THE FINANCIAL END.

TRIALS OF THE BOX OFFICE MAN AND THOSE WHO WATCH HIM.

Story of the Bit of Cardboard That Admits One to the Theater—The Manager on the Road Has to Keep His Eyes Open, Says a Man Who Has Been Through the Mill.

There is something about the wear and tear of the duties incidental to the box office that prematurely ages a young man. Stay by him a single day, and you'll know what it is. When he comes to the theater in the morning and arranges his tickets in the rack and counts out his change and the advance sales on that day, it is with an air of resignation such as kings and queens used to wear just before they were carted out for execution.

There are so many tickets of various kinds and prices prepared for each performance and duly dated and numbered and marked with a big letter or number for the day of the week. This larger designation is with the view of handling rapidly. There are drawers containing the tickets of the following days, each day by itself, and when an advance sale is made he puts the money received for it with the tickets for that day. When the day is over, he puts that tray of tickets and money in the safe for the night. The advance money is thus usually kept until the day comes around and then goes into the pile received for the night's performance.

The peculiarity of this business is that everything connected with the box office is cash. The sales are cash sales, and if a combination show is in the house the settlement with the combination treasurer is made in cash at the close of every performance. Simply put, therefore, at the close of the day the difference between the number of tickets on hand in the morning and the tickets left unsold is represented in the cash drawer.

As a matter of particular fact, however, there are numerous complications incidental to the operation, and the treasurer of the house and his assistant—the box office young man before alluded to—become prematurely old and abnormally smart grappling with them.

On the rural circuits the traveling manager is obliged to be very wary in his dealings with the box office man. As soon as the theater doors are thrown open to the public the combination manager or treasurer looking after the interests of the company playing in the house makes his appearance and takes up his stand at the door, where he can watch both the box office and the ticket taker. When you enter any theater where a combination is playing, you'll see this wary individual at his post of duty. He is there on the presumption that the local people will "do" him if they can. He knows all the tricks and wiles of the box office young man and the doorkeeper and takes nothing for granted.

He sees that every comer hands in a ticket of some kind, and that the doorkeeper puts that representative of so much cash in the padlocked box. The pasteboard in that tin box represents the receipts of the house, of which his company has a certain percentage unless playing on a certainty. He carries the key to that box, and if he is "fly" never lets the box go out of his sight. There is another watcher at the gallery door taking the same precaution. Of course he knows the nice box office young man wouldn't cheat him—not for the world! But all the same he is on guard against a possible lapse of conscience.

"On the road," said Billy Keogh, who has had experience in the box office and as traveling manager and ought to be pretty well up in the tricks of both, "the traveling manager goes on the principle that every box office is going to 'do him up' if it can. The first thing he does is to go to the theater and get his mail and 'size up' the local man. And the first thing the local man does is to get 'fly,' and if so it will be diamond cut diamond. That process we call 'jollying' begins at once.

"The traveling man is always on the defensive. He can't beat the other man. All he can do is to prevent the box office from beating him. He must be up to the tricks and as hard as nails. You know in small towns the local treasurer gets a yearly benefit and the doorkeeper gets a benefit. So these two men will 'play' traveling companies for the benefit of their friends at every opportunity.

"The collusion between the box office and the doorkeeper is perfect. Sometimes they are very sensitive about being watched, and sometimes they pretend to be indignant. The most indignant treasurer I ever met was in a place where we caught the doorkeeper, who was on the landing just above the box office, sliding tickets down a crack in the floor into the box office below.

"Take a popular price house and big audiences of from 1,400 to 1,500 people, and in the rush it is hard to prevent being 'done.' If I can manage to hold them down to $10 or $25 margin, I'm pretty well satisfied. A new pocket register has come into use that helps keep run of the admissions. You can stand at the receiver, and with your hand in your pocket count every person that goes into the house.

"When the ticket seller and the doorkeeper are close together, there is the most danger, for they will communicate with each other with a nod or by signs or words that the company's representative will not understand. No, I don't think the house itself often profits by these tricks. It is considered a rule that the house is 'done' along with the traveling company, though this is not always the case, to my personal knowledge."—New York Herald.

"Where Ignorance," Etc.

Bridegroom Elect (who has given every reason he can find to justify his marriage)—Besides, old man, it will improve my position. Now, you were well off before you married, weren't you?

Henpecked Husband—Yes, I was. But I didn't know it.—London Judy.

MENTAL IMAGES.

Material Pictures Contemporaneous With Thought Impressed Upon the Brain.

"A man conversing in earnest," says Emerson in his essay on "Nature," "if he watch his intellectual processes, will find that a material image, more or less luminous, arises in his mind contemporaneous with every thought, which furnishes the vestment of the thought."

This power of forming mental images appears to vary in strength among individuals to a considerable degree. Naturally we should expect to find it powerful in poets and artists. Charles Dickens has himself told us that he actually "saw" his creations as he wrote, and M. Taine mentions a painter who only looked at an object while he sketched its outline and was able to fill in the colors from the image of it in his mind. On the other hand, there are people of equal intelligence who, being unable to see such mental images themselves, have doubted their existence, and Mr. Francis Galton has shown that habits of abstract thought, such as men of science and philosophers indulge in, are apt to weaken the capacity of forming mental pictures.

