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## A HUMOROUS STORY

# "SLANDER."

Spencer Spry thought he was an actor, but he earned such a meagre living as one that at a very early stage of his career he decided that his striking talent was not appreciated.

This discovery came as a sad blow to the aspiring Spencer, for he considered that, given a proper opportunity, he could outshine all the stars from Owen Nares to Little Tich.

However, after a period of starvation as one of the crowd in a couple of grade revues, he decided that to attempt to exist in his present capacity must eventually mean a martyr's death in the cause of his noble art. And so, forced to the conclusion that the public failed to know a good thing when they saw it, he resolved that theirs must be the loss.

Consequently, he forsook the stage, and abandoned his art.

When Spencer had been out of a "shop" for something like three months, he met a friend from whom he had in the past been in the habit of borrowing sundry half-dollars. This particular pal now occupied the position of editor of the "Dilleigh Daily," and in a weak moment offered Spencer a job on the reporting staff of the paper.

The position was small, and the salary less, but Spencer was glad enough to avail himself of the offer, and he settled down to report fires, suicides, divorce cases and amateur theatrical performances with a cheerful spirit.

One morning, soon after he had settled down as a newspaper nuisance, Spry was trotting around in search of items of general interest, when the dainty form of a golden-haired damsel, whose dazzling appearance marked her as belonging to the stage, jazzed joyously up to him.

"My dear old bean," she purred, extending a dainty gloved hand, "this is a treat! I've been just dying to meet you! How long have you been perishing here, old thing?"

"Ever since the 'Mixed Pickles and Mustard' crowd broke up," answered Spencer sadly. "Since that let down, I left the boards, and now I'm a reporter!"

"So, I heard," answered the actress. "Poor old thing, your luck was only dead out!" she added consolingly. "Anyhow, I always recognised that you've been threatened with brains that's why I've been anxious to see you."

"Eh?"

Spencer looked up sharply, scenting business.

"Let's go somewhere where we can talk," suggested Queenie Dazzle. "I've got a bit of business I can put in your way, and we can't stand talking here."

They strolled on until they reached a cafe in the High Street. Seated at a table in a far corner, the pair settled themselves down for a chat.

"Now look here, Sencer," began the actress confidentially, "I'm in a deuce of a fix. I want money badly, and I must have it. Got me?"

Spencer nodded his understanding. He was in that position himself.

"Now I have been thinking that a second-rate reporter's job is not good enough for a man of your brains," added Queenie flatteringly. "If you had a little ready-money you would be able to get to London. There you would have no difficulty in securing a really good 'shop.'"

"You bet your life I wouldn't," answered Spencer Spry enthusiastically. "What's the scheme? I'm game."

"You have the right spirit, old thing," responded the girl, in gratified tones. "I'll tell you the plan in a nutshell. In your next issue of the 'Dilleigh Daily' you will find space to libel me maliciously; make things as hot for me as you possibly can. I shall read the paragraph, and immediately take proceedings. I shall claim heavy damages against the proprietor of the paper, and you and I shall share the spoil. What could be easier?"

Great ginger! gasped Spry, with delight. "What a brainy little woman you are! Why, it's a chance of a lifetime!"

A few moments later the matter was settled, and together they left the cafe. Outside they parted, Queenie Dazzle for the theatre, and Spencer to make his way back to the office.

"By jove!" he mused, as he hurried along. "It will be the best item of interest the 'Daily' has ever had."

The usually quiet editorial sanctum of the "Dilleigh Daily" resounded with a woman's shrill voice.

"Where's the editor? Where's the manager? Where's everybody?" demanded the woman bursting open the door and brandishing a dainty parasol. "Where's the double-eyed villain who is responsible for this infamy?" she shrieked flourishing a scrap of paper high in the air.

Crampton, the thoroughly alarmed editor, endeavoured to pacify her.

"My dear madam," he began, in a quaking voice, "pray tell me what is wrong?"

"Wrong—wrong! Listen to this, you slandering monster!"

And, still waving her parasol above her head, the woman read, in a high-pitched voice, from the cutting in her hand:—

"Moreover, if the theatres became national institutions, the appointment of actors and actresses would become the work of a special commission. A startling example of the necessity of this is demonstrated this week at the Empire Theatre, where a woman calling herself Miss Queenie Dazzle is playing the leading character in the charming revue, 'What-ho!'"

