

PAWN SHOP COMEDY.

Thief Impersonates Otis Skinner and Sells Actor's Clothes.

Wearing Apparel Valued at \$150—
Possessed for \$11—Garments Re-
turned to Rightful Owner by
St. Louis Police.

A man of medium build, well dressed, with hair a bit sandy, and with a shaven forehead, entered Ben Levy's pawnshop, adjoining Devlin's theater, at St. Louis, and told a story that touched the sympathetic spot in the pawnbroker's heart.

"Do you know me?" asked the stran-

ger. Being assured that he was not known,

at least by Levy, the stranger continued:

"My good man, I am an actor. I am Otis Skinner, playing at the Olympic theater. As you probably know, actors sometimes get into hard lines, even the good ones, and you must know that I am a good one. Surely you have heard of Otis Skinner?"

"Yes," said the pawnbroker, "I have heard of you. Seen your name on the billboards, too."

"Yes; my name is on every billboard, in large type; I have no doubt that you have noticed my name. Well, don't believe all you see on the billboards. While to all appearances, I am making barrels of money, in reality, I am sorely in need of immediate funds. Now I have more clothes than I know what to do with and I thought we might be able to strike a bargain."

"Bring them down here," said the pawnbroker, "and I will make an offer to you."

The alleged Otis Skinner showed disappointment.

"You know," he said, "that it would be extremely humiliating for an actor of my high standing to be seen carting a load of old clothes to a pawnshop. I would rather that you visit me at my apartments in the Laclede hotel, where you can see the apparel and judge its worth."

Levy, however, refused to visit the Laclede, where the actor said that he had room No. 19, so the patron suffered the humiliation, and an hour later laid on the pawnbroker's counter a heavy overcoat, valued at \$75; a suit of clothes,



OTIS SKINNER.
(Famous Actor Who Was Recently "Im-
personated" by a Thief.)

valued at \$50; a pair of trousers, valued at \$15, and some minor apparel.

For these he asked \$25, but the pawnbroker, being an obdurate man and a close trader, offered \$11, which the supposed actor finally accepted.

It was Tuesday night, says the St. Louis Republic, that a thief visited Otis Skinner's apartments at the Planters and divested it of almost everything it held of value. Mr. Skinner placed his loss at \$500. At that time, he had forgotten that the thief's booty included an unopened package which contained Christmas presents, sent to him by Mrs. Skinner, who is in Chicago. There was one piece of jewelry in the unopened package for which Mrs. Skinner paid \$200.

Detectives, on visiting pawnshops, discovered part of the booty in Levy's place and upon questioning him, the detectives learned the story of the thief's duplicity. He had represented himself as Otis Skinner and the dealer, not being acquainted with the personal appearance of the actor, believed his story.

The goods were returned to Mr. Skinner and the overcoat, which was the only heavy one that he had in St. Louis, was greatly appreciated. The articles recovered, however, represent only about one-fourth of the theft.

The register at the Laclede hotel shows that No. 19 was occupied during the early part of the week by one who gave his name as Kerns. When the officers visited the room they found that Kerns had departed with bag and baggage. He had also forgotten to pay his hotel bill.

An Ursus in Nebraska.

Frank Vehling, a young man of Fremont, Neb., has equaled the feat performed by Ursus, as related in "Quo Vadis," and in doing so saved the lives of his sweetheart and himself. Young Vehling and his fiancée were crossing a pasture when they came upon a bull in the path. Vehling drove the bull along ahead for a short distance, when the animal suddenly turned and charged upon the couple. Vehling had no weapon, and there was no time to run. He grasped the bull by the horns, and an exciting struggle took place. The screams of the girl brought two men running from the foad, and when they arrived on the scene they found that Vehling had succeeded in throwing the bull and was sitting on the neck of the prostrate animal awaiting their arrival.

Rural Free Mail Delivery.

Rural free delivery has advanced with marvelous rapidity from a service costing \$20,000 a year at its inception in 1891 to one that will cost this fiscal year nearly \$7,000,000.

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