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## My Management

### It Was Not Wise, but the Gain Was Considerable

By THOMAS R. DEAN

It was not long after I became a manager that I was besieged by playwrights who desired their productions put on the boards. I could withstand the men and the elderly ladies, but when it came to pretty young women it was very hard for me to stave them off. One day when I had already accepted more plays than I could use in several years a young lady called at my office and asked permission to submit a play. I told her that it would be useless for me to read any play unless it promised a phenomenal success, whereupon she looked at me out of a pair of very beautiful blue eyes and said she was quite sure her play would be a phenomenal success. I could not but smile at her confidence, since it was difficult to predict such result even of a work by an experienced playwright.

What could I do? I took her manuscript from her, agreeing to look it over and if I should find it meritorious would read it carefully. The young lady asked when she might call for it, and I told her I would drop her a line when I had read it. This seemed satisfactory to her, and she took her departure, leaving with me very pleasant remembrances of her.

But not having a spare moment I forgot all about her and her play. A month passed, and one day I received a note from her reminding me that she had left a manuscript with me and would be pleased to be informed what had been done with it. I determined to return it with the usual thanks and a few complimentary words, but—We who must deceive authors have so many butts that it would not be worth while to specify this one. I went to a closet where I kept manuscripts handed in for my inspection; but, although I went over all of them carefully, I did not find "Constancy," the one I wanted. Then I remembered that I had taken it to my home. But I did not find it there. I usually stopped at my club on my way home and sometimes at other places. I must have left it somewhere, but inquiry failed to elicit any trace of it.

However, hoping that it might turn up, I ventured to put the authoress off. I wrote her that I had read enough of her play to become interested in it, but had been so busy with those I was preparing for the boards as to prevent my giving it the attention it seemed to deserve.

The truth was that I was having about that time hard luck with the plays I had brought out and was losing money. Indeed, most managers were in the same fix. There was but one play, "A Sylvan Buttery," that was successful, but that had enough success to make up for all the failures. Hearing of the new attraction, I went to see it and was delighted with it. Its theme was one that will always appeal to human sympathies. I wondered if the manuscript could have gone the rounds, as most manuscripts of plays by unheard of authors are apt to do. I certainly would never have turned it down if it had been offered to me.

I didn't find the manuscript of "Constancy" and was much troubled about it. Another month passed, and the pretty playwright called at my office and asked for her play. She said that other playwrights were getting their productions on the boards and she saw no reason why she should not do the same. Mentioning "A Sylvan Buttery," she said that her own play was just as good and if produced would attain equal success.

Being used to the estimate playwrights attach to their plays, if I had spoken my mind I would have told her that there were ninety-nine chances in a hundred that if her play was produced it would be a lamentable failure. As it was, I could only look wise and say nothing. But when I saw that her eyes were wet I broke down and told her that I had read enough of her play to warrant my paying her \$500 for her play, my object being to compromise with her for that amount for having lost the manuscript.

At first she scouted the idea of accepting such a sum for a play which she fancied, as most young authors fancy, would make a fortune, but I represented to her the cost I would incur and the risk in staging her play, and she finally consented to accept my offer, but stipulated that, since she had never made but one copy of her play, I must not call on her for another. Glad to get out of the scrape by paying a stipulated sum, I agreed to this and gave her a check for \$500 in payment for a play that I had never read and did not possess.

This embarrassing matter having been put out of the way I began to show the young lady some attention. Indeed, Miss Alice Woodruff and I became gradually fond of each other. She did not trouble me about her play except to indicate a desire to have it produced. I put her off for some time. Then one day, when by my devotion I had got her into a condition to bear a disappointment, I told her that the reason I had never returned her play was because it would not do for the stage. I had given her the money for

it because I had not had the heart to tell her the truth. She seemed quite overwhelmed at this, and I took advantage of the situation to tell her that I desired her to make me happy instead of pleasing the world by her plays. There is nothing like such a sacrifice as I had made to produce love, and I was rewarded by an acceptance.

During our engagement my fiancée told me that she was engaged in writing another play. "But I'll not offer it to you," she said. "After your noble act in paying me for a play that was worthless rather than hurt my feelings it would be a shame for me to put you to such a test again."

"You will permit me to read it simply as your critic, will you not?" I replied. "We'll see about that when I have finished it."

One evening soon after this when I called on Alice I met a theatrical manager well known to me coming away from her house. I wondered what he had been doing there and wished to ask him, but refrained. I thought he looked at me with something akin to jealousy. We bid each other good evening and passed on without a word upon the subject that was uppermost in the mind of each. Entering the house, I found Alice, and it was not long before I gave her an opportunity to inform me why she had called.

