

A PAIR OF PLAYERS

By VIOLA ROSEBORO.

[Copyright, 1896, by the Author.] Mrs. Mason was surely right in saying Cassius was not like other boys. He was a good looking, well made little fellow, but it seemed as if he must belong to some race or nationality of which I had seen no other specimen. His sun-kissed, oval face and bright, dark eyes were not effeminate if he did have quick, mincing little ways and feminine accomplishments. He had not the smallest gift for acting, but sometimes his queer personality fitted small comic parts fairly well, as almost any queer personality, sometimes will, and as he had a way for droll, trifling, yes he might be successful as a music hall light.

His mind was not that of the smallest, about what one might expect in an articulate actor, and, the way, he was more like a quill than anything else. Squirrel-like, he was trimming over. Squirrel-like, and his little artistic sensibilities, limited as he was, were nevertheless keen and manifold. I invited to Mrs. Mason's room the next day to see some of Cassius' embroidery. As she always had the better and the larger room, it was used as their common sitting room, they explained. As Cassius conducted me there he was voluble in his delighted praise of our star and manager's last histrionic performance. He had played the title role in the "Ticket of Leave Man" the night before. It had indeed been so solidly good as to fill me with melancholy—melancholy at the sight of so much merit so ill rewarded—but Cassius viewed it as reflecting honor upon all of us; as more evidence (little as more was needed) that we were a band of noble artists, superior in the nature of that title to all the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.

"I tell you, it was great, great—good enough for any theater in New York. I tell you, I call this a high class company," he chattered away, unpledged with reflected glory. It was triumphs such as this that made life sweet to him and this sewing woman, and yet there are people who imagine that the world of art is cheerless. He sought out various bits of handiwork, the thing I was really summoned to behold was a satin gown, cut out, not made, and in process of ornamentation. It was a delicate color, and Cassius was embroidering it—embroidering it pretty much all over in shaded yellows and oranges. It was, so far as the embroidery went, a genuinely curious and beautiful piece of work, as distinctly good as if it had come from the hands of an uncorrupted American Indian or an oriental rugmaker. What earthly use it could be in that shape unless it was a studio property was another matter and more than I could guess.

Of course it belonged to Mrs. Mason, and she took it in her thin, knotted hands and tossed it this way and held it with a gusto that showed how powerful was even dressmaking to kill her love of finery. "This is for the wattleau plait, and there are the angel sleeves," she explained. "It's beautiful, isn't it? Not so much beautiful either as gorgeous. That's why I love it so. It's what I call dramatic—dramatic color, you know. It's the dramatic I love everywhere." This was not such a bad bit of characterization. Mrs. Mason, you see, in the line of her likes, had her perceptions. "Just work it at odd ends and ends of time," Cassius remarked with an assumption of indifference and a reality of bursting pride.

What parts do you think it would be nice for?" Mrs. Mason questioned. There was a pose. The part was never written that that gown, with its barbaric splendor of color and its common conventional cut, would suit, but I could not hesitate—I had not the heart—I declared it a creation fitted for Fedora. When the lady were out of my mouth, I felt the cruelty of them. Fedora was hardly a part that even these children of hope could expect fortune to throw in Mrs. Mason's way. But, as usual, I did injustice to their disinterested fascination with all that relates to acting. They were charmed with my observation. They looked at each other and nodded. "There, that's just what I said!" cried one. "It's just in the spirit of Fedora!" exclaimed the other. I was glad they did not further press the question as to where Mrs. Mason was going to wear it.

Mrs. Mason was not quite as devoid of dramatic gifts as Cassius, but she might as well have been an utter stick for all the good her capacity to

"Well, we must be getting to supper," I feel a sense could ever do her. The manager—his professional instincts were keen enough—regarded them both with a bitterness born of the sense that they were to sign and seal of his own decline and fall, and abundantly re-enforced by every prejudice in him. They were gaily unconscious that their pres-



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ence marked with caricature. One night I was near him in a hotel dining room when the waiter seated him opposite them, though you may be sure at another table. He groaned as his eye fell on them. "Put me on the other side, for God's sake," he exclaimed with tragic emphasis, and he pointed to another old actor and fellow sufferer: "I can't eat if I have to see that amayotol monkey and his amayotol man so giddy and happy over there. Fakirs? they ain't fakirs. A fellow has to know a drop curtain from a sewing machine to get up to being a fakir. They're—they're worse than clowns."

