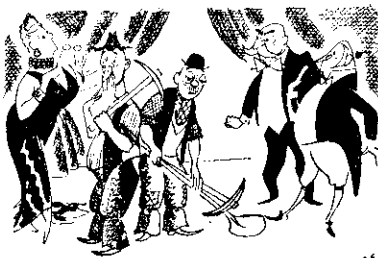


Fool There Was, was being played by Hugh Buckler at His Majesty's Theatre, Dunedin. He and his wife were doing the argument scene in the ship's cabin while the passengers awaited the result. The property revolver barked and out of the cabin shot the caretaker's dog, which had curled up for warmth. It bounded over the footlights, down the middle aisle and out to the street. Joe Brennan, who was playing the steward, and who had to announce that the man had not shot the woman nor had the woman shot the man, but that the man had shot himself, turned a piece of red-blooded drama into howling farce by adding: "and the dog has gone for the police."



"Now do you believe in fairies?"

out into rain and sleet, dressed just as she was, and stood outside the stage door, waiting to be begged to return. But that producer was a brave man. He sent the understudy on, to make a great success of the part. Hearing the applause, the bad-tempered leading lady rapidly regained her senses.

And then there was the well-known actor who was unduly fussy about the spotlight and who fired orders at the operator until the man did not know what to do. Tired of pin-pricking, that operator roared out from his perch during a rehearsal, "See here, you, I've spotted actors before this!"

Of bygone vaudeville trials some amazing tales are told. Tomatoes, cabbages and other missiles were used by audiences to express their disapproval of a poor effort. Occasionally a hook on a wire was used to haul an impossible but insistent performer up into the flies, while the audience roared.

But, as Mr. McKenna said, all the accidents and the mishaps were taken in good part. Stage people, that is, the real professionals with experience, are generosity itself, always ready to help each other and encourage talent. As for loyalty, that extends right through the theatre. It was no use asking Mr. McKenna how magicians perform some of their greatest illusions—he simply says he doesn't know.

Glamorous stage scenes are sometimes broken up by accident. When Tom Pollard produced *The Gondoliers* in Wellington there was a huge laugh at the wrong time when a charwoman, not realising that she was on the stage, walked through a beautiful Venetian canal carrying two tins of biscuits for the staff's supper.

Practical jokers are not popular in the theatre. What appears funny to them might upset the whole of a carefully-rehearsed scene. Playing the city girl visiting the country in the Australian play *Possum Paddock*, Kate Howard had to pick up a small handbag with the remark that she could easily carry it herself and the farm rouseabout need not bother. But when she stooped to pick it up, it would not budge. Somebody had filled it with lead weights which dropped out of the bottom with the last desperate tug. And, of course, the audience was immensely tickled.

Donkey's Serenade

Awkward moments can occur on any stage. Mr. McKenna recalls a presentation of *Veronique* at the Theatre Royal, Christchurch. At the final rehearsal and matinee the donkey acted perfectly in obedience to the duettists' song, "Trot Here, Trot There." But at night it sat firmly on the stage and refused to move an inch, leaving the singers telling of the gambols of a perfectly immobile beast.

Handling a car on the stage is a ticklish business, as Julius Knight discovered. In *Man and Superman* he had to say, "If you won't drive this car, I'll drive it myself." Usually a car is pulled on and off the stage with a rope on wire, but this time the engine was used. Knight shot off the stage backwards: the practical joker had put it in reverse! Australia's Gladys Moncrieff also had trouble with a car in *Katinka*. Miss Moncrieff's singing skill was higher than her driving ability, for she ran the car into a cloth.

We asked Mr. McKenna how many times he had seen everybody upset over an artist's "temperament."

Not often, he said. Once a very well-known actress playing in Wellington argued continually with the producer at rehearsal. The producer, his patience exhausted, told her to get off the stage and stay off. In a fit of pique she walked



FOR THAT BEAMING Smile THANK "Holly" OATMEAL or ROLLED OATS

You stoke up the day's energy with every spoonful of Holly Oatmeal's deliciousness. And you're wise. For food experts say one-fourth of your food should be eaten at the breakfast table.

But how pleasant it is to take your energy in creamy, smooth, nutty-flavoured Holly Oatmeal or Rolled Oats. Holly Oatmeal or Rolled Oats not only win smiles from the family — but receive a special hand-clap from mother for their two-minute ease of preparation and their real economy. Ask your grocer for

HOLLY OATMEAL or Rolled Oats

Products of
Buchanan's (Flour Mills) Ltd.
Ashburton

