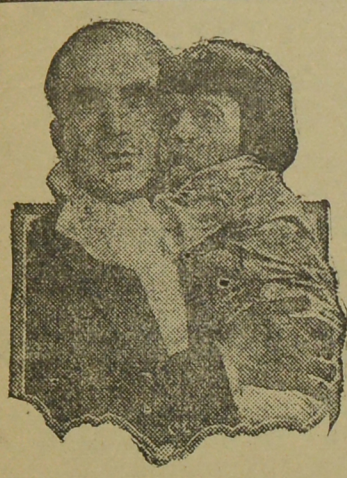




THE SINGING FOOL

by
HUBERT DAIL

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"The Singing Fool", starring Al Jolson, is a Warner Bros., picturization of this novel.

SYNOPSIS

Al Stone, singing waiter at Blackie Joe's New York night club wins fame on Broadway as a composer of popular songs. He marries Molly Winton, a ballad singer, and makes her famous, too. Molly and Al have a baby, Junior, whom Al adores. Molly becomes romantically interested in John Perry, Al's close friend, and Perry begs her to leave Al. On the third anniversary of his marriage Al takes Molly home from the Club Bombo, where he is part owner. She is moody; her conscience bothers her because of her behavior with Perry. This is intensified when Al goes to the nursery and she sees how ardently he loves Junior. Later, in a burst of rage, she tells Al she doesn't love him any more. As Al recoils, Molly hears Junior calling her.

CHAPTER XV

Junior had awakened to find that his toy, his woolly dog, had dropped out of bed. So he was calling to Molly to come and get it for him. As his high childish voice drifted through the rooms to Molly and Al they gave a start. The expression on Al's face softened in an instant. Molly's remained the same as she brushed by Al to look after Junior.

Al turned, looking after her retreating figure, still in a daze from her harsh words. He had lost her love, she actually said so herself! Her words and the heart breaking scene he had just passed through seemed fantastic and unreal to him. What had he done to deserve her indifference and her scorn?

Then, like a man in a dream he followed her toward the nursery. Standing in the doorway, he saw her pick up Junior's woolly dog from the floor, replace it in the child's arms and carefully tuck him in.

"Go to sleep, now Junior. Then Mamma can sleep too."

How strangely contrasting was that soothing voice to the tone Molly had just used in addressing Al! And how kind the expression on Molly's profile as she bent over Junior's bed! Surely this was not the end thought Al. He suddenly determined that he would not let their life together be blasted by her whim; he would fight to reawaken Molly's love!

As Molly came toward him he raised his hand with an apologetic gesture. "Darling, can't we talk this out? If I've done anything tell me!"

"No—no more talk!" Molly passed him, entering her bedroom. He heard her door close with a snap of finality.

But now Junior was sitting up holding out his arms to his father. "Daddy, please sing me to sleep."

Al came forward swiftly, picking up Junior, holding him close as if to drive away the wound Molly had inflicted. Here, at any rate, was someone who loved him, trusted him and always greeted him with the same adoring happy smile. For a moment Al choked up and couldn't speak. Then he said huskily,

"What do you want me to sing, baby?"

"You know" whispered Junior confidently "that one about a little boy like me."

"Little Feller?"

"Yes, that one."

Slowly Al began to sing rocking Junior gently to and fro. There was only an audience of one to hear—and that a very sleepy audience—but the tenderness and appeal of Al's words had not been matched since that night three years ago when he had sung the love ballad "Always" to touch Molly's heart. As the song continued Junior's head dropped in drowsiness and presently his eyes closed. When Al knew that he was really asleep the rhythmic words trailed off into a whisper and silence. Then, pressing

the little form close to him for a last good night hug he put his son back in the bed.

Once more the tip toeing from the room. Then Al stopped and gazed wonderingly at Molly's closed door. She was still up; in the semi-darkness of the hallway he could see a faint narrow line of light under the door?

Perhaps she was already repenting of her quick unkind words—how passionately he wished that could be true! Her pride wouldn't let her make up to him now, but, perhaps in the morning.

Until the long black hours of the night faded into the gray dawn Al sat up in bed, gazing out over the lights of the city, smoking one cigarette after another, wondering, hoping, planning.

In the morning Molly's manner was still cold, but her whip lash tongue was silent. She avoided meeting his eyes and when she spoke it was about necessary things, concerning Junior or the household. Al watched her, hoping to detect a softening glint in those icy blue eyes, but there was no sign of relenting. Finally, he left the apartment for his work.

All through the day and evening there was an actual sharp pain in Al's heart as if a knife had been driven swiftly into him and withdrawn. But he went about his work the same as usual, trying to forget the scene of the night before. When he saw Molly after her performance that evening he thought she was in better humor. She was not cordial, by any means, but she made some attempt to treat him courteously. His heart gave a bound; in a few days he told himself, this mood of hers would wear off and she would be her own lovely self again. Their life together would not be smashed, after all.

So the days passed, with Molly avoiding Al most of the time, and maintaining a certain secrecy of manner when she did talk to him. Then New Year's Eve arrived the New Year's Eve that Al was to remember always.

It was the big night in the city's life of revelry; snow blanketed the streets, embellishing the roofs and facades of the houses and skyscrapers, emphasizing the dazzling fantasy of brilliant Broadway.

At the Club Bombo the cause of "whoopie" had its most devoted adherents. The crowd in evening dress wore tiny carnival hats and danced with the true spirit of abandon as midnight approached. Long streamers of confetti in brilliant red, green, blue yellow and purple were shot across the room, describing graceful curves before they fell across the dining tables and the shoulders of the dancers. It was the biggest crowd the Bombo had ever entertained and on the raised orchestra platform, stood Al, wearing a fantastic head piece, a megaphone in his hands. He was leading the merriment, but the ache in his heart was still present.

