

THE CENTURY MAGAZINE.

VOL. XXXIX.

NOVEMBER, 1889.

No. 1.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JOSEPH JEFFERSON.

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I.

MY FIRST PLAYHOUSE.



MAY almost say that I was born in a theater. At all events, my earliest recollections are entirely connected with one: it was a rickety old frame building with a broad gable, facing on a wide avenue, and situated in the city of Washington. The door from our back entry opened upon the stage, and as a toddling little chap in a short frock I was allowed full run of the place. So "behind the scenes" was my first playhouse. And what a playhouse it was, filled with all sorts of material for the exercise of my youthful imagination. At the back was the bay of Naples, with its conventional blue sky just faintly clouded with the distant smoke of slumbering Vesuvius. Upon one side stood long and stately rows of Corinthian columns, a triumphal arch, and next to that a Roman palace. These marvels of ancient architecture were all leaning up against the wall, not only in an uncomfortable position, but at a dangerous angle, looking as though they had been toppled over during the last days of Pompeii. Upon the other side, heaped in a compact mass, were many scenes of various countries — there a five-storied brownstone front with modern improvements, and here a tiny thatched cottage of the eighteenth century, with a lovely little door in it just large enough for me to go in and out of, slamming it after me and pretending it was mine. Then there was that dear little white paling fence, exactly two feet high: no legitimate theater of the old school could possibly be complete without this curiosity, and nobody ever saw

such a thing anywhere else. Then came the throne-steps, with two Gothic arm-chairs set thereon for the king and queen, and in front of these the old familiar green bank from which stray babies are usually stolen when left there by affectionate but careless mothers. Upon the top of this were two flat swans hitched in double harness to a shell for traveling fairy queens. A little farther down there stood a low and dismal vault having a square, dark opening with some mysterious letters painted over it, setting forth, as I learned in after years, that it was the private "Tomb of the Capulets." Close to this was another piece of real estate belonging to the same family and known as "Juliet's balcony." In a dark corner stood a robber's cave with an opening through which old Ali Baba used to lug the bags of gold he had stolen from the Forty Thieves. Through the narrow and secluded pathways of "behind the scenes" I have often wandered out upon the open stage and wondered at this grove of wings and flats, and I could see that many ropes were hanging from above to which were fastened boats and baskets, tubs and chandeliers, and those sure tokens of bad weather, the thunder-drum and rain-box.

These were the kind of objects that my childish eyes were wont to look upon, and in this huge and dusty toy-shop, made for children of a larger growth, I got my first experience. I had seen many rehearsals, and sometimes got a peep at the play, having been taken on "in arms" as a property child in groups of happy peasantry. Naturally, therefore, I was stage-struck at an early age; and as I had a theater stocked with scenery and properties, I could indulge my passion at a small expense, especially as my stock company were volunteers consisting of two little boys and their sister, who used to play with me on

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Saturdays. This was before the star system had set in, and at a period when combinations were unknown.

Of course I was stage-manager by the right of possession, and had to compile all of the plays. The plots were very simple and made to conform with what set pieces we could get at, or what properties we could secure and hide during the absence of the property man. If the set cottage was handy I would come out of the door as an old man (the age represented by a spinal affection) with a daughter and a market-basket: old man cross, daughter rebellious; old man locks daughter in cottage, goes off to market shaking his fist (spine still weak). The favored lover enters, claps his hands three times, daughter appears at window, kisses her hand; old man coughs outside, favored lover conceals himself; enter old man with market-basket full of gilded pasteboard goblets, accompanied by unfavored lover; they sit down and drink wine out of goblets till overcome. Favored lover steals key from old man's pocket, releases rebellious daughter; the sleepers awaken, general pursuit; favored lover and rebellious daughter escape over bridge, old man and unfavored lover fall into the water. Curtain.

Then there were the private boxes to play hide-and-seek in, with mysterious nooks and ample curtains to creep into, and such chances to kiss the little girl in the dark. I am quite convinced that there is no such playground as a deserted theater in the daytime.

In the green-room there was a noble mirror. I loved to stand in front of it and act. But I was not alone in this. Many of the great players, long since passed away, have stood before this stately glass; and often in the evening, when clad in my night-gown, I have escaped from the nurse, and stealing on tip-toe to the green-room door have peeped in and beheld these magnates with dignified satisfaction surveying themselves in their kingly robes: now a small man with piercing steel-gray eye, possibly the elder Booth; then a tall, gaunt figure, weird and majestic, Macready most likely; at another time a young and beautiful queen in white satin—this must have been Fanny Kemble; again a tall and graceful figure in a scarlet military coat posing with an extravagant swagger and evidently admiring himself—undoubtedly Tyrone Power, the great Irish comedian.