Before long business looked up, faintly enough, but sufficiently to permit Mr. Leroy the luxury of getting rid of Mrs. Mason and Cassius. It was against his principles to pay anybody anything, but now as a measure necessary to their dismissal and his own relief he turned his back on principle and gave them some money. I discovered that this gave me a fine opportunity to strike for my salary and go home. If I did not get it now, I need see no more of it, and I was ready to compromise for cash the possibilities of further experience.

My arts had a degree of success, and I triumphantly took my way back to New York with the dismissed pair. I congratulated them upon their situation. I thought them, in truth, very lucky. They accepted my view with alacrity and volubility and were full of ingenious explanations of the manager's self sacrifice—in dismissing, not in paying, them, they meant. I now learned the exact details of their financial situation. They were hardly reassured to my skeptical mind, but the pair—I always thought of them as the pair—did not themselves take a dismal view of their case. A hundred dollars of the memorable \$400 was still in bank. This fact filled me with admiring wonder, especially I when considered the purchase of that wine colored satin and the accompanying cartload of embroidery silks. But if they indulged in some remarkable extravagances it is plain, you see, that they were, in the main, most frugal, and they had had an energy and a luck in wresting money from managers at which I never ceased to marvel.

I speak of one financial revolution; there was but one. They had a purse in common, as if they were living in an ancient romance. They were blind in the modern view that this is a greater strain than friendship can stand. Arrived in New York they took rooms in neighboring lodging houses on South Washington square—for it happened they could not find what they wanted in either one alone—and once having seen the possibility of establishing themselves near something green it was highly characteristic of them, inborn cockneys though they were, that nothing else would do. Then, with an oil stove, a coffee pot, a stewpan and eight dishes, belongings that had seen service before and were taken out of storage, they set up what is known to the initiated as light house-keeping.

Despite the woman's failing health, her dragging step and her cough, they were still, as Mr. Leroy had so bitterly complained, giddy and happy. To have freedom, freedom to talk about the theater as much as they liked, with home to make them afraid, to be in a town full of billboards, seemed to fill their cup. Cassius, during our journey and in the hurly burly of arrival, had proved himself possessed of great gifts as a courier, gifts that he exercised not only for Aunt Maggie and himself, but for me as well. I expected to stay in town all summer, and he had given me invaluable aid in re-establishing myself. He had run errands and driven nails and hung pictures and hounded trades people—in short, he laid me under great obligations in taking much of the worst of life off my hands.

It was all done out of simple goodness of heart and pleasure in exercising his powers, and of course my relations with himself and Mrs. Mason were now fixed. Soon they came to me for a grave consultation. They were thinking of eking out this income by seeking positions as stage supernumeraries—supes was the word used in our conversation. The point was, did I think this course, if most secretly managed, would hurt their professional position and prospects? Their professional position and prospects! I didn't think it would. Then it came out that the thing was already done—they were engaged for a new piece. It was to be adorned with an exceptionally accomplished mob, and they were to be part of the mob. Now, at the last, their fears for the cherished professional position and prospects had made them hesitate.

I brought up my old argument and said I thought the mob would add to their experience, and, as before, they rapturously argued that that was the view to take. "Daily put his extra people on the list of his company," Cassius informed me, with great satisfaction. "The stage manager is going to take just as much pains with the mob as with the—the other actors," said Mrs. Mason, stumbling over the chance of denying themselves the beloved title. I thought to myself that he would certainly have to take a great deal more. The public does not need to be informed that "supes" are not usually brilliant, and I reflected, further, that if the zeal of my friends did not too far conserve their discretion their superior qualities might possibly win them valuable good will.

Their luck—that sovereign factor in all things theatrical—was still amazingly good. The demand for old women as "extra ladies" is commonly small, indeed, but in a mob, you see, all sorts are needed, and in such a very swell mob as this was to be talent must have some chance to shine, for here was a place where Cassius and Mrs. Mason

