

THE ROAD TO FAME

By ALBERT HIGGINS

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It was Grandma Foster who was to blame for it. She came on a visit to her daughter, Farmer Stebbins' wife, and found her niece Hattie teaching the district school and engaged to be married to a worthy young man named Hiram Ball. Miss Hattie was fairly educated, fairly good looking and very well contented with her life.

Grandma's coming, however, started the fires of ambition. Once during her long life the old lady had attended a theatrical performance. It was in the town hall of her native village. The play was "Uncle Tom's Cabin," of course, and the company was made up of barnstormers, but it was a great play, and it made grandma, who was only a little girl then, thrill from top to toe.

Soon after her arrival at the Stebbins Hattie walked across the veranda in a way that made the old lady exclaim:

"Bless my soul if that don't remind me of Ophelia in 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'! You've got her walk to perfection. Child, have you been practicing for the stage?"

"No, grandma."

"But the way you just turned around, your looking back at me with your head over your shoulder, your smile, the way you stick up your chin, all remind me of Ophelia. You could step right on the stage and play the character."

That was the beginning. Grandma announced her great discovery to her sister and brother-in-law and advised them to put Hattie on the stage at once; but, meeting with decided opposition, she said nothing further to them. Many were the councils held between her and the niece, however. It had been forty-two years since grandma had seen the historic play and what she couldn't remember she imagined. Within a week she had decided that Hattie could not only play the part of Ophelia, but of little Eva,



"BLESS MY SOUL, IF THIS DON'T REMIND ME OF OPHELIA."

Legree, Marks and even of Uncle Tom himself. She couldn't fail to be the whole show, and in four weeks she would rise from "Uncle Tom's Cabin" to Shakespearean plays. The old lady believed what she said, and the young

lady believed with her. Hiram Ball tried his best to open his fiancee's eyes. "Your grandmother is a fool!" was his blunt way of putting it. "Because you can smile and giggle is no sign that you would make a great actress. You just give up the idea and settle down and behave yourself."

"Mr. Ball, I permit no one to speak disrespectfully of my grandmother in my presence," replied the young lady, with freezing dignity, as she took three strides to the east and then turned about and took three strides to the west.

"Hattie Stebbins, don't make a jay of yourself. You'll never be an actress any more than I'll be Cicero. It ain't in us."

"Speak for yourself, Mr. Ball. My resolution is taken. It is irrevocable. Nothing that you can say will shake me in the least. Destiny calls me."

"What, do you mean to tell me that you are going to be silly enough to go on the stage?" he shouted.

"Remember whom you are addressing, varlet!" she warned as she drew herself up.

"By gum, but you have gone crazy! That old grandmother of yours ought to be ducked in the goose pond. What does she know about acting?"

"Enough, sir! Here our paths diverge. From this hour we are strangers."

"Then go right along and make a fool of yourself!" called Hiram as she turned away.

When the grandmother was informed of the insidious remarks of Mr. Ball she held out new encouragement. She discovered new things to find new predictions on. The very way that Miss Hattie climbed a fence, fell down on the lawn or ran into a clothes-line proved to her that the girl was born for the stage and had been moldering in obscurity.

The district school was continued, and nothing might have come of the talk but for the week's holiday in September to give the carpenters time to make some repairs. Grandma had gone home, and now Miss Hattie went over to the county seat to visit a girl friend. She and Hiram had been "out" for the last three months. Instead of moping and sorrowing and breaking his heart he had again called her a jay and continued his business of buying butter and eggs for the market.

A theatrical company playing "Did She Love Him?" had struck the town and excited the people. The actors and actresses had sauntered about the street and been the observed of all observers. There was talk of a "tremendous cast" and a "carload of scenery." There was talk of a "farewell tour" and "tremendous applause." The play had run several hundred nights in New York and the same in London, and its author had received over a million dollars in royalties.

Miss Hattie Stebbins had determined from the first to join the company. She met the manager in a grocery where he had called for crackers, cheese and herring, and, to her intense joy, he was looking for a young lady to play second lead. Her salary would be \$25 per week. Her part would be to hold up the train of the leading lady's dress as she entered the parlor, trim two lamps and ask the leading lady if she should turn the cat outdoors. The manager could promise her no more just at present, as the leading lady was insanely jealous of her part, but later on there would be a change.

It was agreed that Hattie should leave when the company did and make her first appearance at the next town. She dodged her friends and was at the depot as the company made ready to depart at midnight. It departed in the caboose of a freight train. The manager explained that they preferred to travel that way in order to view the scenery.

There were five actors and three actresses. The actors were gallant

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"At the age of 23 my lungs were in a terrible state. I had in gripe the year before; it settled on my lungs and I kept steadily growing worse till I got down so low I was in bed for six weeks. I had a consultation of doctors, and they said they could do nothing more for me. Then I started to use Psychine. I took the medicine for more than a year. It certainly did wonders for me. I am now as strong as I was before my sickness."

MRS. H. HOPE, 50 Morph, Ont.

Psychine, pronounced Si-keen, is the greatest of tonics, building up the system, increasing the appetite, purifying the blood, aids digestion, and acts directly upon the throat and lungs, giving tone and vigor to the entire system. At all druggists, 50c, and \$1.00 or Dr. T. A. Slocum, Limited, 179 King Street West, Toronto.

enough, but the actresses held aloof and threw out insinuations and made Hattie feel as badly as they could. There was sleep that night for all who sat on the floor. In the early morning the company rolled into its next stopping place, and the manager took the upper rooms at the village inn. These included the garret. He did this, he explained, on the ground of health. He borrowed Hattie's watch that day and forgot to return it.

