

A BOWERY MUSEUM ROMANCE.

An Epidemic of Love Sweeps Over the Freaks, Who Fight for a Pretty Piano Player.

Miss Pearl Higbie's Hasty Marriage with an Outsider, Which Was Legal After All.

Now She Is Repentant and Unhappy and the Freaks and "Jack" Have Given up Hope.

An epidemic of love has lately afflicted one of the Bowery museums.

Nobody seems to know exactly who fell in love first. The earliest symptoms were undoubtedly noticed in the living skeleton.

Notwithstanding this fact, there are those who assert that the conical-headed Australian with the boxing-gloves was the first to succumb. Be this as it may, the fact remains that within a week after Miss Pearl Higbie had made her appearance as a piano-player at the museum, everybody, from the cackler at the front door to the Spanish students and from the Siberian sword-swallower to the Missing Link, was engaged in a Greek-Roman wrestle with the gentle flame.

This, of course, does not pertain to the lovely Circassian from Pell street, or to the massive lady who stands as a monumental temptation to the wind, with a lovely growth of Van Dyke whiskers. These two glowered upon Pearl with a feminine glower, and were jealous.

To this jealousy Pearl paid no attention whatever. In fact she regarded it as a joke.

The Lord tempests the wind to the shorn lamb, she said one day, as she passed the bearded lady; and from that time forth they were enemies. But Pearl did not care. Pearl was pretty and the bearded lady was not. Pearl had eighteen years to her credit, and the bearded lady had one hundred and eighty-six, more or less.

Pearl's eyes were as black as two acres of sodas turned from freshly cut packs, and her hair ran in little ripples like that upon

the slightest attention. She laughed and tore it up and threw it into the fire.

Then the Missing Link, who had observed proceedings with a jaundiced eye, turned to the Living Skeleton and said:

"Hally Joe! young feller, do you tink de lady is goin' far to get stuck on a hat-rack?"

"Who's a hat-rack?" yelled the angry Skeleton. "Say! Who's a hat-rack? I'll break yer jaw, dat's wot I'll do."

The angry Skeleton then pranced deliriously around in front of the Link and hit him in the eye. Then there was a fight in which it was a case of the survival of the fittest. The Skeleton threw back his skull and erected his cross-bones in the customary Marquis of Queensberry attitude, and the Link ranted around until his tempest tail cracked like a cab-driver's whip.

The monkeys shrieked and chattered, and the parrots cursed and swore. The Tattooed Man, in a wild spirit of chivalry, rushed up to the piano stage and ceased to throw a protecting arm around the shrinking Pearl. She joined in the chorus of shrieks, and gave him a violent push off the platform. He fell on the floor, skimming his shoulder, thereby destroying several choice illustrations and otherwise impairing his commercial value.

In the mean time the Skeleton and the Link were punching wildly at each other on the floor. Finally the latter caught his opponent by one of his numerous gables and threw him against the monkey cage so violently that his bones rattled. This was too much for the Bearded Lady who weighed

metabolically speaking, and was telling the old, old anecdote. Pearl smiled upon him, while the adjacent freaks glowered. He came again that night and proposed marriage. Pearl laughed cooly and asked him to give her a little time in which to consider.

JACK'S IMPATIENCE.

The days rolled by and Jack became impatient. Finally he succeeded in making an appointment for a long walk on Sunday. He waited for Pearl at the trysting place on Broadway as patiently as an idolatrous lover can. When Pearl finally came striding along—horror of horrors!—she had another girl with her.

They talked upon ordinary subjects for a time, but finally Jack's emotion brimmed over the barriers of repression, and he importuned Pearl to become his wife that day. Pearl did not reply. Then the other girl, thinking it was a good joke, gave Pearl a nudge.

"All right, I am willing," said Pearl.

The enterprising and overjoyed Jack then led the way to the residence of a Methodist minister on Thirty-ninth street. When the door was opened, however, Pearl became frightened and started to go away, saying that she wanted to have the wedding postponed. Jack could not see it in that light. He became angry and would not listen to such a proposition. The other girl, who treated the affair as a joke, told Pearl to go ahead.

"The marriage will not be legal anyway," said she. But it was.

AND SO THEY WERE MARRIED.

The trio then went into the parlor and the minister performed the ceremony, filled out the certificate and placed it in Pearl's trembling hands. When they had registered the street Jack asked his newly made wife to accompany him to their future home on East Fourth street. Pearl demurred at first, but finally consented, ingenuously, however, that her friend should accompany them. The young Bonadict made the best of a bad bargain and the three boarded a downtown Third avenue car.

"Now," whispered Pearl to her companion, "you look for a policeman, and when you see one jump off, and I will stop the car and have Jack arrested." Alas! no policeman could be seen.

When they reached the boarding-house, Jack took Pearl up to the newly furnished rooms, and then promptly and unceremoniously shut the door in her friend's face. Pearl began to weep inside the room, and her friend outside. Then the landlady rushed out into the hall and asked what the trouble was.