Perhaps, he thought, the unrestrained gaiety of this night would change Molly's blood so she would be come her old friendly self. He gave a hurried glance toward her reserved table; she should be here by now. Then came the distracting business of introducing the celebrities and once more he glanced at the vacant table and consulted his watch. Molly was at least a half hour late. He nodded toward the orchestra leader, signalling for another dance.

As the dancers swept toward the floor he retreated among the tables. What was keeping Molly? He could hear the shrieks of the sirens from outside—the New Year had arrived, the time when feuds and misunderstandings are forgotten, new resolutions are made and life begins anew. All this, he hoped desperately

ROSS DRUG CO. JOINS UP WITH LOCAL STORES

The Ross Drug Company, Limited, which about a year ago opened its second large store in Saint John, as extended its business to the city of Fredericton where the drug stores of C. Hedley Forbes, known as Dibble's Drug Store, Ltd., and the Quality Pharmacy become amalgamated with the Saint John concern. Mr. Forbes who succeeded to the business in the capital city upon the death of Mr. Dibble in 1919 becomes a director of The Ross Drug Company Ltd. and will be its Fredericton manager.

The expansion of The Ross Drug Company, Ltd. is another evidence of Maritime progress and especially since the added investment attracts more New Brunswick money to home developed enterprise. Although the local corporation is a link in the international chain of Rexall Stores, it is owned within the province and its forward steps are consistent with its success to date.

The new Fredericton stores will be brought into line with the other establishments of the Ross Drug Company and retain their position in the drug trade of the capital city. Mr. Forbes manager who is president of the New Brunswick Pharmaceutical Society and was for years on its board of examiners is a vigorous young business man who has devoted his life to the profession, except that time he served with the first Field Ambulance Corps to leave Canada for the Great War. He was decorated with the D. C. M. and M. M.

The amalgamation of the former Dibble-Forbes business in Fredericton with the Saint John concern has now taken place. Louis A. Titus of this city, general manager has made several visits to Fredericton to confer with Mr. Forbes as to inaugural plans and changes.

IMPORTANT DECISION IS COMING SOON

London, Nct. 11—The new term of the Privy Council opens on Tuesday, with a number of important judgments to be delivered in Canadian cases. Only three new appeals are listed from Canada, however, two of them being by Chinese residents of British Columbia, contending the Produce Marketing Act is ultra vires of the Provincial Legislature.

Judgments for delivery include the reserved decision on the appeal of representative Canadian women against a ruling of the Canadian Supreme Court, which decided that under the British North America Act women were not eligible for appointment to the Canadian Senate.

THE COOL LONELY ONES

Have mercy, Lord, on the cool lonely ones,
Who sit with folded hands in their church pew,
And satisfied, contented with their lot
Sing out of hymn books others wrote to you.

would influence Molly.

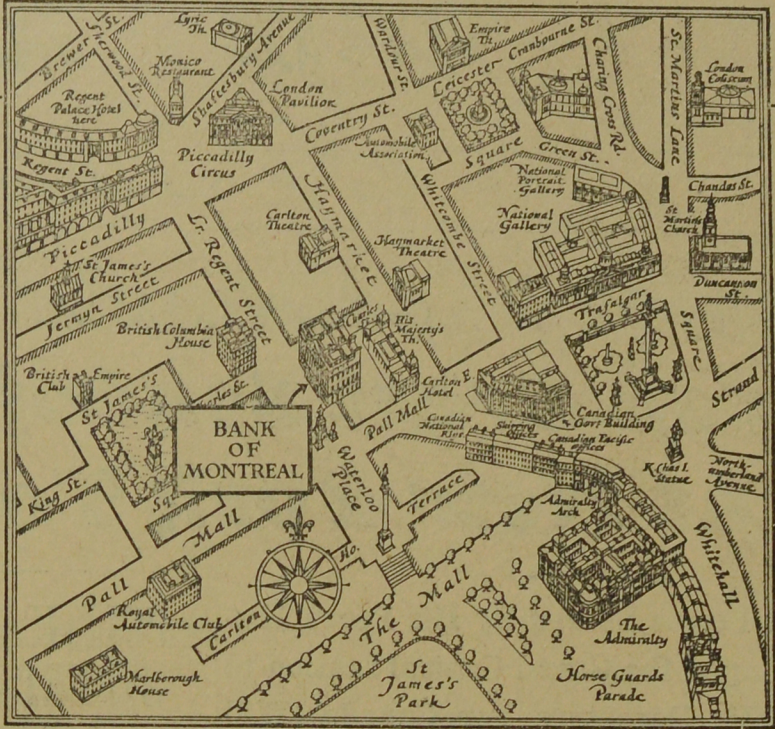
The orchestra was playing with staccato briskness and abandon, the couples swayed and snuggled and called to one another.

"Choose a partner yourself!" cried a friend in passing, clapping Al on the shoulder. Al laughed in answer but a moment later he moved toward the phone room at the rear. Perhaps Molly had gone straight home from the theatre—he must find out!

The phone room was a sort of alcove, with three or four booths. Al entered one, pulling the door shut and calling his apartment number. But the door suddenly drifted open, allowing a roar of happy sounds to enter. Just then he heard a feminine voice at the other end of the wire—Molly's voice, he thought. He quickly pulled the door shut again and said: "Molly, dearest, I've been holding your table for you—hoping you'd come."

But again the door flew open and he missed the answer.

(To be continued.)



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