Not only does this woman murder the part with her tuneless screeching and abominable acting, but her personality leaves one stone cold. It is common knowledge that the mass of tow hair which Miss Dazzle wears was made by Markson's, of Wardour Street, whilst the dentist who was responsible for her magnificent teeth is still awaiting payment for his work.

During the daytime, whilst swaggering through the town, she endeavours to conceal her age by smothering her face with sufficient cosmetics to paint a chicken-house, and it is strongly suspected that she has a special mask for stage purposes. Such a state of things is a scandal to this highly respectable borough."

Miss Dazzle paused for breath as she reached the end of this extract; but before the astonished editor had a chance to collect his scattered senses the woman had dropped her parasol and seized him violently by the arm.

"What have you to say," she burst forth. "My hair is false, it is?" she screamed, tugging at her locks. "My teeth are not my own? My face is painted, is it?" She rubbed her hand roughly over her face and thrust her extended palm under his eyes. "You scoundrel—you worm!" she shrieked, shaking her trembling victim violently. "You'll be sorry you slandered a lady! I'll take you to court, and if you don't end your days in goal I'll eat my wardrobe!"

With this, she flung Crampton from her scathed her parasol from the floor, and flounced out of the room.

Some minutes later Spencer Spry appeared at the doorway.

"You priceless idiot!" thundered Crampton, spluttering with rage. "A fine mess you've got us into. What madness prompted you to write that paragraph about the Dazzle woman? Don't stand there like a helpless fool!" he snapped. "What's to be done?"

Spry's dismay was well-feigned. For some moments he remained speechless, staring in open-mouthed fashion at Crampton.

"I—I hardly know, sir," he stammered stupidly. "I heard on good authority that all I said was true. I think we could prove—"

"Prove what?" bawled the editor, livid with rage. "Prove that a woman's hair is false—that she is in reality a kind of human scarecrow? You must be insane! Get out of my sight, and on Saturday you may draw your pay for the last time. Clear out!"

Spencer was about to expostulate, but words failed him. At last, glaring forlornly before him, he passed from the room.

Once outside, the disconsolate expression was replaced by a broad, satisfied grin.

The following morning the proprietors of the "Dilleigh Daily" received intimation from Messrs Seizer and Snatch, Miss Dazzle's solicitors, that their esteemed client intended taking action against them for malicious and slanderous libel, and that Messrs S. and S. would be glad to

hear what steps the defendants contemplated.

Thereupon the owners of the paper in which the alleged libel appeared placed the matter in the hands of their legal representatives, and hostilities commenced in earnest.

The case duly came into court, and it certainly afforded Mr Justice Carberry a splendid opportunity of proving himself a merry wit.

Amid innumerable sobs, Miss Queenie Dazzle told her story of the "Daily's" unprincipled attack upon her.

"Dear, dear!" observed the justice, as the witness chokingly concluded her evidence.

"Of course, if the allegations are not true—"

"If!" almost shrieked the girl, forgetting for a moment the part she was playing.

"If the allegations have no foundation," continued the judge, not heeding the interruption, "you were quite right in taking action. But I presume your main object in bringing the matter into court was not the heavy damages you claim as to disprove the newspaper's statements concerning your personal appearance."

"Er—er—yes! That is—"

"In fact," continued the judge, chuckling softly in the anticipation of a joke, "you wish to prove that it is that report, and not your hair, that is false. Ha, ha!"

The whole court laughed encouragingly, and Mr Justice Carberry smiled inwardly as he thought of the prominent position this little joke would occupy in his forthcoming reminiscences.

When the laughter had subsided, the defending counsel subjected the witness to a sharp cross-examination, and from this point matters ran on more or less smoothly.

Some time later, when all the evidence had been heard and the judge was summing up, Spencer Spry felt that every word was assuring his future success. The damages Miss Dazzle claimed were £500, and Spencer was convinced that if he and Queenie did not get all that, they could not be awarded a penny less than £300.

At length the jury retired, and the hearts of the conspirators beat high with hope.

Half an hour later the jurymen returned to their places, and after the usual formalities the foreman rose to his feet and announced that, after due deliberation, he and his fellow-members of the jury found a verdict for the plaintiff.

Spry glanced instinctively in the direction of Miss Dazzle, and noticed a gleam of satisfaction in her eyes. Everything was going on swimmingly. It was now only a question of damages.

"However," continued the foreman impressively, "in view of the fact that the defendants have expressed a readiness to apologise for the remarks of their reporter who has since been dismissed from their service, through whose indiscretion this action was brought, we do not feel justified in dealing harshly with the defendants in the monetary sense. We find for the plaintiff, with one farthing damages!"

