

ground, but immediately beyond is the wonderful Alum Cave (Waiporakara), the property of the Tourist Department. This is situated in the side of a conical hill, the mouth being situated near the apex. The entrance is almost obscured by magnificent tree ferns, and upon entering, it is seen that the opening descends to a depth of about sixty feet, the ferns growing to a depth of over thirty feet and waving their lordly heads almost to the roof of the cavern. Descending by a flight of steps cut out of almost solid sulphur and alum, the visitor finds himself in an immense chamber with very fine stalactites hanging all round, and with alum scattered about in profusion. At the bottom of the cave is an underground lake of boiling water, and to approach this is to get the nearest approach to a Turkish bath possible. It is indeed a magnificent site, and it is well that the Tourist Department has taken precautions to prevent it being destroyed by tourists with vandalistic tendencies. It is said that the Maoris used this cave as a hiding place in times of war.

Excellent trout fishing can be obtained almost anywhere on the upper reaches of the Waikato, and for several miles close to Wairakei the banks have been cleared of bush and scrub so as to allow of free play with the rod.

An Evening of Thrills.

(By Edgar Wallace.)

I said to the lady who issues tickets, "Two of the most expensive seats in the house, please. We are representatives of the enlightened Press of England. My friend, who has otherwise lived a blameless life, is, alas! connected with a Radical."

"Three shillings, and not so much lip," said the lady, so we passed in.

The theatre was packed. Nobody applauded the overture, but when the band began a tender movement and the lights went out, silence fell upon the 3/2, 2/1/6 and 1/ parts of the house, and the voice of the man who calls in the police spoke admonishment to the cheap seats, "Give a little order there, caretaker!"

The scene at the rising of the curtain revealed to us that part of a ship which only exists in melodrama. To the right was the captain's cabin. Above this was the bridge, on which the captain stands with his telescope when so disposed. In the centre of the stage was a basket chair with cushions, and up-stage were the bulwarks. When the curtain rose the crew, which in melodrama has the run of the quarter-deck, were chivying a poor Eytalian.

Poor Beppo! He had an organ and earrings and a long knife, and said, "Sy Signor," but as one of the crew (the humorous steward, who is in love with the heroine's maid) said, "These foreigners take the bread out of an honest Englishman's mouth." (Cheers.) Later, when the chivying becomes pronounced, and Beppo draws the aforesaid knife upon humorous steward, and humorous steward turns back cuffs as an earnest of his intention of "showing how an Englishman is not afraid of a cowardly knifing foreigner!" (cheers)—the captain arrives, and says, "Hold, lad! He (Beppo) is only a poor foreigner amongst strangers, so you should be kind to him, and show him that Englishmen can respect a fallen foe!" (Cheers.) Beppo says, "Mc poor Italian, signor, but me grateful; Heavens bless you, signor." Exit with organ playing "Home, Sweet Home."

The captain—all alone, for the crew have now retired—seats himself on the basket chair and takes the audience into his confidence. His soliloquy runs to about half a column, but it may be condensed.

Captain: "So we are nearing England; well, this is my last voyage. I am taking home my savings—one hundred thousand pounds. Yes, I have diamonds in yonder cabin to that amount. It is all for my daughter, who is going to marry Young Harry. Ah me! I wish the ship would move faster."

[Enter the Adventuress, in yachting costume and picture hat.]

Adventuress: "Ah, Captain (aside. 'The old fool!'), I hear you have got £100,000 in diamonds in your cabin. Will you show them to me? I love diamonds."

Captain: "Yes, I have. I will show them to you later. I always like to oblige the fair sex. They are all for

my girl, who is going to marry Young Harry."

Adventuress (starting back): "Heavens! Young Harry."

Captain (not noticing her perturbation): "Yes. Excuse me for a minute, Miss Grey. I must go and navigate the ship. (Exit.)

[The Adventuress seats herself in the basket chair and talks to the audience for ten minutes.]

Adventuress: "Ha, ha! So the Captain has got £100,000 in his cabin. If the drug I will give takes effect he will not have it long. Young Harry is married to me, but the marriage was not legal when I married him. I had already three husbands, poor dears! I am supposed to have died in Florence, but I am still alive. And I have a mother, curse her; I hope she is dead. Ah! Captain." (Enter Captain.)

Captain: "Come into my cabin." (Sunset, all the stage red.) "I will show you the diamonds. I always like to oblige the fair sex."

Adventuress: "Yes. I will come." (Enters cabin. Moonlight, all the stage green. Enter Beppo, playing "Home, Sweet Home." Adventuress and Captain come out of cabin.)

Captain: "How strange my head feels!" (Adventuress sneers.) "Come on to the bridge." (Both go up to the bridge over cabin; Beppo plays "Home, Sweet Home" furtively. Captain leans over rail.)

Captain: "How swift the water runs." Adventuress (biting him on the head): "Die!"

Captain: "O Heaven!" (falls overboard.)

Adventuress: "Ha, ha, ha! The hundred thousand pounds are mine!" (Sees Beppo, who is now playing "Home, Sweet Home" without any attempt at concealment.) "The Italian!" (Curtain.)

The Radical and I went and drank stout.