"He has locked the door in my face," replied the girl.

"Then why don't you go about your business?" replied the irate landlady.

This angered Pearl's friend, and a wordy battle ensued, after which the girl left the house and posted with all speed to the home of Mrs. Higbie, to whom she unfolded the tale of the day's cerebral war. With a wild shriek Mrs. Higbie grasped her best bonnet and rushed for the scene of action. On the way she met a policeman, who promptly fell into line.

THE CURTAIN DID NOT FALL.

The angry mother rang the boarding-house bell, and followed by the officer, rushed upstairs without waiting to explain matters to the astonished landlady. She found Pearl sitting in a chair near the window weeping as if her heart would break. With simultaneous cries of joy the mother and daughter rushed into each other's arms. But the curtain did not fall.

Jack interfered and tried to drag the two women apart. The policeman poked his club into the males and commanded peace. Then Jack made Pearl show her marriage certificate and the officer went away leaving the three principals in the drama alone.

After a long discussion Mrs. Higbie allowed to desert with her daughter and next day Pearl was back at the old familiar piano playing the old old tunes. She will not return to Jack, although he and all the other members of his family have begged her to. Mrs. Higbie says that she will have the marriage annulled at once. She now constantly stands guard over Pearl.

Jack, after much grief, abandoned hope, became independent, and wrote his wife the following letter:

THE LAST LOVE LETTER.

MY DARLING WIFE, PEARL: I write to you for the last time to tell you that I do not intend to counsel you to live with me as my wife. I hereby declare to you that I am not married, for you have my consent. You pretend that you do not care for me, but I know you do. You can have your liberty and go as you please, and I'll married again if you like for I will not interfere. I would ask of you and that in accept my photograph instead, and keep it forever as the picture of the man you loved. I would like to see you again to say "good-by" in person. If you don't want to, you go your way and I'll go mine. You know we were married but now we are good-by, good-by, from your loving husband, Jack.

Pearl still plays the piano, but there is a thrill of pathos in its tones that was not there before, and there are times when she bows her head on her weary hands in a dreamy reverie and wonders if love were not best after all.

The freaks understand and are contented. They have patched up their differences and do not look at Pearl any more. Every night the serio-comic star of the museum trips out on the stage and warbles:

"Love comes like a Summer sun,"
Then comes the pauses, the freaks sing in chorus:
"And it goes like a son of a gun."

Mr. Heintz's Rights Tammany.

Louis J. Heintz, the new Street Commissioner of the annexed district, who takes charge of the public improvements in that part of the city to-day, yesterday announced his principal appointments as follows: Deputy Commissioner, John H. J. Rosner; General Inspector, ex-Alderman James J. Mooney; Superintendent of Streets and Roads, ex-Thomas Kearney; Chief Clerk, W. H. Ten Erck; Bookkeeper, John Osborne.

Rosner used to be a Tammany man and was leader of the Twenty-fourth district after George H. Foster's death until Henry H. Purroy took charge. He resigned from the ward last October to support Helms. Mooney is the chief of the Ollagawallas and was prominent in the County Democracy of the annexed district while there was any County Democracy there to be prominent in. Kearney is a real estate man and is the Republican leader of the Twenty-fourth ward. Ten Erck is the Republican leader of the Twenty-third ward. Osborne is also a Republican and was defeated for Alderman a year ago. He was an umbrella dealer in Broadway, but failed in business a short time ago. He lives at 115 West 11th street.

Louis A. Kline, who was formerly connected with the Park Department, will probably be Commissioner Heintz's Chief Engineer, but that appointment is not yet definitely settled.

New Year's at the Museum.

To-day being a holiday the Metropolitan Museum of Natural History, Seventy-seventh street and I Eighth avenue, will be open to the public free of charge. At 3.30 p. m. an illustrated lecture on the "Physical Geography of the Conterminous of New York State, the Highlands and Plateaus" will be delivered in the museum by Prof. Albert A. Noyes. No admission fee will be charged and the public may enter without cards.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth avenue and Eighty-first street, will be open also, free of charge, from 9 a. m. to eight an hour before sunset.

- Lefet die deutschen Annoncen, welche auf der letzten Seite erscheinen.



her Astrakhan cape, and her little teeth gleamed, as white as the dice which her admirers used to throw for the drinks in a neighboring saloon.

So Pearl continued to strum the piano with sangfroid and both hands right in the midst of the freaks, although she was all by her little self. Whenever she made her appearance in the morning, with her eyes sparkling and her cheeks flushed with the Winter air, the masculine freaks would strike the various attitudes best calculated to show off their respective freakology, and the chorus of envious sighs would condense the coating of white frost over the cold windows.

HOW PEARL ATTRACTED THEM.

