

## Nat Goodwin's Book

Here, at Last, Is the Comedian's Own Explanation of the Riddle "Why Do Beautiful Women Marry Nat Goodwin?"



(From "Nat Goodwin's Book," Copyrighted and Published by Richard G. Badger, Boston.)

"AS more than thirty years of my life have been devoted to matrimony, naturally my autobiography demands mention of the women who have born my name.

"I have been censured sometimes harshly for my versatility in the selection of wives, and many have marvelled at my fortunate (or unfortunate) selections. I have always been long on the market of home and wives."

Having quoted these two paragraphs from the preface, it seems superfluous to mention that the autobiography in question is by Nat Goodwin, long celebrated throughout the length and breadth of two continents as the most thoroughly experienced matrimonial expert dwelling on Christian soil.

Appropriately the book is called "Nat Goodwin's Book," and it's just out. Aside from its picturesque descriptions of matrimonial adventures, it is, perhaps, what its publishers declare it to be: "An intimate and permanent history of the American stage for the past forty years, by the greatest living actor, and the most remarkable autobiography ever written."

However that may be, there's no use attempting to overlook the matrimonial chapters. Especially when one finds the five wives of the author frankly catalogued thus after the fashion of the charade in the puzzle books:

"My first (wife) was an angel.  
 "My second a silly woman.  
 "My third a Roman Senator.  
 "My fourth a pretty little thing.  
 "My fifth—all woman.  
 "My whole (desire) was by repetition to prove that hope can conquer experience."

The chapter headed "Number Five" is the shortest in the book—just fifteen lines. It is a masterpiece of discretion, as though offering "hope" every opportunity to give the lie to "experience." It is only a year or so since Goodwin married "Number Five." It will be remembered that she was the leading lady of his company touring the Pacific coast cities, and that she nursed him back to health after he was severely injured while boating in a chivalrous, but reckless, attempt to send his boat through the surf to do her a small favor. Besides the wives' catalogue above quoted the chapter contains just this:

"The day (a beautiful day in July, 1912, such a day as only Southern California at its happiest moment knows), I made Margaret Moreland my wife once again set the buzzards and the gossips wagging their ears and tongues and lashing their tails (I have always been sure both HAVE tails)."

In referring to Eliza Weathersby (No. 1) as an "angel," Mr. Goodwin corroborates the opinion consistently held in the world of the stage for a quarter of a century and more. She came to this country with Lydia Thompson's company of burlesquers.

She was one of the most famous beauties of the burlesque stage. In 1876 she became a member of E. E. Rice's "Evangeline" company, in which Goodwin had a small part. At the close of the season they were married. Of Eliza Weathersby the autobiography says in part:

"I was only a stripling when I married this beautiful creature. Moreover, I was unreliable, and, I confess, unappreciative of what the fates had been so kind as to bestow upon me. Many have accused me of 'wanton neglect.' I may have neglected her, but only for the companionship of men. She never complained, and during the ten years of our happy married life there was never one discordant note.

"She was ten years my senior, and treated me more like a son than a husband, but, like the truant boy who runs away from school now and then, I was always glad to return and seek the forgiveness that an indulgent mother always gives a wayward child. . . . A loving sister, a dutiful daughter, a loving wife, she is resting in Woodlawn, and the daisies grow over her grave."

No. 2, as everybody knows, was Mrs. Nella Baker Pease. Mr. Goodwin writes that she was the "wife of a dilettante living in Buffalo. She was the best amateur piano player to whom I have ever listened." Here is where Nat gets busy with his untrammelled pen. Mrs. Pease was a great applauder in the theatre where he played. They were introduced and became "steadfast friends." He met the members of her family.

"Her sister was charming. I wish I could say the same of the rest of her family. The brother must have emanated from the same pod in which the husband, Pease, was conceived, or on some coral reef where sponges predominate. He proved a most absorbing person.

"I invited him once to spend a few days with us in New York. He wired that he was coming for 'a cup of tea,' and stopped for two years."

Well, the whole Pease family wanted Mrs. Pease to be educated for the stage. She wouldn't be happy till it happened. Mr. Goodwin's mother was so sympathetic that she invited Mrs. Pease "to spend a few days at our Boston home."

"Mrs. Pease was also fond of tea. She accepted the invitation, and remained for several months. In fact, during her visit to my mother's house I had resumed my tour on the road and even made a trip to Europe."

