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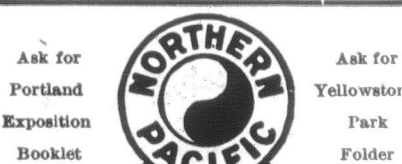
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MILLIONAIRE RAFFERTY

AN EPISODE IN THE BRIEF THEATRICAL CAREER OF
SYBIL FRANKLIN Written specially for The Western Home Monthly



THEIR train arrived so late
at Fielding that the Sybil
Franklin Company went
supperless to the theatre.
During the banquet scene
in the first act, Melville,
the character man, whis-
pered lugubrious asides
to the young star regard-
ing this distressful cir-
cumstance.

Sybil laughed. Her
uncle, John Franklin, the
famous tragedian, had
prophesied many worse experiences
than this when she told him she was
going out as a leading lady. John
Franklin, indeed, was very unwilling
that his niece should be an actress
at all. He was rich enough to retire,
and he wanted Sybil to keep house for
him. After a season or two of little
parts in her uncle's company, Sybil
sensed the situation and signed with
Moses Dana, a manager who played
week stands in the smaller cities, and
who engaged Sybil on account of her
name, for her talent, to tell the truth,
was inconsiderable.

"You see, it's kill or cure," she ex-
plained to Mr. Franklin.

"And what if you fail?" he demand-
ed.

"If we fail," Sybil answered, "you
may buy the place in Westchester,
and your housekeeper will be ready."

"Do you mean that, my dear?"
asked her uncle.

"I do mean that," she said. "I'm
satisfied with the bargain. If Moses
Dana closes his season before April
I'm through with the stage. But we'll
finish it—you see—by hook or crook!"

"You'll learn the hooks and crooks
with Dana," rejoined the tragedian.
"I like your ambition, Sybil. But
you'll find it isn't everything."

"What is, then?"

"In a woman, womanliness."

"But I am an artist," concluded
Sybil, resolutely. "And I am not to
be balked by womanliness, Uncle
John."

Between the acts on that Monday
night in Fielding, Sybil went to the
edge of the curtain and peered out
at the auditorium. It was well filled.
She nodded reassuringly at Melville,
who stood behind her.

"A good house," she said.
"Paper!" grunted Melville mourn-
fully. "Oh, by Jove, look at the box!"

The Fielding Academy of Music
boasts of two boxes, and in the one
opposite Sybil a tall, gray-haired man
was taking the solitary seat. Under-
neath a voluminous light overcoat he
wore evening clothes; in place of a
necktie glistened a diamond. He laid
an opera hat on the railing, waved a
white-gloved hand at the leader of
the orchestra, and pulled back the
lace curtain so that he could survey
the house. His spectacular entrance
made a stir. A ripple of laughter ran
through the audience. The gallery
whistled, and the man beamed with
gratification. His pink face was ab-
surdly simple and childish.

"Now, who in the world is that?"
inquired Melville of the stage car-
penter.

"Oh, that's Millionaire Rafferty,"
said the carpenter, grinning. "Ain't
he a peach? Say, a year ago he was
selling tickets in this theatre. Come
into a fortune since. Has that there
box every show night. Nothin's too
good for Rafferty. Why, he keeps
bachelor hall in the bridal suite at the
hotel. All ready, second act!"

The play was a costume piece, in
which Sybil looked particularly hand-
some. The young actress was accus-
tomed to consider admiration entirely
impersonally, and merely as a part of
her professional stock in trade, but
when Millionaire Rafferty leaned over
the box-rail and applauded extra-
vaguantly, Miss Franklin caught Mel-
ville's eye and felt slightly uncom-
fortable. Her discomfort was in-
creased by the thought that in the
next act her part required the dis-
guise of masculine dress.

Heretofore the change had never
seemed of more consequence than a
change of wigs; but now Sybil entered
for the disguise scene in a tiny
flutter of trepidation, glancing at the
box. Millionaire Rafferty faced the
gallery, where several spectators were
showing their approval of Sybil's trim
figure by vulgar, good-natured ex-
clamations.

"Hush!" hissed Rafferty angrily.

"Silence!"

The next morning she found an ex-
pensive and extremely ugly bouquet at
her place at the breakfast table in the
hotel dining-room. The donor's name
was not attached.

"Who sent these flowers?" Sybil
asked the waitress.

