

## He Fired Mary Pickford, Managed Bill Nye, and Now Handles Carnival Shows

Ed. R. Salter, Publicity Director of Fair Midway, Tells Good Stories.

40 YEARS A SHOWMAN

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Some day, if destiny decrees, a book entitled "Forty Years in the Show Business" will be written by a man now in London. It will be one of the most interesting volumes on theatrical life that ever adorned a book shelf, for it will be penned by an individual whose experience with famous figures of the stage and circus is hardly equalled by any other living person.

Edward R. Salter, publicity manager for the Johnny J. Jones show, now doing business on the Western Fair Midway, will be the author. In London, Mr. Salter is well-known as he is well-known in every city of any size on the continent. For he is the man who started many of the big stars of Broadway on the road to eminence and fortune.

In the course of Mr. Salter's varied career there has been no department of the theatre, circus, side show or lecture business with which he has not come in intimate contact. He is the man who started Bill Nye and James Whitcomb Riley on the lecture platform. Mary Pickford, George Cohan, Henry Woodruff, May Irwin, and numerous other noted stars whose names glittered on Broadway, New York, and the Strand, London, in letters six feet high, owe much of their success to Edward Salter.

Salter was the man who directed "Prince of Tonight," one of the biggest hits in the musical comedy field. He lived with George Cohan and Ren Shields in the old Metropolitan Hotel, New York, when they composed "In the Good Old Summer Time," the greatest popular song success of history. As manager of "The Little Outcast," he actually "fired" Mary Pickford, who was taking the juvenile part.

Started in Detroit. At the age of twelve, Salter started life as a showman in Detroit, where he was born. His first job was selling programs and carrying water. As time went on he graduated to ticket seller, treasurer, assistant manager, and, finally, director of many outdoor attractions when the moving pictures struck the popular fancy and dealt a blow to the legitimate show business from which it will never recover.

From manager of White's Grand Theatre, Detroit, now the New Detroit, Mr. Salter went to Saginaw, Bay City, Grand Rapids, New York and other American cities. He became manager for May Irwin, a great actress of the past, Kelcey and Shannon, Maelyn Arbuckle, Stuart Hobson and latterly played at the Bijou Theatre, New York. He produced "Stubborn Cinderella," "Honey-moon Trail," "The Flirting Princess," "What Happened to Jones," "Why Smith Left Home" and "Bought and Paid For."

Salter it was who originated Swedish comedy in the form of Ole Olson impersonations. Years ago Gerry Cohan, father of the Cohan family of theatrical fame, offered Salter the services of himself, sons and daughters for five years at \$80 a week. Salter accepted and paid such a "huge" sum at the time. Now the Cohan family is making approximately \$800,000 a year. George Cohan, the great Broadway favorite, has amassed millions.

Managed Bill Nye. The most enjoyable period of Mr. Salter's career was when he managed Bill Nye, the famous humorist, and James Whitcomb Riley, the Hoosier poet, who made a fortune on a lecture tour of the United States and England. Riley and Nye, through their readings and addresses, entrenched themselves in the hearts of all their audiences and their names are now regarded with the same lustre as that attached to Mark Twain, Ralph Waldo Emerson and even Longfellow. Mr. Salter likes to talk of his experiences with these popular literary lights.

Nye and Riley were two of the most lovable characters I ever managed, he said. "They were both comparatively old men, mellowed by age and knocks received in the school of experience. Mentally they were the most active pair I ever knew. They held their audiences in raptures of laughter. Whenever Nye appeared on the stage with his aphorisms, epigrams, jokes and good common sense, the crowds warbled with delight. Riley, too, was a universal favorite."

Twenty-five years ago, after the Broadway season, Mr. Salter took two dozen or more New York stars to the Maritime Provinces to play stock. This was, without doubt, the greatest stock company America has ever seen, for it included William S. Hart, the Barnum brothers, Ed. Harron, Willie Collier, Lottie Williams, May Irwin and many other stage celebrities. All these actors and actresses were attracted by Salter's proposal to play stock in the Maritimes by the splendid fishing to be found on the Atlantic coast and inland lakes and rivers. Each member of the great company, from stage hand to prima donna, received \$50 a week. It was the first and only theatrical organization ever conducted on an "equal wage" basis.

