

Sunny Side of the Late Stuart Robson

FEW men on the American stage have been more universally beloved by their fellow actors than Stuart Robson," said one of the late actor's associates, quoted by the New York Sun. "It is not surprising to those who knew him well that there were no public services in this city after his death. The burial was conducted very much, perhaps, as he would have had it had the details been of his own arranging. "It is pretty generally conceded that two of the results of acting are irascibility and an inclination to display temper. Some of the men who are regarded by the theater-going public as most lovable characters are so cordially hated by the people who are obliged to work for them that the wonder of it is that the crimes of the day are not monopolized by the \$40 and \$50 a week actors who have been humiliated by their stars.

"Only once did I see Stuart Robson lose his temper. We were rehearsing some changes in the play 'Oliver Goldsmith,' in Memphis. A prominent actor associated with the company had thoughtlessly and needlessly annoyed him by interruptions and unsteady performance. Not a word would the 'Guv'nor,' as we called him, say, not a word would he let his manager say, although the actor gave an example of poor discipline to the rest of the company.

"But when we began rehearsing this morning in Memphis, K— started his tomfoolery. The Guv'nor stood it for a while, then, growing red in the face, he slammed the prompt book on the table and said: 'The rehearsal is off. I'm tired of this damned business. You have gone far enough, K—. I won't stand your ungrateful tricks any more,' and he walked off the stage.

"That was all. It doesn't sound very strong, but his voice was breaking with rage, and those who heard knew that it was the accumulated anger of months. Half an hour later K— received a letter of apology. The Guv'nor was sorry he had lost his temper. He should not have spoken as he did; he realized it and hoped K— would forgive him. And let me say that from that time on this actor caused the Guv'nor no more trouble, and none in New York today mourns his loss more than he.

"Under equally trying circumstances, I saw him exhibit the utmost good nature. 'The Gadfly,' produced at Wallack's theater several years ago, was a disastrous failure. During the two weeks it ran, the audiences kept growing less and less until Robson got in the habit of asking before the curtain went up if 'he' was 'out there yet?'

"It was bad enough to have the critics roast the play. It was bad enough to be losing thousands of dollars on the production, but it seemed to me to be rubbing it

in when a well known actor formerly associated with Robson came to his dressing room one night and after watching him make up as the boy in the first act, say:

"Rob, you're a fool to play a part like this. Why don't you try Hamlet?"

"The Guv'nor pursed up his lips in the familiar 'Bertie' style and said, with a slight laugh, 'By Gad, I will if they get me mad!'

"'Oh, he can't help that,' he said, when this Job's comforter had left the dressing room. 'He's always doing that. After I had lost \$30,000 on Bill Nye's play, 'The Cadi,' he came around one night and told me that on the night of its first production he sat beside one of the best known critics in New York, and before the curtain went up had told him that he was sure the play was going to be a failure. Now that was a helpful, friendly suggestion to a critic, wasn't it?'

"The Saturday night when 'The Gadfly' had its last production, he was in a very jocular mood.

"'Think of it,' said he, as he stood in the wings preparatory to going on. 'Think of it! It has cost me \$1,000 every time I played this part. (The loss for the three weeks was \$30,000.) Talk about your public-spirited citizens. Where do I come in? Where is my monument? And look how calm and indifferent those fourteen of the lost, strayed or stolen are out there over the honor that is about to be conferred upon me. You'd think from the way they sit that they didn't know it cost me almost \$100 apiece to entertain them. Look at that fine sample of respectability over there, with the red whiskers and Edam cheese head—think of spending \$100 to entertain him!'

"All through the entr'acts he was in the liveliest moods. 'I have a good mind to make a speech, he said, after the first act.

"He assumed a mock threatening attitude. 'Yes, sir, I've a good mind to go out and tell them that they don't know anything about art—a la Mansfield. What the public wants is a—a talking to.'

"At the end of the next act he came in and said: 'I've relented—they look too innocent.'

"The idea of Stuart Robson playing Hamlet will strike most people as very ludicrous, and yet frequently, when he was telling some story of Forrest or Booth or his most intimate friend, Lawrence Barrett, he read the lines with absolutely none of the exaggerated intonations that made his stage work so funny, and frequently with a great deal of beauty. People often asked about his voice—if he didn't slip off the stage and if there wasn't a break in it? It would surprise many to

know that in his ordinary conversation his voice was rather deep than otherwise and that when it 'broke' it was nearly always, so it seemed to me, a conscious break, for the accentuation of the point of some funny story that he was telling.

"He early learned the value of his voice and I think it rather hurt him a little that, in all the criticisms of the 'Gadfly' nothing was said about the fact that it was a different voice if not a different personality. For three acts he went through a part that was most serious and although the same public had been accustomed to see him in parts that were the acme of the ludicrous, accustomed to his squeaky voice and jerky gestures, little was said about the apparent disappearance of what he knew the public regarded as an inseparable part of him.

"And they came all prepared to roast,' he said, which was, in a way, the truth. There was a strong undercurrent against the play and the actor. The idea that Stuart Robson should play anything serious was an insult and yet, although they came to mock and stayed to condemn, I cannot remember that there was any one there who ridiculed.