As a matter of course, being the son of the manager, and almost living in the theater, I was always pressed into the dramatic service whenever a small child was wanted. Even before I can remember I was taken on to do duty in long clothes; in fact, such was the histrionic ambition of my mother that I believe if Tilly

Slowboy had existed in those days I should have been confided to her tender mercies at the risk of colliding my head with the tea-kettle.

The first dim recollection I have of a public appearance comes before me as a startled child in a white tunic beautifully striped with gold bands, and in the grasp and on the shoulders of an infuriated tragedian crossing a shaky bridge amid the deafening report of guns and pistols and in a blaze of fire and smoke. To me the situation seemed perilous, and in order to render my position more secure I seized Rolla by the hair of his head. "Let go," he cried; but I was obeying the first law of nature, not Rolla, so I tightened my grasp upon his tragic top-knot. The battle was short but decisive, for in the next moment I had pulled off his feather-duster head-dress, wig and all, thereby unintentionally scalping the enemy; and as he was past the prime of life, the noble Peruvian stood baldheaded in the middle of the bridge before an admiring audience. This story has the flavor of an old anecdote, but I am credibly informed that I was the original scalper.

About this time—I was three years old—there dawned upon the public a new entertainment in the shape of the "Living Statues," by a Mr. Fletcher. I was much taken with these novel tableaux, and became so statue-struck that I could do nothing but strike attitudes, now posing before the green-room glass as "Ajax defying the lightning," or falling down in dark corners as the Dying Gladiator. These postures appear to have been so successful with the family that they were, as usual, tried upon the public. I am in the dark as to whether this entertainment was the "talk of the town" or not, but I fancy not: an attenuated child representing Hercules struggling with a lion could scarcely excite terror; so I presume I did no harm if I did no good.

To go from white to black, "Jim Crow," in the person of T. D. Rice, now burst upon the town. The legitimate drama has at all times been subject to startling innovations, and surely here was a great blow. The success of this the first and certainly the best knight of the burnt cork was quite marvelous; he drew more money than any star of the season. It is reported that his first hit in Washington was repeated in all the great cities of the country, and his advent in Europe even surpassed his career here. In London he acted in two theaters nightly, the same people in many instances following him from one theater to the other.

Of course this fantastic figure had a great influence upon me, and I danced Jim Crow from the garret to the cellar. The comedian saw my imitation of him, and insisted that I should appear for his benefit; so on that oc-



TYRONE POWER AS "CORPORAL O'CONNOR." (FROM THE LITHOGRAPH BY GOODING & GULLIFORD, AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY WAGEMAN.)

casion I was duly blacked up and dressed in a complete miniature likeness of the original. He put me in a bag, which almost smothered me, and carried me upon the stage on his shoulders. No word of this proceeding had been mentioned in the bills, so that, figuratively speaking, the public were as much in the dark as I was. After dancing and singing the first verse he began the second, the following being the two lines which introduced me :

O Ladies and Gentlemen, I'd have you for to know
That I've got a little darky here that jumps Jim
Crow ;

and turning the bag upside down he emptied

me out head first before the eyes of the astonished audience. The picture must have been a curious one; it is as vividly before me now as any recollection of my past life.

Rice was considerably over six feet high, I was but four years old, and as we stood there, dressed exactly alike, the audience roared with laughter. Rice and I now sang alternate verses and the excitement increased; showers of pennies, sixpences, and shillings were tossed from the pit and thrown from the galleries upon the stage. I took no notice of this, but suddenly the clear, ringing sound of a dollar caught my ear, and as the bright coin was rolling from the stage into the orchestra I darted forward and

secured the prize. Holding it triumphantly between my finger and thumb I grinned at the leader of the orchestra as much as to say, "No, you don't." This not only brought down the house, but many half-dollars and dollars besides. At the fall of the curtain twenty-four dollars were picked up and given into my delighted hands. For years afterwards I was given to understand that this money was placed in bank to my credit, and I fear that I often borrowed small sums on the strength of my prospective wealth.

Our family about this time consisted of father and mother, my half-brother, Charles Burke, and myself; but there was one other member of the household who deserves special mention. She was not one of the family, certainly, but the group would be very incomplete without her. Her name was Mary. She was that strange kind of woman who, while housekeeper, nurse, friend, and attendant, will never take any wages—which I think must have been rather fortunate in this case—and whom everybody depends upon. We would not have parted with her for all the world, and could not have driven her away if we had tried—a faithful, loving, truthful friend, with no ambition or thought for herself, living only for us, and totally unconscious of her own existence. I have no doubt that there are some such beings attached to many families, but I know that our family was just that queer sort of party that could not have done without one. This lady (for she was a lady) was my foster-mother,—dear Mary,—always taking my faults on herself, finding excuses for my badness, and spoiling me, of course.