must, by comparison, be called talented. My best hopes were more than met. An astute creature, half manager, half newspaper man, saw my pair and discovered that he had a use for Cassius. He was about to seek public favor for a show of his own (he afterward advertised it on the billboards, by the way, as having no plot and no literary merit). This show was a careful compound of burlesque, horse play and variety business, and Cassius' antics in the mob disclosed just the qualities of movement wanted for a "part" in "The Kicking Kitten." The part was that of a make believe toy manikin, a toy that should display its activities to the audiences of the future only when properly wound up. The proprietor of "The Kicking Kitten" was a perceiving person. This feat of going when wound up and stopping when run down was exactly the kind of being Cassius could shine in, and, proud as if he were to star in Hamlet, Cassius soon announced his engagement and devoted his leisure to studying and imitating the movements of the mechanical toys exhibited on Fourteenth street pavements. The new play (God save the mark) was to be tried on a dog—the phrase is technical—in a summer tour. Two days before his departure as one of its attractions Cassius came to see me. He wore a curiously familiar air of combined fear and friendliness, and, sure enough, he presently asked me to lend him \$10. He said he had a chance to get, if he got it that night, a \$20 trunk for \$10. He was to leave Monday morning. He must pack his things on Sunday. He could not get the trunk without the money. He needed it greatly. He and Aunt Maggie had not so much in the house, and he was afraid to go away and leave her with any less than she had anyway. He had just heard of and seen the trunk within the last hour.

It was unnecessary to say so much. I had received too many small kindnesses from him to refuse him my money if I had it. But I had it not. All my money was in bank, and until Monday morning I was practically penniless. A very little reflection, however, showed me a way to the desired end. I had the resources of experience. I had been both practically and positively penniless before. Pawnshops are not closed at 8 o'clock on a Saturday night, though banks are. I gave him my watch and told him to get his \$10.

It was on the Monday of Cassius' departure that Mrs. Mason came to see me about this same business. "I just wanted to speak to you a minute," she said, with embarrassed hesitancy, sitting down before me. She had an expression of half business. The red and white paint was heightened in effect by a coquettish white veil, and her speech was more broken by coughing than usual. "It's about Cassius," she continued after some encouragement—"about—you let him have your watch. Oh, it seems dreadful, but he did need the money! Only, Miss Addington, I must tell you I'm afraid Cassius did not tell you quite the truth about that money. I know he'll pay it back, but I wish he'd said what was just so about what he wanted with it. Cassius is good; he has no bad habits, but he doesn't always think it's wrong to tell things that are not exactly so, and I do. I can't stand it. He didn't want it for a trunk. He wouldn't take any we had. He said there was too little for me to be left with, and he might die, or something. He needed a lot of little things dread-

fully, but I wish he'd told you all about it. And now, Miss Addington, I can pay you that money, and we can get your watch right off. Yes, I can, and I feel as if I'd rather. It isn't as if you'd known just what you were doing when you gave it to him." With all her fondness for Cassius it was useless to try to make Mrs. Mason share my surprised admiration of his shrewdness, his knowledge of human nature in asking me to help him to a bargain, and getting all my feminine prejudices on his side, instead of simply appealing to my reasonable gratitude and benevolence with the less dramatic facts of the case, but I was successful in persuading her to leave me Cassius' creditor.

It was soon clear that Mrs. Mason's share of the luck so often referred to had deserted her. The play constructed around the mob was withdrawn, and, as I feared, she found no further demand for "extra" ladies of her age. She said to me that if only the satin gown were finished she thought she might get a place on its merits. As Cassius had taken various small parts of the beloved garment to embroidery during his wanderings, and a modern Ulysses and Penelope rolled into one, this halflucination was safe from rude destruction, and I had small conscience about encouraging it. I saw it was comforting. (CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.)



I gave him my watch.

When bilious or constive, eat a Casaret candy entartie, cure guaranteed, 10c 25c

WEEKLY CROP BULLETIN.

Furnished by the Government Crop and Weather Bureau.

Lincoln, Neb., April 27, 1897. The temperature has been 3c above the normal in the southwestern section; in the rest of the state it has varied from 1c to 3c below the normal. Heavy frosts occurred on the 28th 29th and 30th.

The rainfall has been above the normal in the southeastern section and below the normal in other sections. Plowing for corn has made good progress in all portions of the state the past week. Corn planting has begun in all sections and considerable corn has been planted in a few of the southern counties. Generally, however, little corn has been planted yet. Spring wheat is up and a good stand. Oats are coming up nicely. Alfalfa has been badly winter killed except in the western sections. Peach, apple, plum and cherry trees are in bloom. The frost probably injured fruit very little if at all.

REPORT BY COUNTIES.