"One of the reasons of Robson's popularity was the deference he paid to the opinion of every actor, no matter how unimportant. His dresser surprised him one night by suggesting a change in his lines, and whether it was to please the man or not, he tried the change at rehearsal, after notifying those present to whom belonged the credit for the suggestion.

"He was interested, too, in the outside life of his actors, an unfrequent occurrence among stars of either the old or the new schools. Once, in New Orleans, a queer little comedian, known along Broadway as 'Jimmy,' received a tearful letter from his wife in New York. Evidently he paid no attention to it, for he received another in a few days, saying that if some money was not sent to her at once she would sell his dog, as a man next door had offered her a dollar, probably its full value.

"Jimmy, now thoroughly aroused to the seriousness of the situation, came to the manager and begged for an advance. He was too old an offender, and he was sternly turned down. In tears he went to the Guv'nor. He got ten.

"'A man would be without humanity,' Robson said afterward, 'who could listen to Jimmy talk over the possibility of losing that dollar cur and not shed tears.'

"He was very fond of telling how once he 'barked' for the show when he was playing in Chicago. He was coming over from the hotel to the theater one night, and as he neared the entrance to the theater three

people looking at the lithographs blocked his way.

"'I wonder if that show is any good?' said one of the men, evidently a countryman in town for the night.

"'I understand it is a very good show,' said Robson.

"'Seen it?' was the inquiry.

"'Sure,' he replied, 'a dozen times.'

"'Guess we'll go,' was the conclusion. And the actor left them on his way to the box office.

"'Just added \$6 to the receipts,' he exclaimed to the treasurer when he reached his dressing room. 'There's business enterprise for you. 'Stuart Robson, barker!' how does that sound?'

"No man loved more to swap stories of old times, and when he and old Henry Weaver, who played the part of Samuel Johnson, got together, there was a fund of anecdote let loose that held for hours those fortunate enough to hear it. His stories of the times when he was a page in the house of representatives, his memories of John Wilkes Booth, Edwin Booth, Lawrence Barrett, Forrest, Cushman, all well told and enlivened by his keen humor, would make a book of the most interesting kind.

"The pleasantest memories that many have of him is, however, as he appeared at his summer home at the Highlands of Navesink. During the three or four months he spent there he would probably not move off the porch more than a dozen times. He was there for comfort and rest and he took it, smoking big black cigars all day, reading, copying passages out of favorite books and sticking them up on the walls of his library, and, what pleased him most, listening to the specious arguments and the recital of adventures of his 8-year-old boy.

"There was hardly a one-night stand that we played in the west or south that the audience did not call on him for a speech. He had several in stock for occasions like this, and the one he liked best was in part something like this:

"'When I was a little boy in Baltimore I was very fond of drawing a picture of a big house with a large room, which I roughly indicated as in the front and in which I hoped some day to play with my boy companions. That dream was never realized.

"Time went by and another little Stuart Robson came and he, too, had dreams and those were realized. For the house was built—not quite as big as I had imagined it—and it has the room in the front down there by the Highlands of Navesink. The curly headed little chap is playing there now, and I hope he will live long to enjoy it, for it was his dream and my dream—and perhaps some day his boy will play there, too.'"

Remarkable Development of the Street Railway

THE progress of steam railroad construction and operation has been closely recorded from year to year by private agencies, and since the beginning of such construction in 1829 the country has never had to wait more than a year for pretty accurate statistics of what was being done in that field of investment and enterprise. No private agency that we know of has undertaken any such statistical record in regard to street railways, and accordingly a report on the subject by the United States census bureau for the year ending June 30, 1902, becomes of unusual interest.

In that year it is found that 16,628 miles of main track of street railway were being operated, and 21,529 of single track; and the earnings from operation were \$34,584,627 and operating expenses \$19,012,094 (58 per cent). The operating companies paid dividends of \$15,308,216 and carried about as large a sum to surplus. They employed 2,749 officials, with aggregate salaries of \$4,635,015; 4,301

clerks, with aggregate salaries of \$2,573,936; and 151,123 other employes, with total wages of \$77,427,324. They carried 4,813,466,081 fare passengers, employed 67,199 cars and killed 1,216 persons and injured 47,428. The capital stock, exclusive of 738 miles of single track which failed to report, aggregated \$1,216,277,988, funded debt \$69,328,656, and floating debt \$91,858,571. The total capitalization, bonds and stock, including an estimate for the 738 miles, exceeded \$2,500,000,000.

Such comparisons as are possible with the census statistics of 1890 followed:

	1902	1890
Main line mileage.....	14,418	5,793
Single track mileage..	22,529	8,127
Electric power mileage	21,926	1,551
Animal power	229	5,621
Cable	249	428
Steam	139	711
Bonded debt	\$ 919,228,656	\$151,872,123
Passengers carried ..	4,813,466,081	2,023,010,212
Capital stock	\$1,216,277,988	\$211,277,729

The later statistics are probably more complete than the earlier, but in a general way the changes from twelve years ago are accurately presented.