A year or two rolled by and I find we were in Baltimore, where my sister was born. She divided the honors with me then, and I was, in consequence of this new arrival, not made quite so much of. I remember as a boy I was always being injured,—at least, according to my account,—so that people were rather suspicious of me; and I find this theory holds good as we grow older: that whenever a man comes to us with a tale of his injuries we look on him with distrust, and as he recounts the details of his persecution the question revolves itself in our mind, "I wonder what rascality this fellow has been up to." The world has no time to injure any one; these unfortunate people injure themselves, and so turn into some other channel the current of happiness that might have flowed to them.

But to return to my early persecutions. A neighbor whose weak points I had discovered bestowed on me one day a smooth sixpence. I showed it to my brother Charlie, who, looking at it with some disparagement, said that in its present obliterated state it would pass for

only about four cents, but that if I would bury it for an hour the original figures would show themselves and it would pass for its full value; or, what would be better, let it remain in the ground for a day and it would grow to a shilling. This announcement struck me with wonder and delight, so off we started for the garden to plant this smooth sixpence. After making the interment and carefully marking it with a small headstone we departed. I went back to the house and whispered the whole affair into the ears of Mary; she denounced the operation as a fraud, and bid me hurry and get my sixpence if I ever expected to see it again. I started off at a full run for the garden. The headstone was there, but the sixpence had gone. The body-snatcher had accomplished his cruel work. Throwing myself on my back and kicking my heels in the air, I soon made the neighborhood ring with my frantic yells. The family rushed out and I detailed to them the dark plot of my guilty brother. I determined now that nothing short of a shilling should calm my feelings, and I yelled till I got it.

I am not quite sure as to dates, and many incidents come up before me in a confused form, while a number are traditional; but there are certain facts connected with my early life about which there can be no mistake, and it is quite clear that I was what is understood to be a bad boy and hard to manage. If I heard an oath I cherished it as a newly-found treasure and would practice it in private. All this was no fault of my bringing up, for both father and mother were very particular and exacting in the conduct of home. I was made to say my prayers every night, a good example was always set before me, and sound moral principles were continually instilled into my youthful mind. The prayers I used to rattle off—usually thinking of something else while I was saying them—as quickly as religious decorum and my mother would permit, and the sound moral principles and good examples seemed to have the effect of making me the champion executioner of all the stray cats in our neighborhood. The banging of a tin kettle tied to the tail of an unlucky dog was music to my childish ears; and much as I love animals now, in the innocence of childhood I pursued them with such energy that had Mr. Bergh held his commission in those days I should have been oftener seen in the police court than at Sunday-school.

II.

FURTHER RECOLLECTIONS OF CHILDHOOD.

My mother had a friend in Philadelphia, a Mrs. Neal, who kept a bookstore in Sixth street, near Chestnut; she was the mother

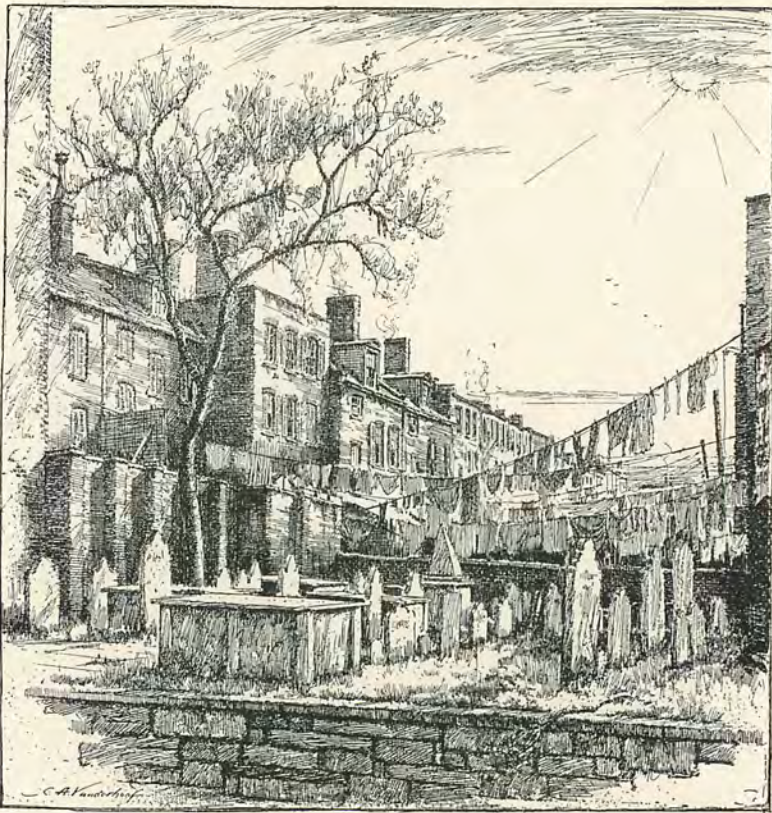


TYRONE POWER. (AFTER THE STEEL PLATE ENGRAVED BY C. TURNER FROM THE PAINTING BY JOHN SIMPSON. PUBLISHED BY W. KENNETH.)

of Joe Neal, the young author of the "Charcoal Sketches." I was a great favorite with her. She always wore a black dress with a white cap; the cap had a little fluted frill around it, very prim, and very much starched. She was a dear old lady, with a sweet smile and large, wide blue eyes, just the credulous and confiding sort of person that a boy of seven could wind around his little finger; consequently I could make her believe anything.

