

STORIES TOLD BY PLAYER FOLK

By Robert Loraine

WHEN I was a lad of fourteen, I had my start in the profession, for which I received the magnificent sum of three dollars and fifty cents a week. But I was rich in imagination, if not in salary, and walked down to my home from Liverpool three times a day and lived on toast and tea. To add to my troubles I had the envy of the leading man, who tried to crush me at every opportunity.



It was my first important rôle in "The Ice King's Vow." I had secured the promise of a stage-manager to be present at the opening performance to see me act. Nothing else mattered to me but to impress him. I tipped the supervisor with a shilling and demanded myself food, that the occasion might be auspicious for that manager's benevolent attention, who was the part of the leader of a pirate band, also preparing to foil me.

I had quite a heroic speech, which should have continued without interruption to the end of it. My plea for my daughters, who were captured by the pirate chief began, "Look at them! Regard them well, chieftain, these the pledges left me by their—"

"I know what you would say," he interrupted. "I will not be taken away— And honor to your mothers. Can you throw to the winds all this, all their entreaties, and my—"

"Silence the old scoundrel!" thundered the chieftain.

"No, I will not be silenced— Prayers, a father's prayers? Oh, take my blessing, can my heart for but pity, and spare my children's honor!"

My vengeance was genuine and my acting fierce. In trying to queer me the chieftain brought out my spirit and better mood. His men had been released by him to handle me roughly when taking me prisoner, and I fought like a champion, which I was.

The end of it all was that the audience and manager were so impressed that the next day he made me an offer of honor.

By Joe Weber
NOT long ago in Chicago I had the pleasure to dine with several prominent lights at the College Inn. We had been seated long when a dapper young fellow at a neighboring table, evidently flustered by the proximity of so much fistic, political, and theatrical talent, kept turning at his seat and butting into the conversation.

By De Wolf Hopper
A REAL Southern Negro will take a simple story and so enrich it in the telling that it becomes a work of art. For instance, when "Happyland" was playing in Baltimore, I sat positively speechless with delight for half an hour, listening to a colored baggageman belonging to one of his company's state of Pennsylvania which a ghost had thrown an occupant of a haunted house.

they were accustomed to use. If a white man had been telling the story, he would have got to the end of it in a minute. But the Negro was talking for talk's sake. He was an artist.

"Jes' when them two niggahs was a-fallin' toh sleep in dat 'ar ha'nted house," said he, "dar was er hor'ble groan right outsiden de doah."

"'Whut's 'at?' sez one niggah. 'Dey ain' no one heah bu' you an' me.'"

"'Ah dun'no whut 'tis,' sez de old niggah; 'but Ah tells yoh one thing: yoh gimme time fo' toh git mah clothes offen dat hook, en Ah gah'nties yoh'll be heah bah yo'se'f.'"

"En raight thaih dat niggah sta'ted fo' toh run. He run so fas' he laik toh choke toh de'f a-swallerin' de ah in front o' his face. He come toh a town, an' he run th'o' hit so fas' he foun' a new street in hit. He kep' on a-runnin' twell he gits out in de woods an' laik toh run oveh a deer. Dis heah deer nevah knowed whut 'uz de matter, en he nevah stops toh ask. He tuk one look at dat skeered niggah's face, en he sez: 'A'm a-gwine erlong. You-all ain' got no moh important business gittin' outen dis neighborhood den Ah has. Somepin' mus' be mighty wrong back dar whar yo's comin' f'um.'"

"Well, dat ar deer he kep a-runnin' erlong wid dat ar skeered niggah twell dey done run sebenteen mile. Den de deer sez: 'Ah run so fas' mah sides is soah.' An de niggah sez: 'Kain' hohp dat; y' gotter run some moah.'"

"At las', Mr. Deer he gotter gib hit up. 'Ain' no use talkin',' sez he. 'Looks laik yo' suah outrun me.'"

"'Hmph!' sez de niggah. 'You-all ain' got no chance toh keep up wid me, lessen yoh tek dat hat-rack offen yoh head.'"

That's all I heard of the story.

By Yvette Guilbert

I WAS playing at the Folies Bergeres a few years ago, when Fate played me a trick that nearly robbed me of my reason.

Only the week previous, my physician informed me that I must submit to an operation immediately if I wished to save my life, and I was finishing the last night of my engagement at the theater, preparatory to my uncertain result of hospital treatment, when the hoodoo confronted me.

It was summer-time and I sat by the open door of my dressing-room watching the players trip by to the stage. One girl came along and stopped for me to admire her gown. It was pretty, and I told her so. "But what do you represent, my dear?" I asked.

"Sorrow," she murmured.

After she left me, I began to brood over my physical trouble, and a fearful foreboding took possession of me. "Sorrow," in picturesque attire, had stalked by my door, and perhaps her call was an omen of what to expect from Fate. The blood was pounding in my ears, and I wanted to cry out; but I could not. Then a bold loud knock came at my door.

"Who is there?" I called.

"Death," was the reply, as a pretty young girl curtsied in a dress of clinging black—"Death, the unwelcome visitor."

I shrieked and lost my senses. Months afterward, during my convalescence, the incident became a laughable memory; but it was void of humor at the time.

By Marie Cahill

I WAS in stock once playing a melodramatic thing, and the hero was declaring his popular-priced love to me; for I was the leading lady.

He was sitting on the edge of his chair, leaning forward, breathing the violence of his feelings. I preyed upon his every word, seeking for the chance to grasp some gleam of intelligence from it. I, too, sat forward in the large oak chair. I watched him with the eyes of an eagle. My hands held the arms of the chair, and in the strength of my feelings my finger-nails almost pierced the tough old oak.

At that moment I heard a bark, and Pete, my Scotch terrier, bounded across the stage in pursuit of a cat. I slipped off the edge of the chair and saved myself from falling only by the main strength of my arms. In my agony I listened for the laughter which greeted Pete to continue at my expense; but as I stealthily drew myself back into the chair and felt that my presence of mind had saved the scene, and gloried in the fact that no one had seen me slip, the voice of the inevitable gallery god came down to me.

"Good old girl!" said the piping little villain, and the scene stopped right there.



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