It will be seen that street railway mileage has been nearly tripled; that nearly all of it is now operated by electric as contrasted with horse power only a dozen years ago; that passengers carried have more than doubled in number, and that capitalization has been increased out of all proportion to the increase in mileage—reflecting in part the increased cost of construction and equipment for electric as compared with horse roads, and in part the inflation schemes of syndicates and promoters.

Public attention in the last few years has been especially directed to the vast quantity of securities thrown upon the investment market by the trusts. Speculation and investment have centered largely upon these industrial consolidations, whereas in former times of great speculative activity steam railroads have led in the storm of inflation and new capital commitments. But it is shown in the above statistics of street railways that this field of investment has been broadening to an

amazing degree and without attracting general attention in comment upon the financial situation. It is made apparent that within a dozen years almost \$2,000,000,000 of street railroad securities have been manufactured and sold, which is about equal to the amount of new steam railroad securities put upon the market during that remarkable period of speculative expansion and inflation extending from 1867 down to the panic of 1873. Yet this marketing of \$2,000,000,000 of street railway stocks and bonds has figured as little more than a mere incident in the general capital commitments of the time. It can probably be said with entire safety that the financial and industrial capitalization of the country per capita of population has never before been expanded so greatly within an equal period of time as during the last half dozen years.

Last of the Mary Ann

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gale at sea or was wrecked on some iron-bound coast to the north and every soul perished.

No sooner had the body of the late captain been given burial and the ship's papers overhauled to find its port of destination than it was headed for the port of New York to be delivered up to the consignees. It was a short-handed crew to work such a big craft, but every man tried to do two men's work, and it was recorded on the log that Nancy Hopewell steered her tricks at the wheel and kept lookouts with the men. While they had been despoiled of the "Mary Ann", they were to find themselves largely the gainers by it. After a run which was bare of event the derelict was safely moored in New York harbor, and Captain Elisha had Nancy remove the tar from her hands and slick up to meet company. It is of the long ago I have written. The tombstones of both Elisha and Nancy are moss grown in the old cemetery, but the salvage money received from "Vorne" gave them years of comfort and happiness. People sometimes wondered that in their old age there was no abatement of their affection, and Elisha would always answer them with:

"Then, by Josh, it's because Nancy is the bravest and best woman on earth, and I don't care who hears me say so!"

Character in Smoke Wreaths

ACCORDING to a man's manner of smoking you shall know him, is the opinion of a keen observer of habits and characteristics.

Let him gnaw at the end of his cigar and roll it between his lips and you may depend he is cynical, likely to look always on the wrong side of human nature and not to trust any one completely.

The man who smokes with his cigar tilted upwards has the traits that make for success, is brisk, aggressive and likely to triumph over interference with his wishes.

The smoker who guards his cigar jealously and will smoke it almost up to the point of charring his moustache or burning his nose is a tactician, scheming, self-seeking and with an intense desire for power.

The cigar tilted toward the chin denotes the day dreamer, the person who may have ideas and ambitions, but seldom the practicality to carry them out.

The cigar held steadily and horizontally indicate a callous, calculating nature, strong traits, but poor principles, the sort of man who could be brutal with indifference should occasion arise.

The man who, after lighting his cigar, holds it not only between teeth and lip, but with two, three or four fingers of his left hand is fastidious and possessed of much personal pride. Such a smoker will often remove the cigar and examine the lighted end to see if it is burning evenly and steadily. Such actions indicate carefulness, sagacity and a character worthy of confidence and esteem.

The smoker who sends forth smoke from both corners of the mouth in two divergent puffs is crotchety and hard to get along with, though he may have good mental faculties.

The spendthrift, sometimes the adventurer, is declared by the act of biting off the end of a cigar. Lack of judgment, dislike to pay debts and not over-niceness of habits are declared by this practice.

The pipe smoker who grips his pipe so firmly between his teeth that marks are left on the mouthpiece is mettlesome, of quick, nervous temper and likes to be tenacious of his opinions one way or another.

The pipe held so that it hangs somewhat toward the chin indicates the listless, ambitionless person, who might stand

irrational and without the capacity to put their powers to use.

Men of quick vivacious temper hardly touch the tip of the cigar with their teeth and after taking two or three whiffs will remove it and hold it in their hand in absent-minded fashion. They are men who change their opinions and ambitions often and require the spur of novelty or necessity to make them exert their best powers.

Men who let their cigar go out and then try to relight it, also those who, after smoking for a while let the cigar go out and then throw it away, are likely to be up to such responsibilities as come to him, but would never seek them or strive for high place.

The man who fills his pipe hastily, haphazard fashion, and emits irregular puffs of some is of incautious, generous impulses, the sort of man who is a good comrade and has powers of entertaining, but whose friendship is not likely to be lasting nor to warrant implicit confidence.

The man who fills his pipe slowly and methodically and smokes mechanically and regularly is likely to be reserved, prudent and a good, dependable friend, while not of showy exterior.