My imagination was wonderfully fertile: I could at the shortest notice get up a harrowing tale of woe that would make the stiff frills on her cap fairly tremble with benevolent agitation. Now it so happened about this time that I was in a state of insolvency, being heavily in debt at the candy-store, and sorely pressed by an exacting peanut-man at the corner. If I was short of a penny or two—usually the case with me—I would dishevel my hair, rush through the store into the back room, and, sinking in an exhausted condition into a little

chair by the fireplace, call for a glass of water. The startled old lady would jump up crying, "What's the matter, Joe?" "Don't ask me—water, water!" "Yes, in a moment, my dear boy." Then in a feeble voice, "Put some raspberry syrup in it, please, Mrs. Neal." "Yes, my darling." And now having been refreshed with this stimulant, I would in a tremulous voice—a little overacted, perhaps—relate some dire calamity that I had just witnessed, giving the full particulars; in fact, the greater the fabrication the more minute I was as to the details. I would perhaps tell her that I had just seen a lovely little girl with blue eyes and golden hair run over by fire engine No. 6; her head, severed from her body, had rolled from the middle of the street into the gutter, and lay smiling at my feet; or perhaps I had pulled the little girl from under the wheels just previous to decapitation and saved her life—refusing a large reward from her father. The shock had been so great that nothing short of an im-



OLD JEWISH BURYING-GROUND, PEARL STREET, NEAR CHATHAM, NEW YORK CITY.

mediate supply of peppermint drops would ever obliterate it from my mind—and where was I to get them? I was in disgrace at the candy-store and had no money. “My dear child,” the old soul would say, “there is a penny for you.” “Oh, no, I could n’t take it”—knowing very well that she would force it upon me. “Ah, Mrs. Neal, I do not deserve all your kindness,”—the only true words I had spoken to her,—“indeed I don’t.” I’m not at all sure that she swallowed all my romantic stories, and it is quite possible that she liked to draw me out just to enjoy my exaggerations.

I was one of those restless, peevish children who, no matter what they had, always wanted something else. The last new toy was always dissected to see what made it go, and the anticipated one kept me awake all night. “When will it be sent home?” “About two o’clock.” “Well, what time is it now?”—and so on, musing, fretting, discontented, and rude. Mother said it was badness, Mary said affection.

As I look back many strange images appear that puzzle me. Some of these scenes I know are real, and others appear to have been dreams. At times this confusion re-

solves itself into a chaos, and I fancy that I shall not be able to disintegrate the shadows from the realities. For instance, I perfectly well remember walking through the smoky ruins of New York with my father, after the great fire of 1835. While we were looking at this charred mass and watching the busy people hunting for half-consumed treasures, and firemen pouring streams of water on the smoldering rafters, two Indians in theatrical costumes began dancing a war dance which they terminated by tomahawking each other in the most friendly way, and then bowing to the people, who applauded them. Now I am quite sure that the first part of this recollection was a reality, and it seems pretty clear that the latter part of it was a dream. It is quite possible, therefore, that in relating many of my juvenile adventures I may be led, or misled, into some unintentional exaggerations.

In referring to Ireland’s “Records of the New York Stage,” I find the following notice of my first appearance in that city:

Master Titus, whose songs and dances were much applauded, took a benefit on the 30th, when he appeared with Master Joseph Jefferson in a celebrated combat, it being this lad’s first appearance out of



Fructipuly Jones
J. J. J. J.

(DRAWN BY ARTHUR J. GOODMAN AFTER A PHOTOGRAPH BY SARONY.)

the juvenile supernumerary ranks. This little fellow was the grandson of the great comedian of the same name, and is the third Joseph Jefferson known to our stage. He was born at Philadelphia, February 20, 1829.

I remember this circumstance quite well — not the birth, but the combat. Young Titus was attired as an American sailor, I being dressed to represent a Greek pirate. I was much smaller than my antagonist, but as the fight was for his benefit, good taste naturally suggested that he should overcome and slay me,—which he did,—and as the curtain came down I was flat on my back, and the American sailor, waving a star-spangled banner over me, placed his foot magnanimously on the chest of the vanquished Greek. The fight was encored, so I had to come to life again — quite a common thing with stage pirates — and die twice. I rather delighted in being the vanquished foe: nothing could possibly be more manly than a slain pirate. Mr. Ireland mentions that the combat was “celebrated”; for what, I am at a loss to conjecture. In the accounts of our last war with the Greeks there is no mention made of this circumstance. If, therefore, the combat was “celebrated,” it must have been for historical inaccuracy. I remembered this battle with pride for years. The beneficiary must have remembered it too, as it was traditional in our family that I came near cutting off a big toe of little Titus in the conflict.

