

A MAIDEN'S PRAYER.

A THEATRICAL STORY.

When, after repeated and fruitless efforts, Mr. Dolly Grass at last found himself in the managerial office of the Festival theatre, to which he had been conducted through a dazzling region of enchantment, he knew, at once, together, his face flushed with excitement and his tongue began to swell to such an extent as to seriously impede his utterance.

These phenomena were carefully noted by Manager Hustle, of the well-known theatrical firm of Hustle & Hardup, as he "sighed up" his visitor and invited him to a chair.

"I have here a play," said Mr. Grass, producing a roll of manuscript tied with a pink ribbon, "which I am confident would prove a great success in your theatre. I wrote it all myself, and although it is my maiden effort in that direction I have reason to believe that it contains the elements of popularity. All I want is a fair trial."

"I'm afraid I can't do anything for you here," said Mr. Hustle shaking his head dubiously. "I can get plays till you can't rest; but when it comes to paying out \$10,000 for putting it on the stage, that's quite a different matter. Very sorry, but I'm exceedingly busy this evening."

"But," rejoined Dolly, "I am perfectly willing to bear the expense myself, if you consider the play good enough for your theatre, would you like to read it to you some evening when you are not otherwise employed. As you are busy now I will call again later in the week."

The effect of these simple words was magical. They opened to the fertile and imaginative brain of Mr. Hustle a bright vista of prosperity extending up to the very end of the season, and possibly a few weeks into the next. In his dream the ghost walked, the leading lady ceased to kick, and the printer, gas man, landlord and costumer disappeared into outer darkness.

"I don't know," he remarked reflectively, "but what I might be able to do something with you. Anyway, just sit down here a minute and we'll talk it over."

If Mr. Grass' knees shook on the occasion of his first visit to the Festival theatre they may be said to have rattled together like castanets on the evening day when he read his play to the members of the company, grouped about him on the dimly lighted stage.

Messrs. Hustle & Hardup were both there, and when the reading was finished expressed their approval with a degree of enthusiasm that raised the young author to the seventh heaven of delight. Some of the players, however, did not seem to be as favorably impressed. The comedian sulked and observed that there were some "mighty queer" things in the dialogue, to which Mr. Hardup retorted that there were "one or two mighty queer actors to read them" and Mr. Funniman subsided inconspicuously, while the rest of the company giggled.

Miss Maude Duprez, the leading lady, was also morose, and it was not until Mr. Hustle had remonstrated with her in a vigorous whisper that her face assumed something like a cheerful smile. She took Mr. Grass aside and made the following stipulations: "First, that she should have her first entrance through a bay window in a riding habit."

Second—That her favorite ballad, "On the Fall From Mr. Bon's" should be interpolated in the drawing room scene in the second act.

Third—That the part assigned to Miss Lester, the juvenile lady, should be shared by just one-half, and all the best lines added to her own, because she did not intend to be "snowed under" by that painted thing, who ought to have been playing comic and woman in the age.

With these trifling alterations she thought the piece might "catch on." The managers had but one stipulation to make, and that was that Miss Grass should deposit with them a check for \$10,000 to "cover the expense of the production and guarantee them against loss." They then introduced Mr. Billy Freeland, the press agent of the theatre, who had been thoughtful enough to prepare in advance two or three glowing eulogies on the author and his play.

The evening of the first representation of "The Maiden's Prayer," by Adolphus Grass, Esq., came at last, and at 8 o'clock the Festival theatre was packed with an expectant throng. The audience was large, but the box office receipts were small. In order to insure a good attendance free tickets had been distributed in various quarters by the management, the author and various attaches of the house.

The friends of Mr. Grass, clad in evening dress and bearing bouquets of flowers, occupied seats in the boxes and front rows of the orchestra. They could be distinguished from the rest of the audience by the expression of blended incredulity and amazement that adorned their faces. That Dolly Grass had no had always been regarded, and with some reason, too, as but little better than a half-wit, should succeed in having a play produced at a leading theatre, with his name actually printed on the programme, was something far beyond the limit of their comprehension.

The friends of the management, who occupied a large proportion of the orchestra chairs, wore countenances full of happy anticipation. They looked as if they had come there to enjoy themselves; and so they had, for the word had gone forth that the new piece at the Festival was to "get the guy" and every disengaged theatrical person in town had made immediate application for a seat.

nervous when I hear the burst of applause and go out there on the stage in front of that great sea of faces. Do you really think I ought to go out and bow when they call for the author?" "If that guy" said the author, "is the leading lady, a minute later, 'gets off without having cabages thrown at him he'll be playing in great luck. He ought to wear an apron over that clown's head. Called out! He's liable to be called out by a policeman."