SOUTHWESTERN SECTION. Butler—Wheat and oats looking well; plowing for corn begun; fruit blossoming but not so full as usual. Cass—Corn planting commenced; wheat and oats growing nicely; apple, peach and plum trees in bloom. Clay—Small grain and pastures doing well; considerable corn ground plowed; some corn planted; fruit prospects good. Fillmore—Plowing for corn in progress; wheat and oats coming up; fall wheat doing fairly well; some potatoes up. Gage—Oats, spring wheat and rye looking fine; corn planting begun; grass growing slower than usual. Hamilton—Spring and fall wheat and oats looking well; prospects for fruit crop good.

Jefferson—Not much corn planted; ground too wet and cold. Johnson—But little advance either in farm work or vegetation during the past week; perhaps a little corn planted. Lancaster—Corn and oats are doing well; winter wheat in poor and a good part of it is being plowed up. Nemaha—Oats and grass growing fast; some corn being planted; peach, cherry and plum trees in full bloom. Nuckolls—Oats up and growing nicely; pastures green; fruit trees in bloom; corn planting delayed by wet weather. Otoe—Ground nearly ready for corn and a few plantings; winter wheat is up; some alfalfa killed. Pawnee—Oats coming up well and wheat blossoming; rain has delayed corn planting; pastures getting good. Polk—All small grain looks well; the bulk of the plowing for corn yet to be done; fruit trees in bloom. Richardson—Some corn planted, but generally too wet; small grain in good condition; fruit trees in bloom. Saline—Most of the corn ground ready and some corn planted; fruit trees have blossomed very fully. Saunders—Wheat and oats all sown and up in most cases; plowing for corn in full progress.

Seward—Work is being pushed as fast as weather will permit; all small grain looks good; fruit trees in bloom. Thayer—Considerable corn planted the latter part of the week. York—Wheat, rye, and grass growing finely; plowing for corn has made good progress; no apparent damage by frosts. NORTHEASTERN SECTION. Antelope—Small grain up and looks well; plowing for corn well under way and some corn planted; grass growing slowly. Boyd—Wheat sown; plowing for corn in progress. Burr—Plowing well advanced and some corn planted; grasses stood winter well except alfalfa which is in bad shape. Cedar—Small grain coming up nicely; plowing for corn in full blast; grass from 4 to 6 inches high. Cuming—Rye, wheat and oats growing nicely; heavy frosts. Dixon—Small grain all in; some plowing for corn. Dodge—Considerable corn ground prepared but some fields too wet to work; pastures in good shape. Douglas—Considerable plowing has been done this week. Holt—Rye from 8 to 12 inches high; plowing for corn in progress; killing frosts on 28th and 29th. Madison—Wheat and oats good stand; rye looking splendid; alfalfa all winter killed; plowing for corn progressing rapidly. Pierce—Small grain in fine shape—it is up and doing well; plowing for corn well under way. Platte—Spring wheat looks fine; oats mostly in the ground; alfalfa almost a total failure; plowing for corn fairly begun. Sarpy—Plowing for corn just begun; there will be a large increase in acreage of listed corn; apple trees in bloom. Thurston—Plowing for corn has begun in earnest. Washington—Wheat looks well but growing slowly; frosts on 29th and 30th but no damage; plowing for corn begun.

CENTRAL SECTION. Boone—Small grain and pastures doing splendidly; plowing for corn being pushed rapidly; fruit not damaged by frost. Buffalo—Spring wheat generally looks well; ground in good shape and plowing for corn progressing rapidly. Cass—Small grain coming up and growing finely; corn planting just begun; large acreage of small grain sown. Dawson—Some corn planted and plowing progressing well. Greeley—Small grain mostly in and plowing for corn begun; many potatoes planted; some spring sown grain up, looks well. Hall—Small grain looks fine; plowing for corn ten days behind; some corn planted; potatoes mostly planted. Howard—Farmers busy plowing for corn; some alfalfa winter killed; wheat coming out fair; spring crops look well. Merriek—Spring wheat and early sown oats up nicely; rye and alfalfa looking fine; a little corn planted. Nance—Wheat sprouting nicely; some plowing for corn. Sherman—Small grain doing well; plowing for corn making good progress; a few have commenced planting corn. Valley—Small grain and grass looking well; some field potatoes being planted; season extremely late.