In New York we lived in the third story of No. 26 James street, next to the Catholic church, and opposite to the “Bunch of Grapes,” a hotel kept by one George Bickford. The second floor was occupied by John Sefton, the comedian and manager, and the lower part of the house by a Mr. Titus and his family. Our fence in the rear joined on to an old graveyard. How this curious old cemetery ever got wedged in between the buildings that surrounded it is a mystery. Perhaps in times gone by an old church may have stood at the outskirts of the little village of New York, and beneath these stones “the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.” Passing down the Bowery on the elevated railroad, by looking on the left-hand side, just after the train branches off towards Pearl street, this queer nook may be discovered, and if the inmates only had the power of noting the progress of the times, they would be considerably astonished to see their descendants whirled over their heads on a railroad in the air.

After school the boys with whom I fraternized would join me in this secluded spot for our evening games — the high tombstones for “I spy,” and the flat ones to act on. The place had long since ceased to be used as a

burial-ground, so our sports were uninterrupted. The boys in the neighborhood were like all other boys, in all neighborhoods — mischievous. My arrival had given a fresh impetus in this respect, and the graveyard offered a fine field for the indulgence of sacrilegious amusements. Ornamenting the tombstones was quite a specialty with one of our playmates. He had, previous to my advent, already painted a large red face, in a broad grin, on a headstone erected to the memory of the Rev. Jacob Boul. After consultation with the artist, I cocked a battered hat, sidewise, on the top of the face, and drilling a hole in its mouth, stuck a pipe in it, thus giving a cheerful tone to the monument, and almost robbing death of its sting.

Saturday, there being no school, was generally set apart as our “Decoration Day,” and it was rare sport to get a marking-brush with a pot of black paint and embellish the virtues of the departed sinners. We were astonishingly brave in the daylight, even defying the dead bones to arise and face us if they dared, but as twilight set in our courage cooled, and we would talk lower. Sometimes, as one boy after another would scamper home, leaving the place “to darkness and to me,” I would saunter slowly along with my hands in my pockets, whistling a nervous defiance to ghosts in general and these ghosts in particular, but taking care not to walk over the flat tombstones, upon which in the daylight I would dance with impunity. Now, as the shadows of night gathered around me, I would increase my pace, scampering faster and faster through the tall grass and rapidly climbing over the fence, fancying that the Rev. Mr. Boul would soon have me by the leg if I did not hurry.

III.

WESTWARD HO!

In the year 1838 the new town of Chicago had just turned from an Indian village into a thriving little place, and my uncle had written to my father urging him to join in the management of the new theater which was then being built there. As each fresh venture presented itself my father’s hopeful nature predicted immediate and successful results. He had scarcely finished the letter when he declared that our fortunes were made, so we turned our faces towards the setting sun. In those days a journey from Albany to Chicago was no small undertaking for a large family in straitened circumstances; certain cherished articles had to be parted with to procure necessary comforts for the trip. I really do not know how, but we got from Albany to Schenectady, where we acted for a few nights with a company that



JOSEPH JEFFERSON, FATHER OF JOSEPH JEFFERSON. (FROM A PAINTING, ARTIST UNKNOWN.)

was playing there. Several of the actors, who had received no salary for some time, decided to accompany my father and seek their fortunes in the West.

As I remember it, our journey was long, but not tedious. We traveled part of the way in a fast-sailing packet-boat on the Erie Canal, the only smoke issuing from the caboose stove-pipe. I can remember our party admiring this craft with the same enthusiasm that we now express in looking at a fine ocean steamer. She was painted white and green and enlivened with blue window blinds, and a broad red stripe running from bow to stern. Her name was the *Pioneer*, which was to us most suggestive, as our little band was among the early dramatic emigrants to the far West. The boat resembled a Noah's ark with a flat roof, and my father, like the patriarch of old, took his entire family on board, with this distinction, however — he was required to pay his passage,

it being understood between him and the captain that we should stop a night in Utica and one in Syracuse, give a theatrical entertainment in each place, and hand over the receipts in payment of our fare.

We acted in Utica for one night, and the receipts were quite good. My father and mother were in high spirits, and there is no doubt that the captain had hopes that the next night's entertainment in Syracuse would liquidate our liabilities, for there was a visible improvement in the coffee at breakfast, and an extra piece of pie all around for dinner. The next night, unfortunately, the elements were against us; it rained in torrents and the attendance was light, so that we were short of our passage money about ten dollars.