But Mr. Grass had no doubts in his mind about the call, for had he not arranged with two trusty friends in the orchestra and another in the proscenium box to stand up at the conclusion of the first act and hail "Author! author!" in lusty chorus? And, that the enthusiasm might seem more general, had he not stationed Honest Peter, his father's colored coachman, in the front row of the gallery, with instructions to mingle his voice with the tumultuous cries below? Moreover, had he not committed to memory a little speech prepared for him by Billy Freeland, and had he not rehearsed it daily before the looking-glass, and acquired, also, at a cost of \$10 to a dancing master, an entirely new and graceful bow?

Surely there was no need to worry about the curtain call or the play, either, for the success of both was a foregone conclusion. But it was the fact of the audience that troubled him, that drove him nearly frantic, for through the hole in the curtain he could see the bright faces of pretty Kitty Morley, and it seemed to him that there was something like a sneer on her lips as she turned to Tommy Hamilton beside her, and pointed at something—could it be the name of Adolphus Grass?—on the programme. What right had that odious Hamilton there, anyway?

The play went on and the author roamed like an uneasy spirit through the availed scene, cursed by stage hands and laughed at by the actors. His carefully prepared speech had slipped from his memory, and he was wandering about in a daze, and breast in efforts to recall the eloquent lines. He could hear shrieks of laughter from the audience, and at times it seemed to him that the people on the stage were laughing, too. Surely this must be good comedy that could convulse experienced professionals.

Miss Duprez's song about the fall from the balcony was the signal for wild outburst of applause, and then the laughter went on without interruption until the close of the act.

They even laughed during the serious portions of the play, so engrossed did they become with the subtle humor of the comedy.

At last the moment which he had been dreading all the evening came. The curtain fell on the third act, and Mr. Dolly Grass stationed himself, pale and trembling, in the prompt entrance, waiting for the summons. A deep silence reigned, a moment was succeeded by a cry from the gallery, which caused him to dart to the hole in the curtain. Where were his trusty friends? They were in their places, shaking with subdued laughter, while far up in the gallery he saw the faithful dusky servant leaning over the rail, while he bawled out: "Order! Order! Miss Dolly! Come out o' dar' an' show yo'self!"

The audience grasped the situation far more quickly than had any of those in the play, and a great shout of applause fairly shook the building. A policeman in the gallery fell upon the hapless coachman and carried him out, despite his struggles and cries:

"Mr. Grass done teler teler holler! He's gwine ter give me \$5 dis berry cbin' for hollerin'! It's all right, boss. For de Lord's sake, go ask Massa Dolly about it." "Go out and square him!" exclaimed Mr. Hustle, as he wiped the tears from his eyes, and poor Dolly was forced to go out on the sidewalk, where nearly half the audience were assembled, and rescue poor Peter from the clutches of the law.

When the piece was over he received a spontaneous call from all parts of the house, but he did not return to it. Mr. Hustle advised him not to and also advised him to leave the theater with as little ostentation as possible.

A FRONTIER STORY.

How Two Government Scouts Were Re-Engaged on the Frontiers.

From Fort Abraham to Fort Sully, both on the upper Missouri river, is a bee line of 160 miles, but the distance as a rider has to make it is fully 200. It is on record that the first dispatch passing between those posts was carried in my pocket, and that at a time when hostile Indians almost besieged both forts. It was on this ride, and at about forty miles above Sully, that a strange incident occurred. From Fort Union to Yankton, a distance of 600 miles, the Missouri runs along a chain of mountains on the east, while on the west side there is scarcely a hill to be found. While the route down the east bank is naturally more difficult, it is also more sheltered, and that was the route I took on the occasion referred to. While there were plenty of Indians in the mountains and in the mountain valleys, there were more of them on the plains, and my journey was considered such a forlorn hope that wagers were made at Fort Lincoln that I would never be heard of again.

I had a mustang which had traveled over more of the country than any man living, and in all matters pertaining to frontier life he was as well posted as four men out of five. Armed with a Winchester and revolver, and rather proud to have been the one selected out of five scouts to make the trip, I left Fort Lincoln just at dusk on the morning of the 1st of August, and rode down the river before crossing over. A reconnaissance in force a day or two before had driven the hostiles back, but I might count on finding them within seven or eight miles. I had scarcely forded the river, when a mule, which had evidently been in hiding in a thicket near by, came forward with a low whinny and appeared greatly pleased to see us. A brief inspection proved that he belonged to a scout named Abner Johnson, who had been detached from Fort Lincoln to Fort Ransom, some 150 miles to the east, ten or twelve days before. The saddle was in place, blanket, coffee pot and other articles secured as usual, and the mule was intact, was such a relief that Johnson had been shot from the saddle. Nothing could have induced the mule to run away from him while alive. The animal, as I figured it, was making for the fort at a gallop, fording the stream when the noise of our passage alarmed him and he hid himself in a thicket. It was determined to accompany me, and, after finding him obstinate, I slipped the iron bit out of his mouth, and he drove him in the water and rode off, with him a close follower.

