

manager—well, like all managers—can't be expected to know everything.

The appearance of Chandler on the scene, however, caused a new phase in the condition of affairs and the annoyance of the last week gave way to supreme independence on Laura's part. On the other hand Hermann Crutts, as house manager, began to impose those petty exactions on the company which can be so irritating to the bohémien life of the profession. And the company—well, blamed Laura. For was not Hermann Crutts the son of the owner, fairly well off and not bad looking. If he wished to spend his money on a cold bird and a bottle and wanted Laura to keep him company, why said they, shrugging their shoulders, didn't she have a little sense and accept his hospitality.

In the meantime Bob Chandler tried his hand at floating some mining properties on the British market, and when not so engaged, made himself generally agreeable to those about the theatre. As a result it wasn't long before everyone in the company was ready to swear by him. This was doubly irritating to Crutts, who had taken a violent dislike to him and didn't hesitate in expressing it. Thus matters stood until December, when one evening before the curtain rang up Bob found him hectoring Laura about her "supposed relation," and insinuating that he didn't wish to have any reflection on the good name of the Criterion. Naturally enough there was only one course for Chandler to pursue, and he carried it out to the letter by kicking Crutts off the stage. When the latter picked himself up and separated the dust from his clothes he sent a letter to Burchon, the company's manager, notifying him that the Criterion would secure a new booking at New Year's. Then John Mortimer Burchon damned, including everything in his disgust from the star down to Chandler. After the play Laura shared his disgust, and the two together passed it on to Bob, who grimly remarked that Crutts could go to hell or some other likely place, but it wasn't worrying him any as he had foreseen something of this nature long ago.

"That's all right Chandler, but what are we going to do. We can't get a house at this late hour," rejoined Burchon resignedly.

"Hold your horses there, old man," "The Trend of Events is billed for the Royal Theatre, Edinburgh, from New Year's on."

"What!" gasped Burchon and Laura together, "you don't—"

"Yep, got an option on it a month ago," Bob replied laconically.

"And you never said a word about it," pouted Laura reproachfully.

"Well, this business isn't my funeral, but I have been expecting it, so thought I had better hold a hand for Burchon while he was playing."

When the rest of the company heard this they voted Bob a trump, and by the latter's invitation had supper on him, while he apologetically explained that the kick was worth ten suppers.

So it came about that on New Year's evening "The Trend of Events" opened at the Theatre Royal in the old Scotch capital. During the next two months Laura visited almost all the historic spots in this modern Athens. On one dull Saturday after the matinee she had determined to see Holyrood, so entering a coupé rode through the drizzling rain by way of Calton Hall. As she peered through the rain bespattered window out on the muddy road and almost forsaken highway, she shivered and wished she had gone to the hotel. Away to the west the

Castle loomed up grim and forbidding, its walls facing sheer with the sides of the cliff and frowning down upon the Princess Street Gardens below them. Her eyes wandered from the distant landscape to the square regular outlines of the prison of Dow Craig by the roadside. It seemed almost to hem her in between its massive masonry and Calton Hill upon which the monuments stood looking down defiantly upon the plains. The mist which had gathered on the Pentland Hills moved slowly Firthwards, now dropping lightly on Arthur Seat, now passing gently over the Hill until it hovered above the silent city of Leith.

But here she was—as the coachman drove up alongside the open archway of the Palace. Laura got out and rushed hurriedly through the rain and the entrance hall, waking the drowsy warder who saluted respectfully for the shilling which she had given him for the guide book. Then as she passed through the cloisters of the open quadrangle almost ran into—Mr. Hermann Crutts.

"Oh! how you frightened me," stammered Laura, then after a brief pause, "What are you doing here?"

Crutts looked at her for a moment rather sullenly, then acting as if she had made the first advances replied, "Down here getting the material for the staging of the coronation play which we are putting on at the Criterion."

"O—Oh!" briefly replied Laura in a tone which plainly indicated that the subject was getting distasteful.

Crutts went on then hastily, "Are you sight-seeing, because if you are why I have a permit from the secretary giving me free access to every part of the Palace. Perhaps we might see what we otherwise wouldn't," he concluded affably.

Laura didn't like the idea of having such company as Crutts in her rambles about this ancient structure, yet what was the difference. There was no need of being rude, besides he had permission to view the private apartments, an opportunity which was not to be missed. The last argument determined the matter so she started with him through the chapel, gallery and various chambers once occupied by Queen Mary, Darnley and the murdered musician Rizzio. Finally they found themselves in Queen Mary's private apartments. Laura was just drawing back from the secret stairway which Crutts had shown her when the hour gun on the fortifications of Inchkeith boomed suddenly out on the falling night. "Why, it is six o'clock; we must go," exclaimed Laura in dismay.

But as she turned to leave something was thrust into her mouth while her elbows were pinioned by a pair of strong arms. Crutts, for it was no other than he, then drew a wide belt around her, and when he had made it almost impossible for her to move, gazed sneeringly yet sensually upon her. Just then the heavy tramp of the warder could be heard as he made his rounds preparatory to closing. Crutts dragged her half way down the stairway and held her close to him, taking the additional precaution to hold his other hand over her mouth. Laura tried to resist in order that the warder might hear, but he pressed her so relentlessly to him that she was almost suffocated. The warder stuck his head through the doorway of the room above and called "All out," then listened a moment for an answer, failing which he closed the door and lumbered heavily down the halls.

After his footfalls had completely died away Crutts helped Laura downward up the steps and into the room where he seated her near the window so that she might not faint from the ordeal she had been through. She gazed piteously up into his face, but seeing its hard, set expression looked tearfully out the window. Seating himself a short distance away he lit a cigar and watched her