The captain being a strict member of the — church, he could not attend either of the performances, and as he was in his heart most anxious to see what acting was like, he pro-



CORNELIA JEFFERSON (MOTHER OF JOSEPH JEFFERSON) AS "JESSICA." (AFTER THE PAINTING BY NEAGLE.)

posed that if the company would "cut up" for him and give him a private show in the cabin he would call it "square." Our actors, being highly legitimate, declined; but my mother, ever anxious to show off the histrionic qualities of her son, proposed that I should sing some comic songs for the captain, and so ransom the rest of the actors. The captain turned it over in his mind,—being, I am afraid, a little suspicious of my genius,—but after due consideration consented. So he prepared himself for the entertainment, the cook and my mother comprising the rest of the audience. The actors had wisely retired to the upper deck, as they had been afflicted on former occasions. I now began a dismal comic song called "The Devil and Little Mike." It was not very brilliant but quite long, some twenty-five verses, each one containing two lines with a large margin of "whack fol de riddle." It was never quite clear whether the captain enjoyed this entertainment or not: my mother said he did,

for though the religious turn of his mind would naturally suppress any desire to applaud, he said even before I had half finished that he was quite satisfied.

On our arrival in Buffalo we found another pioneer company, under the management of Dean and McKenney. Here we staid over two or three days, waiting for the steamer to take us up the lakes. Marble was starring there; he was one of the first and best of the Yankee comedians. In those days the stage New Englander was acted and dressed in a most extravagant manner. I remember seeing Marble play, and his costume was much after the present caricature of Uncle Sam, minus the stars but glorying in the stripes.

In a few days we steamed up the beautiful lakes of Erie, Huron, and Michigan. The boat would stop sometimes for hours at one of the stations to take in wood, or a stray passenger, and then the Indians would paddle out to us in their canoes offering their beadwork and

moccasins for sale. Sometimes we would go ashore and walk on the beach gathering pebbles, carnelians, and agates. I thought them of immense value, and kept my treasures for years afterwards. What a lovely trip it was as I remember it! Lake Huron at sunset is before me now—a purple sky melting into a golden horizon; rich green foliage on the banks; yellow sand with many-colored pebbles making the beach of the lake; the clear and glassy water; groups of Indians lolling on the banks, smoking their pipes and making baskets, their little villages dotting the hills with tents made of skins and painted canvas; blue smoke curling slowly up in the calm summer air; and all the bright colors reflected in the lake. I stood there as a boy skimming flat stones over the surface of the water, and now as I write in the autumn of my life these once quiet shores are covered with busy cities; the furnaces glow with melted iron, the locomotive screams and whistles along the road where once the ox teams used to carry the mail, and corner lots and real-estate agents “fill the air.” When we think that all these wonderful changes have taken place within the last fifty years, it is startling to speculate upon what the next half-century may bring about.

IV.

CHICAGO IN 1839.—AN ADVENTURE IN
SPRINGFIELD.

So day by day passed, till one night a light is espied in the distance, then another, and then many more dance and reflect themselves in the water. It is too late to go ashore, so we drop anchor. At sunrise we are all on deck looking at the haven of our destination, and there in the morning light, on the shores of Lake Michigan, stands the little town of Chicago, containing two thousand inhabitants. Aunt, uncle, and their children come to meet and welcome us. Then there is such a shaking of hands and a kiss all round, and “Why, how well you are looking!” and “Is this Charlie? How he has grown!” “Why, that’s not Joe! Dear me, who’d have believed it?” And then we all laugh again and have another kiss.

The captain said he had enjoyed a splendid trip, such fun, such music and singing and dancing. “Well, good-by all,” “Good luck”; and off we go ashore and walk through the busy little town, busy even then, people hurrying to and fro, frame buildings going up, board sidewalks going down, new hotels, new churches, new theaters, everything new. Saw and hammer, saw, saw, bang, bang,—look out for the drays,—bright and muddy streets, gaudy-colored calicos, blue and red flannels and striped ticking hanging outside the dry-

goods stores; bar-rooms, real-estate offices, attorneys-at-law — oceans of them.

And now for the new theater, newly-painted canvas, tack-hammer at work on stuffed seats in the dress-circle, planing-boards in the pit, new drop-curtain let down for inspection, “beautiful!”—a medallion of Shakspeare suffering from a severe pain in his stomach in the center, with “One touch of nature makes the whole world kin” written under him, and a large painted, brick-red drapery looped up by Justice, with sword and scales, showing an arena with a large number of gladiators hacking away at one another in the distance to a delighted Roman public; though what Justice had to do with keeping these gladiators on exhibition was never clearly explained by the artist. There were two private boxes with little white-and-gold balustrades and turkey-red curtains, and over each box a portrait of Beethoven and Handel—upon unfriendly terms, glaring at each other. The dome was pale blue, with pink-and-white clouds, on which reposed four ungraceful ballet girls representing the seasons, and apparently dropping flowers, snow, and grapes into the pit. Over each season there floated four fat little cherubim “in various stages of spinal curvature.”

My father, being a scenic artist himself, was naturally disposed to be critical, and when the painter asked his opinion of the dome, he replied:

“Well, since you ask me, don’t you think that your angels are a little stiff in their attitudes?”