Mr. Kirkpatrick of Winona, Minn., an experimental psychologist, has made a series of observations on this phenomenon with the help of his classes. The scholars were asked to write down just what came into their minds when certain familiar words, such as "book," "tree," "church," were called out, and the answers were carefully investigated. He found that the majority of the students formed distinct images of the objects corresponding to the words, and the rest formed indistinct images, with a few exceptions, who seem to have indulged in philosophical abstractions. The word "book," for example, called up visions of a Bible, a dictionary, a novel, in all but a few scholars, who thought of "food for the mind" or "the thoughts of some person." The word "tree" was represented by some kind of tree, more especially the illustrious cherry tree which George Washington cut down. The word "church" usually evoked a picture of some church in the vicinity, but some of the hearers thought of a "religious organization." It is evident from his results that most people are "visualizers" in thinking, while a few are "nonvisualizers." The tendency to form distinct images was very conspicuous among the female students, and in both sexes it reaches an abnormal development about the ages of 14 and 15, or during the period of adolescence, which, it has been otherwise observed, is also one of exceptional good health and rapid growth. The tendency is further checked or fostered by the occupations in life.—Cassell's Magazine.

The Clock Winding Snake.

In Persia there is a kind of snake which is known to the natives as the clock winding snake. It derives its name from a peculiar buzzing noise which it makes that resembles the winding of a clock. These snakes are perfectly harmless and frequently glide in and out of the houses, no attention being paid to them by the natives. During a visit there several years ago I was attracted one morning by an unusual twittering of birds, and on looking up saw about 20 sparrows on the top of a wall, all jumping about in an excited manner.

At first I was at a loss to understand the cause of such a commotion, but presently I heard the peculiar buzzing of the clock winding snake and in a minute perceived the reptile crawling along the wall, making directly for the birds, which appeared to be fascinated and made no attempt to fly away. The snake glided in among the birds, and choosing one to his liking deliberately seized it in his mouth and swallowed it. I picked up a stick, and after killing the snake cut him open and extracted the sparrow. After about 10 minutes' exposure to the sun the bird got up, and in a few minutes more flew away apparently unhurt.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Rosebery's Foresight.

The foresight Lord Rosebery displayed in arranging his matrimonial plans is illustrated in the following anecdote: Shortly after he had returned from his continental tour he was one of a house party at Mentmore, a lordly pleasure house which Baron Meyer Rothschild had built for himself in Buckinghamshire. One evening, at dinner, the conversation turned on the exquisite decorations of the room. Lord Rosebery's observation to his next neighbor, by way of epilogue to the conversation, was, "Yes, this place would suit me excellently." When, seven years later, he had married the daughter of the house and was the owner of Mentmore, his friend, happening to meet him, reminded him of this observation. Lord Rosebery replied with assumed gravity, but with a telltale twinkle in his eye, "Well, of course you know that the unexpected always happens."—San Francisco Argonaut.

A Philanthropist.

"What is the subject of your lecture?" inquired the editor.

"'The Cause of Hard Times and How to Cure Them,'" replied the gifted orator, "and as the object of the lecture is in its very nature purely philanthropic I will ask you to be generous in the matter of free notices. By the way," he added hurriedly, "I forgot to fill a blank in this advertisement. I will attend to it now."

And he took the copy and filled the blank after the words, "Price of admission," by inserting the simple characters, "$1."—Chicago Tribune.

Increase of Suicides In Austria.

The increase in the number of suicides in Austria, which is stated to have been very marked in the sixties and seventies, fell off in the 10 years 1880-90. Since the latter date, however, it has again become noticeable. In 1891 the number of suicides was 872, in the following year it was 903, and last year it reached 1,005.—London Times.

A PIONEER SKETCH

A TOUCHING TALE OF A BURIAL IN THE WILDERNESS.

The Lonely Grave of Little Ruth, Which Was Cared For by Some Kindly Hand For Thirty-five Years—A Mother's Awful Grief Almost Alone In the Forest.

In the year 1829 a steady stream of immigration was flowing into the territory of Michigan. The ever restless people of the east had heard wonderful stories of the abundance of game and great fertility of soil to be found in the new territory, and the sturdy, adventuresome farmers of rocky New England were pushing their way westward, with the hope of finding the El Dorado of their dreams.

Detroit, at this time, was a sight to behold. Its streets were thronged with the covered wagons of the immigrants. Hunters and Indians, half breeds and soldiers were mingled in a chaotic mass.

Among the great throng of home seekers that left Detroit on the 2d day of May, 1829, were James Harris, his wife and year old baby. Young Harris had put all of his earthly possessions into a covered wagon, and bidding goodby to friends and relatives had joined that endless stream of home seekers that were pushing their way into the wilderness of Michigan, hoping by their energy and perseverance to build up a home for themselves and an inheritance for their children.

The road westward from Detroit followed an old Indian trail, and by constant travel the mud had become so deep that it was almost impassable. Many of the pioneers left the old road and struck off into the wilderness, making roads for themselves.