With a horrified shriek, Queenie Dazzle started up from her seat to collapse, swooning, into the arms of her counsel, who had hastened to her assistance.

Restoratives were applied with success, and a few minutes later she was able to leave the court.

Oblivious to everything that was happening around him, Spencer Spry remained staring fixedly before him.

Rousing himself at last, he made his way out into the street a sadder, wiser, and, in every way, a poorer man.

THE END.

## ANZAC DAY.

Come, brothers, let this be our day of days;  
Strange words this day shall be our pride and boast;  
Anzac, Lone Pine, the Apex, and Quinn's Post;  
Now, when the yellowing poplar darts her rays  
Down the long silence of our woodland ways,  
Remember as you parched, cliff-guarded coast,  
The thirst, the wire, the flies, the crowded host,  
The uproarious bathing in those perilous bays.  
Let us, while thanking God for this good land,  
In whose great peace and beauty we do dwell,  
Make in our tasks this day a holy praise;  
And, turning eyes and mind to that far strand,  
Say before Him: "There our beloved fell;  
There our beloved fell in the Great Cause!"

## MADE IN GERMANY.

### BRITISH QUALITY BETTER.

German goods, though they are only arriving in this country in small consignments, are already beginning to make their presence felt on the British market. In Edinburgh shops the old trade mark "Made in Germany," has begun to work its way to the front, and it is being found that in the case of a good many articles not only are the German samples usually of quite acceptable quality, but the price is in almost every instance far below that of a similar article made at home.

According to the representative of a Leith shipping firm engaged in the importation of German goods, many cutlery firms in this country are simply crying aloud for large quantities of German cutlery, and firms in Elberfeld and elsewhere in Germany have entered into communication with British firms, offering goods at enticing prices.

There is no great supply of scissors, the small stock possessed by Germany being rapidly absorbed, but the goods which have reached the British market are sold at a fourth of the price of the Sheffield makes. It must be remembered, however, that the prices quoted here are the manufacturer's quotations. Four-inch nail scissors are obtainable at 15s 6d per dozen; six-inch at 16s 6d; while nail clippers are sold at the astonishing low price of 5s 6d per dozen.

The British articles are nowhere near these prices. Knives form a large proportion of the imported articles, and, on the whole, are of a really good quality. A capital knife may be purchased for 1s 6d, its equivalent in English make probably costing about 7s 6d; and for 2s or 3s 6d, an excellent razor may be obtained.

Enamel ware can be bought in greater quantities than any other article, but cannot be compared with the British class of goods. The German ware is only dipped once in the enamel, while the British firms put their products through the process seven times.

As an instance, a twelve-inch German basin is offered at 1s 6d, the cost of the home made being 4s 6d.

Before the war German musical instruments and toys flooded the market, and a German firm of toy-makers, who specialise in making dolls, are now offering to supply British warehouses with these at prices which completely undersell the British production.

Some time ago a large consignment of handbags arrived, valued at about £13,000. Frankly, quality for quality and value for value, to say nothing of style, they scarcely compare favourably with the home productions—except in price.

In every class of goods "German-made" sells at much cheaper rate than the British make. In quality, however, the British manufacturers are often much superior.

There can be no question of the fact that firms in this country have agents in Germany, who are energetically pushing the German goods, which in the present high-priced British market offer an unusual opportunity for profit-making.

## COMFORT FOR THE SORROWING.

'Tis sorrow builds the shining ladder up,  
Whose golden rounds are our calamities  
Whereon our firm feet planting, nearer God.  
The spirit climbs, and hath its eyes unsealed,  
True is it that Death's face seems stern and cold,  
When he is sent to summon those we love,  
But all God's angels come to us disguised;  
Sorrow and sickness, poverty and death,  
One after another lift their frowning masks,  
And we behold the scraph's face beneath,  
All radiant with the glory and the calm  
Of having looked upon the front of God.  
With every anguish of our earthly part  
The spirit's sight grows clearer; this was meant.  
When Jesus touched the blind man's lids with clay,  
Life is the jailer, Death the angel sent  
To draw the unwilling bolt and set us free.

—Lowell.

There's gold in the rock where the miners flock,  
There's gold in the sands of the sea;  
There's gold in the very air we breathe,  
Could science but set it free.  
There's hidden gold in the pirate's haul,  
And we'll find it some day, I'm sure;  
There's ease worth gold for a cough or cold,  
In Wood's Great Peppermint Cure.