“No, sir; not for angels. When I deal with mythological subjects I never put my figures in natural attitudes; it would be inharmonious. A natural angel would be out of keeping with the rest of the work.”

To which my father replied that it was quite likely that such would be the case. “But why have you made Handel and Beethoven frown at each other? They are not mythological subjects.”

“No, no,” said the painter. “But they are musicians, you know; and great musicians always quarrel, eh? Ha, ha!”

“Yes,” said my father; “but as Handel died before Beethoven was born, I don’t see how any coolness could have existed between them.”

The foregoing dialogue, while it may not be verbatim, is at least in the spirit of the original. I could not possibly remember the exact words of the different conversations that will naturally occur through these chapters; but I have placed them in their present form, as I believe it is the clearest and most effective way to tell the story. Many of the conversations and incidents are traditional in my family; I have good reason to take them for

granted, and I must ask the reader to share my confidence.

The green-room was a perfect gem, with a three-foot wavy mirror in the center and cushioned seats all around the wall—traps under the stage so convenient that Ophelia could walk from her grave to her dressing-room with perfect ease.

With what delight the actors looked forward to the opening of a new theater in a new town where dramatic entertainments were still unknown—repairing their wardrobes, studying their new parts, and speculating on the laurels that were to be won!

After a short season in Chicago, with the varying success which in those days always attended the drama, the company went to Galena for a short season, traveling in open wagons over the prairie. Our seats were the trunks that contained the wardrobe—those old-fashioned hair trunks of a mottled and spotted character made from the skins of defunct circus horses: "To what base uses we may return!" These smooth hair trunks, with geometrical problems in brass tacks ornamenting their surface, would have made slippery seats even on a macadamized road, so one may imagine the difficulty we had in holding on while jolting over a rough prairie. Nothing short of a severe pressure on the brass tacks and a convulsive grip of the handles could have kept us in position; and whenever a treacherous handle gave way our company was for the time being just one member short. As we were not an express mail train, of course we were allowed more than twenty minutes for refreshments; the only difficulty was the refreshment. We stopped at farm-houses on the way for this uncertain necessity, and they were far apart. If the roads were heavy and the horses jaded, those actors who had tender hearts and tough limbs jumped out and walked to ease the poor brutes. Often I have seen my father trudging along ahead of the wagon, smoking his pipe, and I have no doubt thinking of the large fortune he was going to make in the next town, now and then looking back with his light blue eyes, giving my mother a cheerful nod which plainly said: "I'm all right. This is splendid; nothing could be finer." If it rained he was glad it was not snowing; if it snowed, he was thankful it was not raining. This contented nature was his only inheritance; but it was better than a fortune made in Galena or anywhere else, for nothing could rob him of it.

We traveled from Galena to Dubuque on the frozen river in sleighs—smoother work than the roughly rutted roads of the prairie; but it was a perilous journey, for a warm spell had set in and made the ice sloppy and unsafe. We would sometimes hear it crack and see it bend

under our horses' feet: now a long-drawn breath of relief as we passed some dangerous spot, then a convulsive grasping of our nearest companion as the ice groaned and shook beneath us. Well, the passengers arrived safe, but, horror to relate, the sleigh containing the baggage, private and public, with the scenery and properties, green curtain and drop, broke through the ice and tumbled into the Mississippi. My poor mother was in tears, but my father was in high spirits at his good luck, as he called it; because there was a sand-bar where the sleigh went in, so the things were saved at least, though in a forlorn condition. The opening had to be delayed in order to dry the wardrobe and smooth the scenery.

The halls of the hotel were strung with clothes-lines and the costumes of all nations festooned the doors of the bedrooms, so that when an unsuspecting boarder came out suddenly into the entry he was likely to run his head into a damp Roman shirt, or perhaps have the legs of a soaking pair of red tights dangling around his neck. Mildew filled the air. The gilded pasteboard helmets fared the worst. They had succumbed to the softening influences of the Mississippi, and were as battered and out of shape as if they had gone through the pass of Thermopylæ. Limp leggins of scale armor hung wet and dejected from the lines, low-spirited cocked hats piled up in a corner, rough-dried court coats stretched their arms out as if in the agony of drowning, as though they would say, "Help me, Cassius, or I sink." Theatrical scenery at its best looks pale and shabby in the daytime, but a well-worn set, after a six-hours' bath in a river, presents the most woe-begone appearance that can well be imagined; the sky and water of the marine had so mingled with each other that the horizon line had quite disappeared. My father had painted the scenery, and he was not a little crestfallen as he looked upon the ruins: a wood scene had amalgamated with a Roman street painted on the back of it, and had so run into stains and winding streaks that he said it looked like a large map of South America, and pointing out the Andes with his cane, he humorously traced the Amazon to its source. Of course this mishap on the river delayed the opening for a week. In the mean time the scenery had to be repainted and the wardrobe put in order: many of the things were ruined, and the helmets defied repair.