Between the river and the foothills there was a level varying in width from 50 to 100 feet, and covered with grass. Along the bank of the stream, with hardly a break for miles and miles, was a line of trees and bushes. The foothills were covered with scrub and growth, and between them and the base of the range there was fair travelling and good cover. At every mile or two there were breaks in the foothills by which one could turn in from the level. I did not intend to travel far that night, the main object being to get beyond

the hostile lines and take an early start the next morning. Up to the crossing of the river my mustang's feet had been muffled with oak sachs so that he could leave no trail. There had been no rain for two or three days, and no living Indian could have traced me. Across the stream, I removed the bags. I should leave a plain trail, but must thereafter trust to my own sagacity. It was a startling sight as I rode forward I routed up a deer or other wild game every 50 rods. This satisfied me that no Indians were near, and I continued my ride until midnight. By this time I was at least 20 miles below the fort, and I went into camp to wait for daylight.

Going into camp consisted of unsaddling the mule, rolling up my traps in a blanket, and plunging down at the roots of a cottonwood. I was asleep in five minutes, and when I opened my eyes it was daylight.

The animals were close at hand, and each had his nose in the air and was scenting like a dog. I was hardly on my feet when I saw a white smoke, a light breeze blowing up the valley, and the camp fire was below me or the direct I proposed to go. I moved into the belt of timber and did not stop to catch a moment for an observation, and after going about a quarter of a mile I saw the smoke. I waited five minutes before advancing nearer, but seeing no movement, I crept forward, saw the body of a white man lying on the ground, under the trees. I knew it was, by the dress, and now, thinking that I had come upon a government scout or some white hunter, I rose up and advanced into the camp. No man ever made a more appalling discovery. It was the body of Abner Johnson, and he had been killed, and between him and the river, a distance of 20 feet, lay the dead bodies of nine Indian warriors. While a glance at the scene made me shudder, it did not take me some time to satisfy myself as to the cause. I finally found a stone-belt, holding about two quarts, which I remember to have seen in the hands of a prisoner. It had contained whiskey, but was now empty. The posture of the bodies was proof that every warrior had died of poison. I did not venture until a moment that Johnson fixed up the close before leaving Fort Ransom on his return. He seemed to have a presentiment that he would be captured, and he brought two quarts of whiskey and dosed it with strychnine, knowing that it would surely revenge him.

Johnson had evidently been driven out of his direct course, as was proved by a trail over the ground, he was well in the lead of his nine pursuers when a chance shot from a rifle struck him in the right hip and he tumbled down in the brush. He had gone on and the Indians had gone in to camp to torture the wounded man. They had cut off his left ear, gashed his cheeks, and had done many other things, and other cruelties when the poison which they had imbibed in the whiskey began to work. There must have been a high old time among them for half an hour, during which interval the prisoner probably bled to death. Johnson's eyes were wide open and if his eyes could reflect anything his surely reflected the agonizing agonies of the Indians were in a grassy dell a quarter of a mile away, and each was hobbled. It seemed an awful wicked thing to do, but I did not stop to turn and drove my knife to its heart. Then I gathered up saddles and blankets and lariats and flung them into the river. I took the risk of hostiles, and the wampum and headresses of the nine warriors and made up a load for the mule, and after covering Johnson's body with brush I rode on to keep it from the vultures, I went forward on my journey, which was completed without a further incident worth mentioning.

A couple of years later I was transferred to Fort Lincoln, in the State of Texas, and in the Apache country. A commission was sent to the east to locate a post on the Rio Pecos river, and as the country was full of hostiles the party made pretty rough. There were six scouts, thirty private soldiers, three or four officers, and some seven or eight prospectors and hunters and trappers. They wanted to sight of that country. The distance from the fort to the river is about sixty miles, and all open country, and we were accompanied by two wagons and an ambulance. While we did not see a man over fifty all told, each man was heavily armed and well mounted, and 500 Indians would have hesitated to attack us in the open. All the scouts were paired off, and the name of my partner was Calvin. He was a rough and rugged man of 60, and most of his life had been spent in the Apache country. He had had a dozen of close calls, and the scars he could show in proof counted up a dozen or more. I did not know until we had started on the march that he had prepared any trick against the Indians, who would be sure to menace us, but at our first camp he showed me a canteen of whiskey, which he said was poisoned. He had had a full of hostiles the party was made up of.

