

**OUR MR. WRENN; THE
ROMANTIC ADVENTURES
OF A GENTLE MAN**

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Our Mr. Wrenn; the romantic adventures of a gentle man by Sinclair Lewis

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SINCLAIR LEWIS

**OUR MR. WRENN; THE
ROMANTIC ADVENTURES
OF A GENTLE MAN**

NOVELS BY SINCLAIR LEWIS

Our Mr. Wrenn

The Trail of the Hawk

The Job

Free Air

Main Street

Babbitt

OUR MR. WRENN

THE ROMANTIC ADVENTURES
OF A GENTLE MAN

BY
SINCLAIR LEWIS



NEW YORK
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TO
GRACE LIVINGSTONE HEGGER

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OUR MR. WRENN

I

MR. WRENN IS LONELY

THE ticket-taker of the Nickelorion Moving-Picture Show is a public personage, who stands out on Fourteenth Street, New York, wearing a gorgeous light-blue coat of numerous brass buttons. He nods to all the patrons, and his nod is the most cordial in town. Mr. Wrenn used to trot down to Fourteenth Street, passing ever so many other shows, just to get that cordial nod, because he had a lonely furnished room for evenings, and for daytime a tedious job that always made his head stuffy.

He stands out in the correspondence of the Souvenir and Art Novelty Company as "Our Mr. Wrenn," who would be writing you directly and explaining everything most satisfactorily. At thirty-four Mr. Wrenn was the sales-entry clerk of the Souvenir Company. He was always bending over bills and columns of figures at a desk behind the stock-room. He was a meek little bachelor—a person of inconspicuous blue ready-made suits, and a small unsuccessful mustache.

To-day—historians have established the date as April 9, 1910—there had been some confusing mixed orders from the Wisconsin retailers, and Mr. Wrenn had been

OUR MR. WRENN

"called down" by the office manager, Mr. Mortimer R. Guilfogle. He needed the friendly nod of the Nickelorion ticket-taker. He found Fourteenth Street, after office hours, swept by a dusty wind that whisked the skirts of countless plump Jewish girls, whose V-necked blouses showed soft throats of a warm brown. Under the Elevated station he secretly made believe that he was in Paris, for here beautiful Italian boys swayed with trays of violets; a tramp displayed crimson mechanical rabbits, which squeaked, on silvery leading-strings; and a newsstand was heaped with the orange and green and gold of magazine covers.

"Gee!" inarticulated Mr. Wrenn. "Lots of colors. Hope I see foreign stuff like that in the moving pictures."

He came primly up to the Nickelorion, feeling in his vest pockets for a nickel and peering around the booth at the friendly ticket-taker. But the latter was thinking about buying Johnny's pants. Should he get them at the Fourteenth Street Store, or Siegel-Cooper's, or over at Aronson's, near home? So ruminating, he twiddled his wheel mechanically, and Mr. Wrenn's pasteboard slip was indifferently received in the plate-glass gullet of the grinder without the taker's even seeing the clerk's bow and smile.

Mr. Wrenn trembled into the door of the Nickelorion. He wanted to turn back and rebuke this fellow, but was restrained by shyness. He *had* liked the man's "Fine evenin', sir"—rain or shine—but he wouldn't stand for being cut. Wasn't he making nineteen dollars a week, as against the ticket-taker's ten or twelve? He shook his head with the defiance of a cornered mouse, fussed with his mustache, and regarded the moving pictures gloomily.

They helped him. After a Selig domestic drama came a stirring Vitagraph Western scene, "The Goat of the Rancho," which depicted with much humor and tumult the revolt of a ranch cook, a Chinaman. Mr. Wrenn was really seeing, not cow-punchers and sage-brush, but him-