hasn't got any policy on Preller's life. Preller's family is nobody else. If there is there no such thing in existence, the company or companies holding the risk would apply to the Coroner or the Health Board for a certificate of death, and no such application has been made.'

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FROM THE PRESIDENT.

OF BAYLOR UNIVERSITY.

"I have been using in my household for three seasons— Ayer's Hair Vigor. It has given entire satisfaction in every instance. Yours respectfully, W. E. CAREY CHASE."

Ayer's Hair Vigor is entirely free from uncleanly, dangerous, or injurious substances. It prevents the hair from turning gray, restores gray hair to its original color, and prevents its growth, cures dandruff and all diseases of the hair and scalp, and, at the same time, a very superior and desirable dressing.

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