The second act was the entrance-hall of the Trocadero. On consulting my programme I discovered it was one of the poor captain's country seats. The Radical said this gives the lie to the old-repeated statements made by Captain Kettle and other naval authorities that the mercantile marine is underpaid. The captain's daughter is going to marry Young Harry. Some one else loves her. His name is Guy, and he is a villain. On the programme he is tersely described as a "Parasite." Guy is a friend of the Adventuress, and when they meet outside the church where the marriage ceremony is going on, and when the Adventuress casually mentions that one of her husbands is getting married to the girl the Parasite loves, he gets fearfully annoyed, and wants to stop the wedding.

"No," says the Adventuress, "it is all right, for when I married him I already had four husbands—poor dears. These papers show that he is not legally married to me."

Peal of bells. Wedding party come out of church. Bride and bridegroom. Humorous steward and maid, village idiot and two young men in caps.

Young Harry sees Adventuress, clasps his forehead, and says, "Her second time on earth!" Bride looks put out.

"This is your legal wife," says the Parasite, pointing triumphantly to Adventuress.

"No," says the Adventuress, loudly, "I am not his wife." (Sensation.)

The Radical and I went into the bar and drank stout.

Beppo returns in the third act. If he had been wise he would have waited for the fourth.

Young Harry (entering hurriedly, to his bride): "Dearest, your father is alive."

Adventuress (aside): "Ha!" Parasite (aside): "Ha!"

Young Harry's Bride: "Thank Heaven!"

Young Harry: "Alas! his mind is gone! He was picked up by a passing steamer."

Young Harry's Bride: "Alas! my poor father!"

Parasite: "Beppo would betray you." Adventuress: "Then he must be got out of the way."

(Enter Captain. He has grown quite a venerable white beard, and is quite mad.)

Young Harry's Bride: "Don't you know me, father?"

Mad Captain (passing his hand wearily before his eyes): "I always like to oblige the fair sex. Oh, yes, I will show you the diamonds. I'm always polite to the fair sex."

Young Harry's Bride: "Alas! he is mad."

Humorous Steward (now a gardener; all humorous stewards become gardeners): "Poor old captain, he's dotty." (Laughter.)

Parasite: "He does not recognise you." Adventuress: "No; now to kill Beppo."

Scene: A rocky coast, with lightning. Beppo comes in without his organ.

Beppo: "Mc poor Italian signor. You pay poor Beppo mooch money he no betray you; no fell captain ze lady kill him and steal ze diamonds."

(Parasite hits him on the head with shovel. Adventuress sticks knife in ribs. Beppo accordingly dies. Parasite and Adventuress bury Beppo in sand—real sand.)

Next morning Mad Captain, Young Harry and Bride, and Short Doctor with Bernard Shaw beard come to rocky coast, toy idly with sand, dig up Beppo. Consternation of Adventuress.)

Captain (clapping head—his own head): "Beppo! Beppo! Why, yes! I remember all." (Sees Adventuress.) "Ah, you! There stands the woman who stole my hundred thousand pounds!" (Curtain.)

In attempting—in the last act—to stab Young Harry's Bride, the Adventuress stabs herself. In the hospital the Parasite visits her with a few presents: (1) large silver-plated revolver; (2) small phial of deadly poison.

Adventuress, in bed, with her hair down, curses Young Harry, curses Mad Captain, now, happily, no longer mad—curses her mother (who, by the way, is dead in the next bed), curses Harold (whom I've forgotten to mention—I don't mean the Radical, whose name is also Harold), and shoots at Young Harry's Bride, hits Parasite, who falls with a wringing waaak, takes poison, falls across bed, dies, etc.

"What can you recommend in the drink line?" asked the Radical at the first restaurant we entered. The lady behind the counter thought a while: "What about stout?" she suggested.

EDGAR WALLACE.
(In London "Daily Mail.")

Women Who Smoke Too Much.

Englishwomen of the upper class are being told by their doctor that they are smoking too much, and beginning seriously to damage their health in many cases. They aim at soothing their nerves, but instead of being content with half a dozen cigarettes a day they are smoking two or three times as many, and producing the opposite effect. Excessive indulgence leads to frequent indigestion, and then in turn to inadequate nourishment, nerve weakness and irritability. The doctors are told that they exaggerate, and do not make sufficient allowance for other conditions which produce nerve weakness, especially among women who spend most of their lives in town. It is at any rate a fact that the number of those who smoke is rapidly increasing, and as women are generally more liable to suffer physically from the habit than men, the chances are that the doctors are not far wrong. In one large West End restaurant for middle class customers one can see any evening groups of professional women smoking cigarette after cigarette with their after dinner coffee. Apropos of this feminine indulgence in tobacco in England, a report from Paris is interesting. A leading tobacconist there, proceeded against on the ground that he did not possess a certificate justifying him in calling himself "purveyor of cigarettes to Queen Margherita of Italy," has proved that he regularly supplies her Majesty with cigarettes. The same dealer states that among other royalties addicted to smoking are the Empress of Russia, the Queen of Roumania (who has a pronounced fondness for it), Queen Maria Christina of Spain and Queen Amelie of Portugal.

"John!" cried Mrs. Jenkins as she greeted her husband on the stairway at 3.46 a.m., "here you are again, intoxicated!"

"No'm," replied John, circling around with his arms several times trying to catch hold of something solid. "Just in love, m'dear."

"Yes, m'dear. 'Sh' love makesh th' worl' go round, ain't it?"

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The original of the above testimonial is on file in the office of the Cuticura Remedies, 150 N. 5th St., St. Paul, Minn. Reference: R. Town & Co., Merchants, Sydney, N.S.W.

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