SOUTHEASTERN SECTION. Adams—Plowing for corn in progress, some corn planted. Chase—Corn and potato planting going on; wheat and oats look good; hard frosts on the 25th. Dundy—Spring wheat doing well winter wheat very thin; oats coming up nicely; corn planting in full blast. Franklin—Stalk cutting and plowing for corn being pushed; some corn planted; alfalfa and small grain doing finely. Frontier—Small grain looking fine, alfalfa growing nicely. Furnas—Corn planting has been commenced by many; alfalfa is fine and will soon be ready for first cutting. Harlan—Alfalfa is over a foot high; some corn planted. Hitchcock—Small grain up, looks well; corn planting begun; all the potatoes planted; small grain looks well. Kearney—Corn ground more than half plowed; some corn planted; small grain doing well; frost injured fruit some. Lincoln—Grain doing well; corn planting in good headway. Perkins—Small grain coming up well; corn planting begun. Phelps—Fruit trees in bloom; grass growing slowly; some corn planted; small grain never looked better. Red Willow—Grass, wheat, and rye are doing well; nearly every farmer has started planting corn; pastures good. WESTERN AND NORTHWESTERN SECTIONS. Cherry—Grass backward; rain needed; frost very night. Keith—Wheat up, looks good; corn planting commenced. Keya Paha—Wheat and oats about all sown. Kimball—Small grain all sown and some up; rain needed. Logan—Early sown wheat up and growing nicely. Rock—Wheat coming up; some corn planted; pastures good. Scotts Bluff—Large acreage of small grain and alfalfa sown; plowing for corn in progress, but none planted yet. Thomas—Grass starting; stock doing well on the range.

OUR FIRST ADMIRAL.

A Propoied Monument to Ezek Hopkins of Providence.

Patriotic Rhode Islanders propose to erect a monument at Providence to Commodore Ezek Hopkins. This worthy was born on his father's farm at Chapumiscook, now Chopmist, Scituate, R. I., April 26, 1718. When the seven years' war broke out in 1756 he went out in one of his vessels as a privateer captain and returned to Providence with a valuable Spanish vessel, which he renamed the Desire in honor of his wife. The first official service he rendered in the revolution was as the commander of a battery of six eighteen-pounders erected on Fox Hill, overlooking Providence harbor, in the summer of 1775. Upon the organization of the "continental navy" he was appointed by congress "commander-in-chief" Dec. 22, 1775. He was relieved of his military command in Rhode island and immediately proceeded to Philadelphia in the sloop Katy with 100 men specially enlisted for naval service.

On Feb. 17, 1776, he sailed from Delaware bay with a squadron of eight vessels, and conducted the successful Nassau expedition. John Paul Jones was a lieutenant under Adams who, until his hitch with the marine committee of congress, was practically "admiral."

Highout—Now, tenderfoot, drink or I'll—Tenderfoot—Don't shoot, sir, I'll drink it. Highout—That saves me a cartridge—the stuff'll kill him anyway.

John's Festive Idea. But it Discouraged the Young Lady Who was Teaching Him. A clever girl, who would make a sensation in society if fate had been a little more kind to her in a material way, lives on a side street and is a constant source of amusement and joy to her little circle of friends. She is poor; she is compelled to turn and return her gowns; trim and retrim her bonnets and make all sorts of little sacrifices, and all because fate decreed that her father should be a quiet, unambitious, conscientious, dreaming sort of a fellow, instead of a bustling, money-making, successful merchant. This girl amuses herself with all sorts of things that other girls seldom think of. Her latest exploit is a class of Chinamen, into whose wooden heads she is endeavoring to inject a faint idea of the limitations of the English language and incidentally the Christian religion. In her class on a recent Sunday, she was giving Ching Pol an object lesson on the wonderful creations of God.

"See, Ching," she said, "see this beautiful rose. God made this rose. He made it to look pretty and smell sweet. God made all things, Ching. He made you and He made me. Now, tell me, Ching, who made the rose?" Ching grinned and said: "God; He make lose." "That's right, Ching. Now, why did He make the rose?" "He make lose to look pretty and smellee sweet." "That's right. Who made you, Ching?" "God make me," replied Ching. He makes me to look pretty and smellee sweet." She is endeavoring to teach the Chinamen a few other things, but will let personal smiles with the rose rest for a while.

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Advertisement for a grinder, featuring an illustration of a man and a woman. Text: "We send the French Grinder CALTHOS... A wonderful machine... E. B. WINGER, Station R, CHICAGO."

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