

Playbills and Sentiment.

By Carl Williams.

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The janitor's little girl murmured a word of thanks for the penny bestowed upon her and scampered back down stairs, while Elizabeth returned to the parlor with the mail which the child had just brought.

It was a comfortable little city apartment, and only the typewriter table in one corner betrayed the fact that it was a work as well as a play room. Through an arch an absurdly small dining room with the table laid for one proclaimed it to be the home of a bachelor girl, though Elizabeth Bennett's dainty femininity gave no suggestion of spinsterhood either from choice or circumstance.

The coffee percolator steamed on the table unheeded while she ran through her letters—a check for a story, two manuscripts, a paper and a thin, flat package bearing a foreign stamp.

Elizabeth frowned over one letter, smiled over another, patted the check lovingly as she thrust it into the drawer of her tiny desk and ripped the covering from the package. Out fell a playbill, a glaring thing of red and blue letters on yellow paper, bearing the list of artists appearing at a Roman music hall.

One of the names was marked with an ink cross, and in defiance of postal regulations Nell Stanwood had written on the margin: "Do you remember we saw her at the theater the night before I sailed? It's a small world, after all."

Elizabeth smiled at the remembrance. Four other girls and herself had given Nell a going away party the night before the latter sailed to study in Italy. They had wound up the evening at a vaudeville theater,



"IT IS FROM THE HOME," HE EXPLAINED, where the little dancer of the glaring programme had appeared. Now, Nell in Rome had seen the same act and had remembered their last night together. Was she homesick?

It was several moments before Elizabeth opened the newspaper, the old home paper and "as good as a letter," so Jack Hardy had often declared. Not an item of news worth the telling escaped publication in the Blairsville Beacon, for even with detailed information as to newly painted fences the editor found it difficult to fill his yawning columns.

The Beacon was Hardy's compromise with his conscience, for he had declared when Elizabeth had determined to leave Blairsville for the greater opportunities of the city that he would not write. He had not written, but after the first week the Beacon came regularly, addressed in his strong, masculine handwriting, and Elizabeth always smiled a softly triumphant smile whenever the copy arrived.

There had been an "understanding" with Jack Hardy until the stories she loved to write had so frequently found publication as to awaken in Elizabeth an ambition to get in personal touch with the editors.

Hardy had frowned upon the suggestion of removal to New York. He could not leave Blairsville because his own and his mother's incomes were derived from the lumber business which his father had left, and Hardy knew that to go to the city meant beginning all over again the fight for a competence.

There had been heated words over Elizabeth's determination to leave, and she had been given her choice of a career or marriage. She had elected in favor of the career. She had prospered in the great city. She had told herself over and over again that she had done the only sensible thing, and yet—

Today there was an inclosure with the Beacon, a playbill announcing in flamboyant language a week's engagement at the opera house of the Rice & Bennett Empire stock company.

Elizabeth smiled as she read the familiar repertoire. The Rice & Bennett company was almost an institution in Blairsville. Twice a year they played for a week in the town hall, and every one who could afford it attended all their performances. It was the one real dramatic treat of the season, for

July Official Tide Tables

Compiled by the U. S. Government for Astoria and Vicinity.

JULY, 1908.				JULY, 1908.				
High Water.				Low Water.				
Date	A. M.	P. M.		Date	A. M.	P. M.		
Wednesday	1:54	8:1	3:25	7:3	Wednesday	1:56	8:0	3:2
Thursday	2:30	7:7	3:22	7:3	Thursday	2:22	8:2	3:4
Friday	3:05	7:4	4:20	7:4	Friday	3:05	8:0	3:2
Saturday	4:35	6:9	5:00	7:6	Saturday	4:10	8:0	3:2
SUNDAY	5:45	6:6	5:38	7:7	SUNDAY	5:10	8:4	3:8
Monday	6:38	6:2	6:20	7:8	Monday	6:11	9:1	3:8
Tuesday	7:45	6:0	7:00	8:0	Tuesday	7:00	9:1	3:7
Wednesday	8:00	5:9	8:00	8:2	Wednesday	8:00	9:1	3:7
Thursday	9:18	5:9	9:00	8:3	Thursday	9:00	9:1	3:7
Friday	10:25	6:2	9:55	8:8	Friday	10:00	9:0	3:3
Saturday	11:25	6:0	10:48	9:0	Saturday	11:00	9:0	3:4
SUNDAY	12:25	5:5	11:48	9:2	SUNDAY	12:00	9:0	3:4
Monday	1:25	5:4	12:48	9:3	Monday	1:00	9:0	3:4
Tuesday	2:25	5:3	1:48	9:4	Tuesday	2:00	9:0	3:4
Wednesday	3:25	5:2	2:48	9:5	Wednesday	3:00	9:0	3:4
Thursday	4:25	5:1	3:48	9:6	Thursday	4:00	9:0	3:4
Friday	5:25	5:0	4:48	9:7	Friday	5:00	9:0	3:4
Saturday	6:25	4:5	5:48	9:8	Saturday	6:00	9:0	3:4
SUNDAY	7:25	4:4	6:48	9:9	SUNDAY	7:00	9:0	3:4
Monday	8:25	4:3	7:48	9:0	Monday	8:00	9:0	3:4
Tuesday	9:25	4:2	8:48	9:1	Tuesday	9:00	9:0	3:4
Wednesday	10:25	4:1	9:48	9:2	Wednesday	10:00	9:0	3:4
Thursday	11:25	4:0	10:48	9:3	Thursday	11:00	9:0	3:4
Friday	12:25	3:5	11:48	9:4	Friday	12:00	9:0	3:4