We reached the Rio Pecos, opposite Corporal's Peak of the Castle Mountains without being molested by the Apaches, although we saw numbers of their scouts and had no doubt that a considerable force was hanging on our flanks. We made our camp in a defective spot, and after a rest, small parties scouted up and down the river to examine the lay of the country. On the third day Calvin and myself, accompanied by a corporal and two private soldiers, rode up the Pecos about ten miles, crossed over, and started to come down on the north side, and we had not gone far when we found the stream when we found the redskins more numerous and far bolder. The soldiers had seven-shooter carbines and Calvin and I had Winchester, and we felt no alarm even when we knew the Indians to number fully 100. An ambush was the only thing to be dreaded, and we got into one in spite of our vigilance. We rode miles below where we crossed the river the ground became very rough and was cut up into gullies. This extended from the river back as far as we could see, and we could not see the fort. By a good luck crossed the river here, but our orders were to come down on the north bank. Every man knew that if the Indians meant to attack they would do so from the west, and notice would be a volley from one of the blind ravines.

In this emergency we strung out in single file, the corporal leading, Calvin next, I the third, and the private soldiers fourth and fifth. We had not advanced forty rods into the "bad ground," and had not caught sight of so much as an Indian's feet, when we were surrounded by from 25 Indians in a gulch. They were only 20 feet away, and one would have thought every man of us would have been killed. In the first volley we were killed three of us were untouched, and not one of our horses was hit. The corporal and Calvin were both wounded and then the rest of the party were killed simultaneously with the volley a hundred or more Indians exhibited themselves in front and on our left, shouting and firing. In such an emergency every man acts for himself. The three of us who were treated as fast as our frightened horses could run, all the time under. But as soon as we had cleared the "bad ground" we took shelter in a small grave on the edge of the stream and prepared for defence.

We were charged by 60 of 70 warriors on foot, who perhaps imagined us badly frightened, but we passed away at them so steadily that they broke and took to cover, leaving six dead men in plain view. This was at 10 o'clock in the morning, and we did not get another glimpse of an Indian until 4 in the afternoon, when I climbed one of the trees and saw a body of them making off to the mountain. I then ascertained what had occurred. Both Calvin and the corporal had been put to the torture, but they had been amply revenged. The six we had killed lay where they fell, as our fire commanded the spot. We found, in a sort of pocket, covered with bushes and limbs, 11 other dead, every one of whom had died of poison. One was Chief White Bird, a noted warrior, and the others were veteran warriors of his band. The bottle was empty, and the tobacco bag had been turned wrong side out. Three or four years afterwards I met an Apache who was present on that occasion, and he said that White Bird and his chosen few drank the whiskey and then smoked their pipes while the others were making the prisoners ready for torture. The corporal died before they could make ready, and when the warriors began to cut our tree, and Calvin was soon dispatched by a blow of a tomahawk. The bodies were badly mutilated, but it was mostly after death. The band lost interest to our tree, and was so disheartened that it retreated and went into mourning for weeks.

MEN OF LETTERS.

A new novel by Dumas is expected about Christmas. William Ernest Henley, the author and poet, began life as a laborer. John Wesley had a remarkable memory, and at 85 even it was still vigorous. There is said to be little doubt in England that Sir Edwin Arnold will be the next laureate.

Tolstoi, it is reported, has been obliged to stop smoking, and this has sadly interfered with his power to write. Tennyson's forthcoming volume is to be made up of verses recently composed and of scraps rescued from forgotten books. James Whitecomb Riley has not been well this summer and has done very little literary work. He is regaining his health rapidly.

It is said that Luther R. Marsh, the New York lawyer who became a believer in spiritualism and Mrs. Dies De Barr, is writing a book on spiritualism. Archibald Grove, who is at the head of the *New Review*, is only 28 years old. He took double honors at Oxford in 1880, and has spent much time in travel. Joaquin Miller, the poet of the Sierras has shaken the dust of the effete east from his boot heels and gone to California to plant his feet. He says that he has planted 15,000 within the past three years. When not engaged in tree planting he is busy with his great work, a life of Christ.

He Kept Posted.
From Drake's Magazine.
Mother: "Yes, my son, Miss Gently is a young woman of sterling worth." Son: "She was day before yesterday, mother." Mother: "Was day before yesterday?" Son: "The last Chicago wheat deal swamped the old man and Miss Gently has no sterling worth just now. I shall go back to Miss de Golding's. The same deal gave her father a bank account. There's nothing like keeping posted, mother."

Life: Jenkins: "Well, Jack, the cool weather's coming on now." Jack Borowitz: "Yes, and I'm glad of it. One more washing and my flannel shirt will do for a chest protector."

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