She went on in her part that night. She had studied it for hours and was letter perfect. She fell over a chair on her entrance, and she fell over another on her exit, and, though the actresses sneered and wanted to know if she thought she was in a cabbage patch, the manager took her aside and said he never saw such acting by an amateur. She had only to keep on and fall over four chairs to bring four rounds of applause from the audience. He wound up by borrowing her breast-pin.

For a whole week Miss Hattie Stebbins played second lead and rode from town to town in cabooses. For a whole week the actresses showed their jealousy of her. Sometimes enough money was taken in to pay the bills and get to the next town. Sometimes the printer and the landlord were held up by promises. Sometimes the audience numbered fifty people, and the applause that went up the manager called "positively tremendous." Sometimes only half a dozen people sat around and wondered what it was all about.

Miss Hattie had two gold rings, and the manager borrowed both of them. She loaned two or three of her dresses and a hat to the actresses in the hope of getting into their golden opinions. She learned to enter and to exit, and if she fell down she learned to fall gracefully on her shoulder. The manager assured her that the pinnacle of fame was not far away, and everything looked rosy, when she awoke one morning to find the company gone and to learn that the landlord was holding her for the bill.

Luckily her father arrived at that juncture. There was no scene. She did not fall into his arms. She had had acting enough. He simply took her home, where she found Hiram waiting for her. He had been biding his time, and there was no scene with him either. He simply remarked that if she had got over being a jay he would like to revive the marriage question, and an hour later a female head was resting on a manly shoulder and gazing up at the new moon with dewy eyes. After a long while Hiram gently asked: "Dearest, what does varlet mean? You know you called me one."

"It's—It's some kind of an animal. I guess, and I'm sorry," she replied as she snuggled closer.

A NEED, JUST LIKE SLEEP.

In the Instinct of Natural Death Born In Mankind.

The most convincing fact in proof of the existence in man of an Instinct of natural death seems to me that reported by Toxarsky in relation to an old woman. In the lifetime of Toxarsky I begged an acquaintance of his to obtain for me the details of this most interesting case, of which I had found but an incomplete statement. Toxarsky unfortunately could add nothing to what he had published in his article. I believe, however, that I have found the source from which his instance had been taken.

In his book upon the physiology of taste, which had its day of celebrity, Brillat-Savarin relates the following: "I had a great-aunt, ninety-three years old, who was dying. Although for some time confined to her bed, she had retained all her faculties, and her condition was only betrayed by her loss of appetite and the weakening of her voice. She had always shown a fondness for me, and I was near her bed, affectionately ready to wait on her, which did not prevent my watching her with the philosophical eye I have ever had for the things and events surrounding me. 'Are you there, nephew?' she asked, in a scarcely audible voice. 'Yes, aunt; I am here at your service, and I think you would do well to take a little good old wine.' 'Give, mon ami. One can always swallow liquid.' I hastened. Raising her gently, I made her take half a glass of my best wine. She brightened for a moment and, looking at me with eyes which had once been very fine, 'Thank you,' she said, 'for this last favor. If ever you reach my age you will find that death becomes a need, just like sleep.'

"These were her last words. Half an hour later she had fallen asleep forever. We unmistakably have here an instance of the instinct of natural death. The instinct was shown at a relatively early age in a person who had retained all her intellectual faculties."—Professor Elle Metchnikoff in Harper's.

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POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

Beat a boy out of a dime and the crime will never outlaw.

Comparison may not be a detraction, but it is certainly a half sister.

The truth with unselfish people is they are liable to brag about it.

There is only one way in this world to get your own way—insist upon it.

Almost any defense would be all right if you could make people believe it.

It is just as dangerous to tell some people a secret as it is to fool with a loaded gun.

When a man submits to a procession wedding the other men look at him the way boys look at a boy whose mother makes him wear long curls.

The man who has made a failure in any line of business never has a very good opinion of the man who started in the same line at the same time and made it a success.

Too Deep.

The story is told of a lank, disconsolate looking farmer who one day during the progress of a political meeting in Cooper institute stood on the steps with the air of one who has been surfeited with a feast of some sort.

"Do you know who's talking in there now?" demanded a stranger briskly, pausing for a moment beside the disconsolate farmer, "or are you just going in?"

"No, sir. I've just come out," said the farmer decidedly. "Mr. Evarts is talking in there."

"What about?" asked the stranger.

"Well, he didn't say," the farmer answered, passing a knotted hand across his forehead.

A Pet Tiger.

Out of a river bed where it had tumbled when its dam was put to flight some hunters in India fished a tiger cub. In two days it was as tame as a kitten and grew up the playmate of the camp terriers. It was very fond of them and the terriers worshiped the tigress. To allay the fears of a woman visitor the tigress was one night chained up. Next morning the animal was found with a man under her. She had not hurt him. He was a thief and, not knowing of her existence, had come within the area which her length of chain enabled her to command. She sprang upon him, lay on him and kept him prisoner until guards came to release him.

A Famous Tenor.

Apart from its wide range, the natural beauty and sweetness of the voice of Sims Reeves held his audiences spellbound and fully entitled him to be termed the finest English tenor of his day. He especially excelled in oratorio parts, while in opera his success was scarcely less pronounced. Perhaps it was as a singer of English ballads that Sims Reeves appealed to the majority, and it will probably be many a long day before we shall hear a more exquisite rendering of "Sally In Our Alley" than that of which this great tenor was capable.—London Mail.

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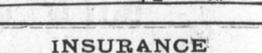
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