

THE BUTTER AND EGG MAN 121

LEHMAN

Will you shut that door, please?

[PETER *does so.*]

Bernie! Go ahead!

BERNIE

BEGIN

Well, of course there ain't no doubt but what it needs some work. Now, when I catch a show I don't look at the show so much; I look at the audience. They'll tell you every time. Now, your prologue is great. It's a great idea—him reading the play. And it held 'em. It's a novelty. But after that they begun to slip away from you.

PETER

I'd like to talk to you about that.

BERNIE

Who's the kid?

LEHMAN

If you don't mind, Mr. Jones—

PETER

Well, I just wanted to—

LEHMAN

All right!

[*An extra glare at PETER.*]

Go on, Bernie!

122 THE BUTTER AND EGG MAN

BERNIE

Well, I'll tell you. Some of them scenes, they don't quite click. Now I got a scene that I done in a show called—ah—

PEGGY

[*Having discovered PETER.*]
Hello, Cutie!

PETER

Hello!

BERNIE

What's going on here?

PEGGY

Mind your business!

LEHMAN

Bernie, can't you get rid of her somehow?

PEGGY

Let him try! What I got on him!

LEHMAN

Are we going to get anything done here, or aren't we?

FANNY

I vote "no."

THE BUTTER AND EGG MAN 123

LEHMAN

Go ahead, Bernie! You was saying?

BERNIE

Well—ah—

[*Eyes* PETER.]

PETER

I didn't do anything.

LEHMAN

Oh—go on, Bernie!

BERNIE

Where was I?

LEHMAN

You was saying you got a scene.

BERNIE

Oh, yah. You got to put something in the place of that cabaret scene. Of course, it may be the way it was put on. I don't know who done it for you, but of all the lousy directing—

BENHAM

[*Rising to his full height.*]

I beg your pardon, Mr. Jackson!

MAC

Now, that's all right!

124 THE BUTTER AND EGG MAN

BERNIE

Bernie *Sampson* is my name.

BENHAM

It's quite possible that you don't know who I am!

BERNIE

That's only part of it.

BENHAM

I was associated for ten years with Sir John Hare, and I've been with Sir Charles Wyndham and Sir Beerbohm Tree.

FANNY

[*By this time slightly over the edge.*]
And where are they now?

BENHAM

I am not accustomed to having my direction described by that adjective.

BERNIE

Listen—I come up from New York as a favor to Joe here—

BENHAM

Nevertheless, I must insist—

LEHMAN

Now don't let's get scrapping!

THE BUTTER AND EGG MAN 125

BENHAM

But if he's to be permitted—

MAC

Now, there's no use flying off the handle—

BENHAM

Yes, but—

MAC

He didn't mean anything!

[BENHAM finally quiets down; takes his seat.]
That's the stuff!

PEGGY

Is that going to be all?

BERNIE

Now, Baby!

PEGGY

Well—call me for the next round.

[She stretches full length on the bed.]

LEHMAN

Go on, Bernie.

BERNIE

[A nod of the head toward BENHAM.]

What's this guy so touchy about?

[BENHAM starts to rise; MAC lays a restraining hand on his shoulder.]

126 THE BUTTER AND EGG MAN

LEHMAN

Now, please!

[*To BERNIE.*]

Bernie! What's this scene you got?

BERNIE

Well, I'll tell you. It'll drop right in where your cabaret is, see? It was a wow scene, but the show never come into New York, so it'll be new. It was a hop joint in Hongkong.

END

BENHAM

[*With great dignity.*]

It would not possibly do.

LEHMAN

We got to stick to the story, Bernie. We can't throw away the whole play.

FANNY

Why not?

LEHMAN

Now, I'll tell you. Suppose we start at the beginning—

[*There is a knock on the door.*]

Who's this?

FANNY

You can't tell.

[*PETER opens the door. It is MARY MARTIN*]