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What I Think of My Wives—By Nat Goodwin

MR. NATHANIEL GOODWIN, one of the greatest and best beloved (except by his wives) of American actors, has long been promising to write a book which would set forth his rich store of stage and matrimonial experiences. He has written his book, and in it, if he has not made perfectly clear just why beautiful women marry him, he has made perfectly clear why he has separated from so many of them.

The book is brilliant, full of fascinating anecdotes upon the great and lesser folk of the stage with whom Nat has come in contact with in his decades of acting. It will be published during the Fall, and

will no doubt take first rank among stage memoirs. He might still have been a happy and deserving once-turned husband, according to his book, had not one wife died and three divorced him. To the sixth wife, who appears in his horoscope, according to grave astrologers, he gives no present thought. He is living, three months after his fifth marriage, on a little island of content.

The following article, taken from the manuscript sheets of the book, is printed by the courtesy of Mr. Goodwin himself. Here is how the five-wedded fascinator bars his soul and airs the troubles of a five-ply husband in the book "I Wonder."

By Nat Goodwin

In His Forthcoming Book of Memoirs.

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

I truly believe that no home is complete without a wife, providing she is of the kind that enjoys the company of honest and intelligent people. Some men only lease their mates and then prate about respectability. If I have decided at different times to tear down any of the Ephesian domes which I have erected, is the fact of my destroying them enough to warrant my

being known, as was Alexander, as the fool that rased (or was it raised) them?

The three saddest events in my life were the burial of my son, the child of myself and the former Mrs. Nellie Baker Pease; the death of my wife, Eliza Weathersby, and inspecting Her Majesty's Theatre, London, with Sir Henry Irving, under the guidance of Beerlohm Tree, then the lessee and manager.

The three happiest events were the birth of my son, the presentation of a loving cup to me by the Lambs Club, and my first night's performance of Shylock in "The Merchant of Venice."

Eliza Weathersby was one of the

loveliest women I ever saw, and without doubt the most amiable and capable of the dearest devotion. A superb artist she entered burlesque to the surprise of all who knew her and to the deep regret of many. The reasons for her entry into the burlesque field was that the salary offered enabled her to support her widowed mother and five sisters, who were left in want by the death of their father. Every week, after our marriage, a certain sum was sent across the ocean out of our joint salaries to the widow and orphans left in London, and, one by one, each succeeding year one of the five sisters would come over to join our happy family.

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.

pod as the husband, Pease, or perhaps on some coral reef where sponges predominate. He proved a most absorbing person. I wired him once to spend a few days in New York. He wired me that he was coming for a cup of tea—and stopped two years.

I noticed during my visits to her house that she bestowed no love nor even respect upon that dilettante husband. I promised her to assist her to meet Mackaye, and after binding myself with this obligation I took my departure.

I met her afterwards in Boston, where she told me she was suing for a divorce, and in a few days I was served with papers from the husband, who charged me with alienating his wife's affections. When the summons came she took it as a joke, saying, "What a great relief from a little incubus." I failed to see the joke and suggested that she furnish some solution for escape from this

me. It was I who began the suit. I was very much embarrassed during the trial when the judge asked me to give him the name of my wife before I married her. I told him I thought it was Hall. He said: "Think? Don't you know?" I said, "That's the name of her brother, who had previously played under my management." When the papers were returned from her attorneys she gave her maiden name as McDermott. I said, "That's the name of her ex-husband." We afterwards discovered that her name was McDermott and that she had married a man of the same name. Hence arose the awkward situation.

(He gives to Edna Goodrich but a few lines. Indeed Number Four narrowly escapes the oblivion of silent contempt so far as her former husband is concerned.)

My marriage to her was one of the great errors of my career. I realized we were mismatched. I had

"There is an expressive verb 'to pan'—its meaning is 'to roast,' 'to criticize.' 'They've always handed it to me,' says Nat. 'But even an ex-husband will turn. It's quite a 'pan' for his ex-wives, this book of Nat's."



Edna Goodrich, Wife No. 4, Whom He Calls His "Error," and Who Cost Him Half a Million.



Nat in the Pacific Surf Cooling Off.



Maxine Elliott, Wife No. 3, Whom Nat Calls "The Roman Senator."



Margaret Moreland, Wife No. 5, the Latest Mrs. Goodwin.

Most embarrassing situation. realized the publicity and scandal that must surely come. She had met my mother and father in the meantime and they were greatly upset about the matter. I realized the publicity and scandal that must surely come. I put the question directly to her: "What shall I do?" She said: "It is very simple. Go to Buffalo. Buy them off. Come back to Boston and marry me. Your mother has become quite fond of me, likewise your dad. I am passionately fond of art. I think you are the most charming of men, and I know I can make you superlatively happy." I fell for this. What else could a true born American do?

It was at a banquet given by Mr. Tim Frawley, in San Francisco, I first met the Juno-like Maxine Elliott, one of the most beautiful women then 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 were wonderful. There she sat, totally unconscious of the appetites she was destroying, absorbing the delicate little compliments paid her by that prince of good fellows, John Drew. Serene and superior she reminded me then, as many times she has since, of a Roman Senator and upon her I afterward bestowed that sobriquet.

During my marriage to Maxine Elliott she purchased a house on Duke street, London, without my knowledge. I had previously placed my furniture in a storehouse together with the contents of my wine cellar, which she quietly confiscated. I did not mind the furniture so much, but to tickle the palates of her English friends with my expensive St. Emilion and Veuve Cliquot was rude, to say the least. Besides I was never invited to her Duke street house. After I had tried so hard to entertain her at Jackwood, my English home, I think her conduct was most discourteous.

A great many people have the idea that Maxine Elliott divorced

fallen in love with her while trying to save her from a scoundrel. My zeal outran my discretion. Her mother was a jarring chord. In short the avenues of our lives did not run parallel and the milieu she created in our home became one of trying ordeals rather than domestic felicity. She was marvelously beautiful—so they tell me. But, to quote from James Whitcomb Riley, "Pretty is what pretty does."

(After his third divorce drama, in which she played the heroine, Miss Goodrich had little to say of him, only: "When a man is fat and past fifty he would better stop his pursuit of romance," and, when in softer mood: "It is a great pity. He was once such a fine actor. What a waste of life!")

In May, 1913, I again started the world by marrying Margaret Moreland, and set the buzzards and the gossips wagging their ears [Nature query: Does a buzzard wag his ears?] and lashing their tongues in spasms of spleen. Irrespective of my love for the lady, her devotion to me during my late illness was worthy a crown of rubies. I only wish I possessed one to place upon her brow. She saved my life and I owe it to her. The trouble has been that I have always admired beautiful and they have handed it to me.

I have constantly referred to fate while writing my book, taking my cue from Homer, but had I known he simply used the word fate to save time, and since my course through life was directed by "fates" rather than fate, I should not have marvelled at my many disappointments in the matrimonial field. With those "Three Little Maids from School"—Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos—leading me through life with their silken threads through my nose, allowing me to go and then reeling me back again, as one toys with a game fish, I have felt like giving up the game long ago.

Young ladies, you certainly have made it very warm for me.

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