The animated skeleton would throw out his allured chest and swell around and smoke cigarettes with fervor and vigor. The tattooed man would show off his picturesque navy-blue anatomy to the best possible advantage, more especially that particular illustration over his heart, which was supposed to convey the idea of two doves hopped and cooing.

Even the ossified man, who has not moved since 1863, had a pain in the paving-stone that performed the functions of a heart, and altogether the freaks were badly broken up. The Phil cannibal alone was calm and self-possessed. He regarded Pearl from a gastronomical point of view and was comparatively contented, because he knew that she was unattainable either as a broil or as a bride.

But Pearl had many other admirers outside the museum. Sometimes a seedy-looking man with a bulbous rubeous nose would come in and lean pensively on his breast and regard her wistfully for hours at a time. Then, at regular intervals, Sing High, the Chinese laundryman on the next block, would put on his Sunday blues and his best pair of skates, and with a little package of cornmeal in his long yellow hand would hasten down to the museum with the Colonial idea of languishing somewhere around the piano.

THINGS WERE DIFFERENT.

When Mrs. Higbie was around, however, and it may be said in passing that she was generally around—things were, a different aspect. People began to whistle idly and to stroll about with the purpose of concealing their emotions. The glances bent upon the oblivious Pearl in her mother's presence were hurried and unsteady. There was no languishing. Mrs. Higbie was a feminine dragon, who guarded the little piano player with an acidity that defied the most ardent Romeo of them all.

As for Pearl—well, she did not mind it at all. She played day after day and night after night and never spoke to anybody but her mother and her little dog Fido at home, and the female snake-charmer, who was her friend. She had never had a sweetheart and did not want one, she said.

Finally, as time passed on, and as the flame in the breasts of Pearl's worshippers grew and grew, they began to pour forth tales of woe in the shape of surreptitious notes. These they left in odd corners about the piano when Pearl was away. The first bill was from the Living Skeleton. It said:

Miss Pearl:

I take my pen in hand to let you know that you are the life of my heart. All do not regard me with disdain because I am only a skeleton, but I am in love with you. I love the way you smile and the way you laugh. I am certain enough for each of you, and will wait here for you. I am so thin, but I am sure that you could see through me and with the naked eye, I am not half so thin as I look.

I am sure that you will meet with favor, give me a chance and I will love you.

CHARLES LIVING SKELETON.

To this note the heartless Pearl paid not

the faintest attention. She laughed and tore it up and threw it into the fire.

Then the Missing Link, who had observed proceedings with a jaundiced eye, turned to the Living Skeleton and said:

"Hally Joe! young feller, do you tink de lady is goin' far to get stuck on a hat-rack?"

"Who's a hat-rack?" yelled the angry Skeleton. "Say! Who's a hat-rack? I'll break yer jaw, dat's wot I'll do."

THE DAY THAT JACK CAME.

Among the throng of visitors during the evening was a young man named Jack Foreman. Jack is a clerk in a cigar store on the west side. He drifted into the museum in an idle moment with his hands in his pockets and his heart in the right place. He drifted out again an hour later with his hands on his heart and his head in his pocket and otherwise turned so topsy-turvy that he scarcely remembered who he was. He had seen Pearl and had fluttered madly, just as other men had fluttered, around the piano. It was Fate.

Thereafter Jack came regularly to the museum every night, listening to the dreamy strains of "Sweet Heather Bell" and the "Fisher Maiden" until love's gentle hashish had taken his heart out, and he was Pearl's most devoted slave. Day after day he sold black-eyed clogs, rode downtown on black-eyed street cars and ate black-eyed meals in the preoccupied fashion of a loves-eater.

Pearl was unconscious of this. She had no suspicion that such a man as Jack Foreman existed, until one day he came up and spoke to her. This was, of course, after he had thoroughly got the lay of the land. It is unnecessary to say that Mrs. Higbie was not present.

THE FIRST LOVE LETTER.

Pearl would not talk. She turned to her nose with uncompromising, but maidenly, scorn, and Jack went away disconsolate. The next morning Pearl received a note signed "Jack," which said, among other simultaneous things, that she was the only girl he had ever loved.

After the heartless manner of her sex Pearl tilted her nose up to a further angle and tore the note to pieces. Jack came again that evening, but received no recognition whatever. The next week brought two more letters from the persevering lover, both full of tender appeals for encouragement. The last one Pearl showed to a young lady named Emma, who was swallowing words that week on the platform next to her.

"Senericia Zangara" was her stage name, but that ends no figure in the case. A sword-swallower by any other name would be as sweet.

Emma smiled. She had been doing the museum act for ten years and was a walloper from Swallowville. She also understood all about stage-door Johnnies. So she advised Pearl to answer the letter, "because," said she, "you might not hold of some rich young man for a husband." Such is the worldly love of a worldly woman.

Pearl fell in with the idea and wrote to Jack telling him she would like to see him. Half an hour later Jack was at her feet,