"Oh, you mustn't think that you are the only string I have to my bow," she replied laughingly, and that was all I could get out of her.

The next day as I was about to enter my office Parkinson, the man I had seen coming out of my fiancée's home, passed by and, seeing me, stopped and said:

"It seems that you and I are after the same thing," he said. "The same thing! What do you mean?"

"Come. Don't pretend to be stupid. You know where I met you last evening."

"Certainly I do!"

"Well?"

"Well?"

"I've got it all in my own hands, and there's no use in your interfering. You can't do anything."

"You speak in riddles."

"What nonsense! Own up, man. You're trying to get ahead of me, I having been first in the field."

"See here, Parkinson," I said, with rising color; "Miss Woodruff is engaged to me, and there's no use for you to try to get ahead of me. It is you who are interfering."

The most singular expression came over his face I have ever seen on the countenance of any one. He stood gaping at me for a few moments, then, with an abrupt good morning, turned on his heel and left me.

I called on Alice during the afternoon, but for an explanation.

"I supposed," I said laughingly, "that you and I were engaged?"

"So did I."

"Will you please explain what you mean by encouraging another man?"

"I encourage another man?"

I told her of my meeting with Parkinson and of his having accused me of trying to get ahead of him. "She burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter."

"I think it time," she said, "that you and I came to an understanding. Sit down. I have a story to tell you."

I obeyed her impatiently.

"The first time I saw you," she said, "was when I left you a play called 'Constancy.' The next day the manuscript was returned to me by some one who found it, though I don't to this day know where."

A cold chill began to creep down my back.

"I offered it to several other managers and finally to Mr. Parkinson. He brought it out under the name of 'A Sylvan Buttery.'"

## REAR ADMIRAL FLETCHER OF ATLANTIC FLEET.



Photo by American Press Association. Rear Admiral Frank F. Fletcher commands the important first division of the Atlantic fleet. He has under him the following first line battleships: Florida, his flagship; Arkansas, Delaware, North Dakota and Utah.

## CAPTAIN RODGERS COMMANDS DELAWARE.



Photo by American Press Association. The Delaware, which Captain William L. Rodgers commands under Rear Admiral Fletcher, has twenty-four guns and is a battleship of the first line. She is of 20,000 tons.

## CAPTAIN SMITH OF BATTLESHIP ARKANSAS.



Photo by American Press Association. The Arkansas of the Atlantic fleet is a sister ship of Commander in Chief Badger's official flagship Wyoming. She has thirty-three guns, is commanded by Captain Roy C. Smith and is used as Badger's flagship during repairs to the Wyoming.

## CAPTAIN RUSH OF FLAGSHIP FLORIDA.



Photo by American Press Association. The Florida is the flagship of Rear Admiral Frank F. Fletcher, commanding the first division of the Atlantic fleet. Captain William R. Rush is in command.

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## ONE SORT OF MURDER.

It Doesn't Take Human Life, but It Shortens Its Usefulness.

Several well known financial men were talking the other day when the name of a man well known in the street for his proclivity to take up valuable time of friends with useless discussions about nothing was mentioned. One of the men in the party prominent in business and finance at once burst out with: "That man! He's a murderer."

"What's that?" said another. "I never heard that he had killed any one unless he talked them to death."

"I mean just what I say. He's a murderer on the installment plan," came the answer.

The speaker was begged to explain, and he said: "I have just so many days to live, and all of them are filled with business of importance. That man comes in and steals my time, and I claim that he has just as much murdered me as if some time in the future he had struck me down, for the time he talks with his nonsense is that much gone out of my life and is lost. I say that he is a murderer on the installment plan."

And when the other members of the party recalled the many times they had been treated in the same way by the man under discussion they agreed with the first man in his verdict.—Wall Street Journal.

## LONDON'S UGLY CHURCH.

The First Sacred Edifice in the World to Be Lighted by Gas.

Readers of "Our Mutual Friend" will remember that Dickens gives a whimsical description of St. John's, Westminster, when referring to the home of the doll's dressmaker, Miss Jenny Wren.

"In this region," he writes, "are a certain little street called Church street and a certain little blind square called Smith square, in the center of which last retreat is a very hideous church, with four towers at the four corners, generally resembling some petrified monster, frightful and gigantic, on its back, with its legs in the air."

Lord Chesterfield said St. John's reminded him of an elephant with its legs in the air, and Charles Mathews likened it to a dining table in the same position.

St. John's enjoys the distinction of being the first sacred edifice in the world to be lit by gas. As may be imagined, the introduction of the new illuminant was deeply resented by many conservative spirits, some of whom went so far as to describe it as a sacrilege.—Manchester (England) Courier.

The universe is not rich enough to buy the vote of an honest man.—Gregory.

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