Among this number was James Harris, and all went well for a few days. After camping one night the wind suddenly shifted to the northwest, and a cold rain set in. This was the eighth day after leaving Detroit. The company that they had begun their journey with had gradually dropped off, and for two days they had traveled alone, alone in the great wilderness, unprotected save what protection the canvas covered wagons gave them. Was it any wonder that as they listened to the howl of the wolf and the hoot of the owl they became a little homesick? Harris had made a great fire of dry brush, and while it was burning brightly the family had gone to sleep. From this sleep the young mother was aroused by a sharp, hoarse cough from her baby. She immediately awoke her husband, fresh fuel was thrown on the fire, and as it blazed up the young mother peered anxiously into the face of baby Ruth. One glance at the little drawn face resting on her arm, and the mother knew that the baby had that dread disease, the croup. Everything was done for the little sufferer that the distracted parents could do. They were young and inexperienced, and all night long they fought for the life of their little one, but all in vain. Just as the first glimmer of light appeared in the east the spirit of baby Ruth took its flight. The young mother, wild with grief, pressed the form of her darling to her breast, moaning and saying over and over again, "Baby is dead!" She refused to let her husband take the little one from her. She would never give it up; no, never! All that day they remained in camp. Toward evening the wife became calmer, and standing near the wagon with the babe in her arms she saw her husband dig the little grave, and when it was finished a rude box was made, and she tenderly laid her baby to rest, with her own hands placing it in the grave, and as the dirt rattled down on the lid she fell senseless into her husband's arms.

After filling the grave the young father took two little sprouts of Lombardy poplar that he had in the wagon, setting one at each end of the grave, and cutting the words "Baby Ruth" on a piece of board he placed it at the head of the little mound, and then they resumed their journey. Years passed, and a road was laid near the spot. The poplars grew and became a living monument. The piece of board that had told the little one's name was annually replaced by some kind hand.

Time passed quickly, and May 10 had come and gone 35 times since baby Ruth was laid to rest in the wilderness; the poplars had grown to be trees and stood in a cleared field near the roadside; the surrounding forest had long since disappeared. A board was nailed to the trees with the words "Baby Ruth" painted on it. A carriage was passing by when the driver, an elderly man, glanced toward the trees and saw the inscription. He looked at the trees and at the sign, hitched his horse, made inquiry of a farmer near by as to the meaning of the sign and was told that when he came to the country he found the little grave marked with a rude board, and that he had spared the trees and nailed up a new board. His informant wondered at the emotion of the stranger, who staid with him overnight, but his wonder ceased when he was told the story of baby Ruth as I have written it. The wife and mother had died some two years before. Other children had come to bless her, but she never forgot her firstborn and the little grave in the wilderness. A beautiful monument now marks the spot where sleeps baby Ruth.—Van Buren County Republican.

A Year's Work of the Pasteur Institute.

The annals of the Pasteur institute for the year 1893 have just been published. They show that last year 1,648 persons were treated for hydrophobia, and that only six of them died of that disease. Of the number mentioned there were 1,470 French people and 178 foreigners. Among the foreigners were 43 Spaniards, 35 Greeks, 23 English, 22 Belgians, 18 Egyptians, 14 British subjects from India, 9 Swiss, 9 Dutch and 6 Portuguese. Since M. Pasteur commenced to practice his inoculations against hydrophobia 14,430 persons have been treated by his method, and 72 have died of the disease.—London Standard.

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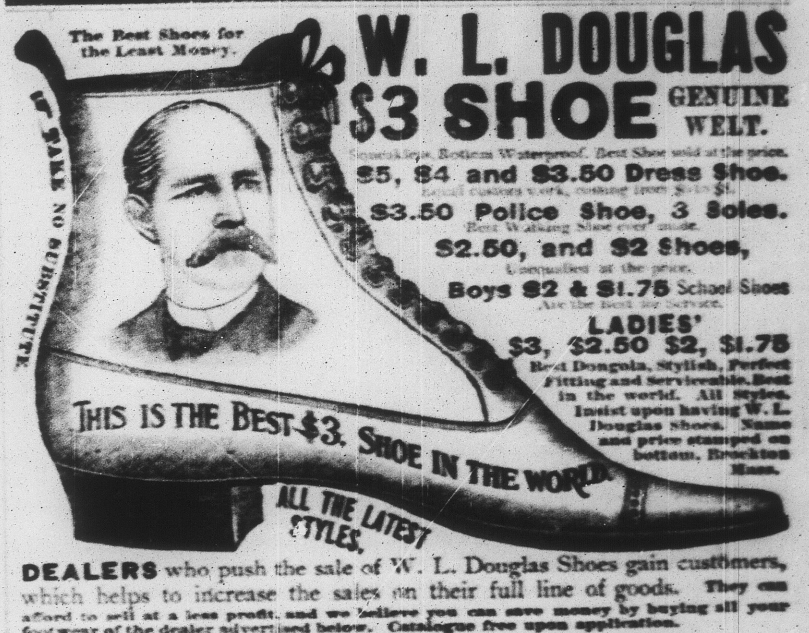

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