the few other attractions that made Blairsville were traveling magicians, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" companies and an occasional "medley show." The Rice & Bennett company was to Blairsville what grand opera is to the cities.

Last year she and Jack had attended the spring performances together, but in the fall she was gone. How time had flown! The Rice & Bennett company would open their spring engagement the following week, and Jack had sent her a hanger. An odd lump came in her throat as she returned to the table and her neglected coffee.

When she started to tidy up after the meal she thumb tacked the Italian poster to the wall of her tiny private hall. The wall was bare, and the yellow poster with its foreign lettering gave a smart touch to the hall, like hotel labels on a steamer trunk or suitcase.

Elizabeth sat down to the typewriter, but presently there came an insistent ring at the hall door. Tony, the rosy faced Italian, who supplied the tenants of the house with ice, displayed two rows of gleaming teeth as he explosively announced "Ice!" Elizabeth held open the door for him while he lifted the cake from the dumb waiter and placed it in her refrigerator.

But the smile faded from Tony's face as he turned to leave. With an inarticulate cry he sprang at the poster, fingering it lovingly and scanning every word of the beloved Italian.

"It is from the home," he explained, blushing, when the first shock of surprise had passed. "It is there that I take—a what you call—sweetheart? Ah, the Salome Margherita, ma an' my Marie. Marie she cannot leave a da pop—da fard! I come—a to America to make a mon. It is ver' lonely, signora. Scusa a mi!"

He shuffled haltingly from the apartment, his jovial face drawn with homesickness and thoughts of the distant Marie.

Elizabeth went back to her work. On the floor the Rice & Bennett playbill still lay neglected, but now it caught her attention, and she picked it up to read, even as Tony had done with the other, every word of the familiar announcement.

She wondered if Jack would be going. If so, who would be in her place? Mrs. Hardy did not care for the theater, and it was not fair to expect Jack to go alone. She smiled at her jealous thoughts and sat down resolutely before her typewriter, but she found that the thread of the story which had started so well was lost. She could not force her mind to concentrate upon the adventures of an imaginary heroine. Her attention persistently wandered to the playbill on the floor.

She could see the opera house without even shutting her eyes. The roller skating craze had somewhat revived its original glories. The common wooden chairs were in place now only when some theatrical performance was given. Probably there were

"Rules and Regulations" tacked up on the walls with "Beacon Job Print" in large type beneath the phrase, "By order of the management." She could hear the ragged strains of the three piece orchestra, and she knew that Will Taber and Ren Blake would hustle importantly through the stage entrance. They were always the "and others" on the programme, the army in "Under Two Flags" and "A Celebrated Case," the miners in "The Danites," etc. It was all so vivid that she seemed really to be there. With a choking laugh at her new emotions she ripped the story from her typewriter and slipped in a fresh sheet.

John Hardy, Blairsville: Please get seats for all next week. I am coming home tomorrow.

ELIZABETH. Then she gazed about the cozy little flat. It would be very different in Blairsville, and she knew that in sending that message she had virtually announced her surrender, but she hummed a little little song as she put on her hat and prepared to take the telegram to the office. When she came to the narrow hall she stopped and took down the Italian poster and, with the one from home, placed it in the drawer of her desk.

"You've carried your messages," she whispered to them as she smoothed the folds, "but I want to keep you for remembrance and warning. To Tony and me you meant home, I'm more fortunate than Tony, for I'm going home—to Jack."

The Helping Hand.

A blind newsman stood in the early evening on the curb at Forty-second street and Third avenue. The papers he sought were at a depot on the opposite side of the avenue. He stood silent. Presently a young man slipped out of an idle group near by, took the blind man by the arm, piloted him across the car tracks, left him and passed on. Neither said a word.

Having obtained his papers, the blind man turned again to the curb, standing patiently. A woman, bareheaded and evidently a tenement dweller near by, walked up the avenue, paused, stepped aside, took the newsman by the arm, conducted him back across the avenue and resumed her errand. Neither spoke. It's just a way they have over there on the east side.—New York Globe.

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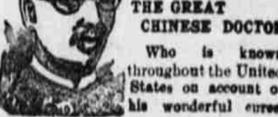
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