While Goodwin was trying to get Steele Mackaye to teach Mrs. Pease how to act so she wouldn't be unhappy any more, her husband suddenly charged him with alienating his wife's affections. "This dropped like a bombshell into our little circle, as nothing was further from my thoughts than marriage. She took it as a joke, saying:

"What a splendid release from the little incubus."

"It's very simple," said she. 'Go to Buffalo, buy him off, come back to Boston and marry me.'

"After that what could a true-born American do?"

This was the "silly woman" of the wives' catalogue. Of this marriage Nat C. Goodwin 3d. came into the world. "Up to that time we were happy. . . . And then she became insanely jealous of our darling boy, and it is here that I drop the curtain upon our lives."

It was a legal separation, and it cleared the way for No. 3, the "Roman

Senator" of the catalogue, Maxine Elliott. Mr. Goodwin first met her at a dinner party in San Francisco on the eve of his departure to tour Australia in "An American Citizen."

"At Mr. Frawley's left sat the stately, majestic, Juno-like Maxine Elliott, one of the most beautiful women whom I had ever seen, her raven black hair and eyes in delightful contrast to the red hues that formed an aureole, as it were, above her head.

"My leading lady at this time was Miss Blanche Walsh, who was engaged only for the Australian tour. While contemplating the fair Maxine the evening of the dinner it suddenly struck me what a fine leading woman she would be for an organization. Everybody told me she was an extremely poor actress, but I made up my mind to find out for myself."

It is interesting now, some eighteen years later to read what Mr. Goodwin's manager, McClellan, said when he spoke of engaging Miss Elliott:

"Why, you're crazy!" he shouted. "She's beautiful to look at, but she can't act; she hasn't the emotion of an oyster! Blanche Bates is playing rings around her in Frawley's company! Get Bates, if you can, but pass up Elliott! Read what the San Francisco papers say about her! Go to sleep, and in the morning I'll try to engage Blanche Bates for you."

"I only wish I had followed his advice, but fate was peeping over her ramparts. And he caused me to pass a very restless night."

Goodwin had to take Sister Gertrude with Maxine. He signed them for the Australian tour—to his manager's supreme disgust. And right there in the progress of his autobiography he is moved to philosophize thus:

"Had I not made those two engagements the pages of history would have been greatly changed. Had the

little Kentucky family held aloof there would have been no Maxine Elliott Theatre in New York; Forbes-Robertson would never have met the sweet Gertrude; the latter would never have been launched as a star; Maxine would not now be a retired actress, rich and famous; Clyde Fitch's career would have been postponed, and the avenues of my poor life would have been broader and less clogged with weeds."

There's a whole story by itself in that catalogue expression, "My third a Roman Senator," up to the day of the divorce that cleared the tracks for No. 4. Mr. Goodwin gives her this final paragraph:

"Maxine Elliott is a variously gifted woman. With the ambition of a Cleopatra she used me as a ladder to reach her goal, and found her crowning glory in the blinding glare of a myriad of incandescent lights which spell her name over the portals of a New York theatre. She is one of the cleverest women I ever met. Her dignity is that of a Joan of Arc, her demeanor Nero-like in its assertive quality, and yet she has charms of emotion that manifest womanhood in the truest sense of the word."

"My fourth, a pretty little thing"—Edna Goodrich. The end of that chapter is in this piece of advice:

"If a man steal your wife, don't kill him—caution him."

The heading of that chapter is: "The Five Fatal Fish Cakes and Number Four." There is a brief resume:

"As I have shown, my second and third wives were thrust upon me by circumstances. Being human, I allowed my bark of irresponsibility to sail tranquilly into the harbor of intrigue.

"If these two marriages were errors, my fourth venture into matrimony was a catastrophe. I fled from a Cleopatra to meet a Borgia. And a dish of fish cakes proved my undoing."

While he was thus refreshing himself in a popular resort he was approached by an ex-prize fighter, who told him the sad tale of the stranding of a radiantly beautiful star. "By the time I had reached the fifth fish cake my blood was fairly boiling, and the whole universe seemed to me to be calling aloud for a man to step forward and right the wrongs the young and handsome star had suffered."

"Arrived at our destination we were first, and speedily, ushered into the presence of the mother of our heroine in distress. She was a middle-aged woman of the modern, alert type, who enjoyed cigarettes when her dear daughter was not in evidence. . . .

"Then came radiantly the daughter. She was submerged in sables. Resplendent jewels covered her.

"I was forty-seven years old. Perhaps, gentle reader, you know how susceptible are we clever men at that time of life, how tranquilly we sit back on the cushions of our thoughts and say to ourselves we are proof against the blandishments of women."