With Famous Stars. In Mr. Salter's opinion, the greatest black-faced comedian that ever lived was George (Honeyboy) Evans. Evans was a versatile clown behind the footlights, and an extraordinary man off the stage, as well. He composed some of the most popular hits of fifteen years ago.

Lillian Russell, De Wolf Hopper, Maude Adams, Cyril Maude, Al Johnson, Elsie Janis, Theodore Babcock and Madame Modjeska, were intimates of Salter. He used to pay Theodore Babcock \$12.50 a week, with board, for playing juvenile parts in a repertoire show. Later, he hired the same man for \$200 a week in "What Happened to Jones?" Babcock has in recent years made as high as \$1,000 a week. Eddie Foy and Marie Dressler were also managed by Mr. Salter. McIntyre and Heath, the greatest vaudeville pair that ever graced a theatre, got their start under his supervision.

Mr. Salter never went to school a single day in his life. In spite of lack of training, however, he has an education of which any master of arts might be proud.

The late Alf Holman, Alf Bryan, noted song-writer, Charles Shaw, now managing a theatre in New Orleans, were all London boys. Salter knew them personally, and can recall nights in this city when the four of them got together after the show

ED. R. SALTER.

and swapped reminiscences. He was also a boon companion of A. J. Small, the missing Toronto theatre millionaire, with whom he had dinner two weeks before Small's mysterious disappearance. Mr. Salter has his own theory regarding Mr. Small's alleged death. The latter had more enemies, he said, than any show magnate he knew.

De Wolfe Hopper An Idol. De Wolfe Hopper, Mr. Salter says, was probably the most entertaining stage idol in America. Hopper was always filled with kindness and humanity toward his fellowmen, and his humor was as keen off the stage as on. Lawrence D'Orsay, Salter declared, was about the worst actor in the world. But his inimitable English accent carried him into the crowd's affection.

"D'Orsay should have been a rich English earl. He was the most likeable clubman we ever met, and it seems a shame that he was not born a count or an earl, for he had the perfect precise manner of old-fashioned nobility."

Lillian Russell's charitable inclinations made her one of the most loved women on the stage, Salter said. He points to her as a shining star in the firmament of theatre lights.

Is the so-called temperament of great stars real or is it affected? he was asked.

"My experience proves that temperament is all affectation," the general publicity manager of Johnny J. Jones replied. "But I always had a cure for temperament. Once, when May Irwin became erratic and refused to play ten minutes before the performance was scheduled to commence, I decided I'd have to employ harsh methods. So I told her she could do as she liked, and promptly put a substitute in her place. Audiences are always very tolerant of substitutes, and the show went over with a success that was sensational. After that Miss Irwin never let her streak of temperament show itself. She was cured."

Objected to Candles. "Another time Henry Woodruff wouldn't play, because the theatre was illuminated by candle light. He said his reputation was too great to consider acting under poor lights. Well, the show had to be put on, so I substituted a young chorus man to fill Woodruff's place. This chap did extraordinarily well and the audience went mad over him. Woodruff read about it in the papers the next day and from that time on his temperament was a minus quantity."

Mr. Salter attributes 60 per cent of the success enjoyed by modern stars to pure, unvarnished luck. Richard Mansfield, he said, would still be a plodding actor, unknown to the public, were it not for the fact that the leading man of his show took the suddenly ill years ago, and Mansfield was given his chance. From that day Mansfield had been in demand everywhere.

Salter knew Douglas Fairbanks when the latter played heroic roles on the legitimate stage. They usually assigned him the task of impersonating newspapermen of the commonly accepted type. Later Fairbanks married the daughter of Sully, the cotton king, and Sully spent a fortune trying to star his son-in-law, without success. When the movies came, however, Fairbanks seemed to fit right in, and his salary jumped from \$30 a week to \$3,000 a week inside of a year.

Song Writers. Mr. Salter knows Irving Berlin, the song-writer, and was an associate of Daniel Frohman, Fox and Gilbert Sullivan. He and the late John Bunny were great friends. Bunny was a failure on the stage, but his success in moving pictures was instantaneous, especially when his wife, Flora Finch, was given a star part. Bunny died under management of Salter, when they were touring the country in vaudeville.