The girl mumbled an incoherent
reply.

"Won't you please take them as a
present from me?" said the leading
lady, sweetly, and gave them to the
servant, who giggled and bore the
flowers to the kitchen.

Sybil had a discreet glimpse of Mr.
Rafferty in the corridor. Out of the



Methodist Sunday School Picnic, July 3rd, 1905, on the Farm of Mr. Thos. Hall,
Ninga, Man.

tail of her eye she could see that he
studiously disregarded her.

Late in the afternoon Sybil received
a call from her manager.

"I promised to let you know when
business was real bad, Miss Frank-
lin," began Dana. "Well, things is
commencing to look awful!"

Sybil flinched.

"We've only two months more of
the season to play, Mr. Dana. Can't
we—"

"I've got some towns booked in
April," interrupted Dana. "If we can
tide over this month we'll pull out
fine; but I've had to miss three salary
days already, and I can't raise a cent.
I was thinking that if you wrote to
your uncle—"

"For money?" broke in Sybil hotly.

"I'd die sooner!"

"Then we'll have to close," said
Dana, "and that settles it."

Sybil stared at the dingy carpet of
her parlor, and winked back the
tears. Her ambition was very dear
to her.

"Can nothing be done?" she falter-
ed.

Dana started up with surprising
cheerfulness.

"Oh, yes, I've a scheme, of course,"
he said briskly. "An old chap in this
town has written a play and wants us
to produce it. He's rich—kind of a
local magnate—and he'll put up all
the cash we want for the production."

"Rafferty!" breathed Sybil.

"That's the name," assented Dana.

"But his play—it can't be actable!"

"Actable? I should say it was!"
cried Dana emphatically. "Why, look
how we can advertise it! This Raf-
ferty is notorious. It'll be a tremen-
dous winner here for us—tre-men-
dous!"

"But have you read—"

"Yes, I've read it," pursued the ex-
cited manager, "and it's all right. If
it runs queer, we can fix it good
enough at rehearsals." He hustled to
the door. "I'll have the parts copied
and get things going."

"One moment," interposed Sybil.
"I want to be sure we're treating the
author in good faith."

"Miss Franklin," said Dana sternly,
"it's this, or close. As for good faith,
I tell you that any new author is
lucky to have a play produced at all.
And when he's rolling in money—
why, does he mind?"

Sybil was silent. She hardly knew
what to say. She could not announce
her suspicion that Mr. Rafferty's mo-
tive was his admiration of her beauty.
Millionaires could afford to produce
plays, and it certainly was her busi-
ness to act plays. Dana hurried from
the parlor with a sigh of relief.

At the theatre Sybil shared a dress-
ing-room with Mrs. Dana, a motherly
placid lady whom Miss Franklin
loved. It was Mrs. Dana who intro-
duced Rafferty to the leading lady
behind the scenes. The diamond col-
lar-button was missing, but his cos-
tume was grotesquely sumptuous. He
had pale, tremulous blue eyes, with
an odd, pleading expression in them,

and his mouth was loose and inde-
cisive. Sybil listened with the most
distant politeness while he invited
the manager's wife to drive with him.
Mrs. Dana excused herself kindly.

"I got a real nice double rig, Miss
Franklin," hinted the millionaire.
"Yes, ma'am, a real nice one."

Miss Franklin pleaded press of
work. She had not even looked at
her part in Mr. Rafferty's drama. The
author bowed preposterously, and
Sybil, laughing, crossed the stage to
Melville.

"Have you read 'Mated at Last?'"
asked the actor sadly.

"That ridiculous man's play? No.
Is it queer?"

Melville rolled his eyes.

"It's unspeakable," he groaned.

"Alice in Wonderland" is 'Hamlet'
beside it."

"Why, Dana said it would act!"

stammered the leading lady.

"Oh, Dana! What does he care?"
said Melville. "This play is simply
idiotic—as one might expect from a
love-crazed author!" and he shook a
blue manuscript reproachfully at Sybil.

Danger flashed in Miss Franklin's
eyes. She secured a copy of "Mated
at Last," and dipped into it in the
privacy of her dressing-room. A few
glances were enough. The play was
illiterate, incoherent nonsense.

Sybil sent for Dana. She was in a
wretched temper, chiefly at her own
folly.

"But it's too late to give it up
now!" protested the manager fervent-