Well, it began with fish cakes, progressed to marriage, and ended, as everybody knows, in a legal separation that left Nat Goodwin considerably poorer, although a vastly wiser man.

Some of the later details, as told in the book, are interesting. "That she had instituted the proceedings didn't bother me at all,

Having done all the affirmative work in two other divorce actions, I thought I might as well take it easy this time and let her do the work. But I had forgotten all about a certain deed of trust I had made in Paris some time before.

"During my mining activities I foresaw the calamity that was inevitable, and acting on the advice of an incompetent attorney I foolishly entered into a trust agreement with my wife under the terms of which I placed all my property in the hands of a trustee. In avoiding a possible loss I ran headfirst into a sure steal!

"As soon as I had been served in the divorce action I began suit on my own account to cancel this trust agreement. It had always been a nuisance, even in the days when wife and fond mama were at their loving-est! Now it was imperative that I be allowed to handle my own property alone. The settlement of that action was a long, drawn-out affair as compared with the divorce action. During the several months before my wife finally won (?) her case the newspapers were filled daily with sensational articles about my affairs with women I had never even seen! It seemed to me as if the gentlemen of the press just published any and every photograph of a pretty woman they could find and named her as one of the unfortunate objects of my attentions. In spite of this my wife's able counsel had been able to present no facts to the Referee that could justify him in recommending a decree in her favor—up to the Tuesday before the Saturday on which he was to render his decision.

"It never dawned on me that this was the case until my dear old friend, Jim Killduff, who had been following the suit more closely than I had came to me that Tuesday night and congratulated me! 'You're winning so easily, it's a laugh,' he exclaimed. 'Winning?' I echoed feebly. 'Do you mean she isn't going to get her divorce?' 'She hasn't a chance on earth,' replied Jim cheerfully. 'Every charge she has made against you has been stricken from the Referee's record.' 'Good Lord,' I gasped, 'she's got to win! It's the only way I can ever get this trust agreement busted!'

"The result of our conversation I can not set forth in detail. The fact remains, however, that before that next Saturday the Referee had presented to him the evidence necessary to make his course of duty plain—and once again the newspapers had grounds (?) for proclaiming me a disciple of Solomon!"

"Between you and me, gentle reader, Justice must have had to tighten that bandage about her eyes when she learned of the decree! She surely must have loosened it laughing!"

"I can say, however, that it is a most expensive luxury—being divorced! It's much cheaper to use the active voice of that verb!"

But, fortunately, as already noted, he became free to wed No. 5, who is "all woman."

## Why We Need More Mussels to Keep Our Clothes On

UNLESS something is done very soon to increase the supply of mussels, the little fresh-water bivalves which used to abound in all the rivers and streams tributary to the Mississippi, we shall be forced to devise some new method of keeping our clothes on our bodies.

Formerly the buttons on the underwear and other white garments worn by both men and women were made of china and porcelain. A few years ago, however, the mother-of-pearl found in the shells of mussels displaced almost everything else as a material for buttons. It is far stouter and more durable, as well as more attractive in appearance, and is so inexpensive that buttons made from it can be used on the cheapest as well as the better grades of garments.

The discovery of this use for mussel shells led to the establishment of an enormous industry numbering many

large plants and employing thousands of men. It has been supplying good buttons at a low price not only to the whole United States, but to most of the world.

A short time ago the alarming discovery was made that the mussel beds were giving out. The shellfish were not reproducing themselves as they should. The Federal Government stepped in and established limitations to the dredging of mussels in certain streams. Still the supply continued to diminish in spite of the known wonderful fertility of the parent mussels. So a more careful scientific study was made by biological experts employed by the Government, and some curious facts about the life history of the mussel were disclosed.

The diminution in the supply of pearl-button material, it was discovered, was due not to the taking out of mussels, but to the destruction of fish in the rivers. It was learned that in its early stages of development

the fresh-water mussel is a parasite, its existence depending largely upon its ability to fasten itself to the gills or fins of a fish. Certain kinds of the mollusks attach themselves to only a particular kind of fish. The "liggerhead" mussel, for instance, one of the most prolific and valuable varieties, is parasitic to river herring almost exclusively, and the partial extermination of this fish has had a material effect upon the natural reproduction of mussels.

With this and similar information as a guide, the Government has now established a research laboratory a few miles from Muscatine, Ia., and has gone into the business of mussel farming in order to try to conserve our supply of material for buttons.

Several field parties from the new laboratory are constantly employed in this work of accelerating the processes of nature and conserving probably billions of baby mussels.