The greatest "Tom" show of ten years ago was organized by Edward Salter. It was called the Salter-Martin Company, and came to London twice, showing "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

The outdoor show is now Mr. Salter's specialty and he has many interesting stories to relate regarding the habits of freaks and animals. The majority of circus freaks, he says, are procured inside America. One of the show officials will hear of a freak living in some part of the country, and an investigation will be made. If the oddity is found to be freakish enough to warrant exhibition he is offered a contract and, if he accepts, is taken with the show. Ho-to, the African pigmy, who resembles a gorilla more than a human being, was procured by Barnum twenty years ago on the west coast of Africa, where the legendary

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"ape-men" lived.

Regarding Freaks.

The great proportion of freaks are foreign, few peculiarly designed persons being born in America. Circus animals are mainly bred right in this country, although a percentage are taken captive in their native haunts and trained. An escaped lion, contrary to general opinion, is not a dangerous animal, Salter declared. The lion is usually much more frightened than the people, and if they would not prod him with pitchforks and use other foolish measures to get him back to his cage, he would seldom attack them. Elephants are the most dangerous animal when they break loose. It is virtually impossible to deal with them until after their tantrums have ceased.

Circus and show people, Salter stated, are the most temperate of any class in the world. They all have their religion and their standard of morals these days is infinitely higher than it was twenty years ago. Most of them are well educated.

"You must remember that show people are called upon to put up with a great deal," he said. "Ninety-nine per cent of the spectators enter a booth with skepticism and all think it vitally necessary to make some derogatory comment about the show. Cries of 'fake' are frequently heard and men and women on exhibit are often insulted. If our people were half as temperamental or bigoted as the so-called normal person who views them they would be impossible to handle."

The likeable thing about show people and theatrical people is that while they may not profess any high devotion to religion, they all try to practice the golden rule and experience has given them a larger and more generously used supply of the milk of human kindness than any other class I know."

Among stars and show companies directed by Mr. Salter are Lottie Williams, Mary and Lottie Pickford, Bill Hart, William Farnum, Madame Modjeska, Cool Burgess, the minstrel George Evans, second only to Honey Boy Evans; Mrs. Fiske, Kelcey and Shannon, Moheens and Bulger, Robson and Crane, John Dillon, Calhoun Opera Company, Harris' Theatre, Pittsburgh; Grand Theatre, Duluth, and many others previously mentioned.

## Double Misfortune Strikes Gentlemen Adventurers

Associated Press Despatch.  
Los Angeles, Sept. 13.—Double misfortune has befallen a group of 39 British gentlemen adventurers, who arrived at Los Angeles harbor recently on a pathfinding voyage in the interest of an airplane flight around the world planned for next year by Captains Norman McMillan and G. H. Malines of the Royal Air Force. The first came yesterday when federal officers searched their vessel, the Frontiersman, and announced they had found aboard 65 gallons of whiskey, and promptly attached the liquor and the boat.

The second misfortune came when a deputy United States marshal served notice on the commander of the Frontiersman, Capt. Spalding, that the vessel was attached in behalf of the Los Angeles Shipbuilding and Drydock Company for a claim of \$150,000. The first came yesterday when federal officers searched their vessel, the Frontiersman, and announced they had found aboard 65 gallons of whiskey, and promptly attached the liquor and the boat.

Club of London, who volunteered to serve without pay for the run of the voyage. Several now working as deckhands, stokers, oilers and cooks, have notable war records. It is said the crew contributed \$15,000 toward the expenses of the trip, the remainder being made up by popular subscription in England. The vessel left London June 16 last, but turned in at Dover because of faulty engines, and started from that port June 22. It passed Madeira and Santa Lucia and into the Pacific through the Panama Canal. It made a leisurely trip up the west coast, with some trouble from improper fuel, and reached Los Angeles harbor Aug. 25, since when the crew has been fed and dined by many individuals and organizations in Los Angeles and vicinity.

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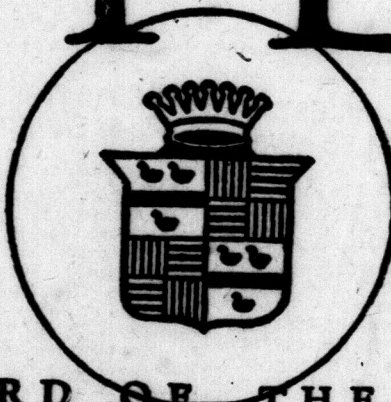
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