After a short and, I think, a good season at Dubuque, we traveled along the river to the different towns just springing up in the West—Burlington, Quincy, Peoria, Pekin, and Springfield. In those primitive days, I need scarcely say, we were often put to severe shifts for a theater.

In Quincy the court-house was fitted up, and it answered admirably. In Terre Haute a large warehouse was utilized, but in Pekin we were reduced to the dire necessity of acting in a pork-house. This establishment was a large frame building, stilted up on piles about two feet from the ground, and situated in the open prairie just at the edge of the town. The pigs were banished from their comfortable quarters, and left to browse about on the common during the day, taking shelter under their former abode in the evening. After undergoing some slight repairs in the roof, and submitting to a thorough scouring and whitewashing, the buildings presented quite a respectable appearance. The opening play was "Clari, the Maid of Milan." This drama was written by John Howard Payne, and his song of "Sweet Home" belongs to the play. My mother, on this occasion, played the part of *Clari* and sang the touching ballad.

Now it is a pretty well established fact in theatrical history that if an infant has been smuggled into the theater under the shawl of its fond mother, however dormant it may have been during the unimportant scenes of the play, no sooner is an interesting point arrived at, where the most perfect stillness is required, than the "dear little innocent" will break forth in lamentation loud and deep. On this occasion no youthful humanity disturbed the peace, but the animal kingdom, in the shape of the banished pigs, asserted their right to a public hearing. As soon as the symphony of "Sweet Home" commenced they began by bumping their backs up against the beams, keeping anything but good time to the music; and as my mother plaintively chanted the theme "Sweet Home," realizing their own cruel exile, the pigs squealed most dismally. Of course the song was ruined, and my mother was in tears at the failure. My father, however, consoled her by saying that though the grunting was not quite in harmony with the music, it was in perfect sympathy with the sentiment.

Springfield being the capital of Illinois, it was determined to devote the entire season to the entertainment of the members of the legislature. Having made money for several weeks previous to our arrival here, the management resolved to hire a lot and build a theater. This sounds like a large undertaking, and perhaps with their limited means it was a rash step. I fancy that my father rather shrunk from this bold enterprise, but the senior partner (McKenzie) was made of sterner stuff, and his energy being quite equal to his ambition, the ground was broken and the temple erected.

The building of a theater in those days did not require the amount of capital that it does

now. Folding opera chairs were unknown. Gas was an occult mystery, not yet acknowledged as a fact by the unscientific world in the West; a second-class quality of sperm-oil was the height of any manager's ambition. The footlights of the best theaters in the Western country were composed of lamps set in a "float" with the counter-weights. When a dark stage was required, or the lamps needed trimming or refilling, this mechanical contrivance was made to sink under the stage. I believe if the theater, or "devil's workshop," as it was sometimes called, had suddenly been illuminated with the same material now in use, its enemies would have declared that the light was furnished from the "Old Boy's" private gasometer.

The new theater, when completed, was about ninety feet deep and forty feet wide. No attempt was made at ornamentation; and as it was unpainted, the simple line of architecture upon which it was constructed gave it the appearance of a large dry-goods box with a roof. I do not think my father, or McKenzie, ever owned anything with a roof until now, so they were naturally proud of their possession.

In the midst of their rising fortunes a heavy blow fell upon them. A religious revival was in progress at the time, and the fathers of the church not only launched forth against us in their sermons, but by some political manœuvre got the city to pass a new law enjoining a heavy license against our "unholy" calling; I forget the amount, but it was large enough to be prohibitory. Here was a terrible condition of affairs — all our available funds invested, the legislature in session, the town full of people, and by a heavy license denied the privilege of opening the new theater!

In the midst of their trouble a young lawyer called on the managers. He had heard of the injustice, and offered, if they would place the matter in his hands, to have the license taken off, declaring that he only desired to see fair play, and he would accept no fee whether he failed or succeeded. The case was brought up before the council. The young lawyer began his harangue. He handled the subject with tact, skill, and humor, tracing the history of the drama from the time when Thespis acted in a cart to the stage of to-day. He illustrated his speech with a number of anecdotes, and kept the council in a roar of laughter; his good-humor prevailed, and the exorbitant tax was taken off.

This young lawyer was very popular in Springfield, and was honored and beloved by all who knew him, and, after the time of which I write, he held rather an important position in the Government of the United States. He now lies buried near Springfield, under a monu-

ment commemorating his greatness and his virtues—and his name was Abraham Lincoln!

V.

HARD TIMES.

At the end of our Springfield season my father dissolved partnership with McKenzie, and my next remembrance finds us in the town of Memphis. Bad business had closed the theater, and my father had turned from scene painter to sign painter.

There had been an ordinance passed by the fathers of the city requiring that all carts, drays, and public vehicles should be numbered. By some accident I heard of this, and as I was on the alert to get work for my father, I called at the mayor's office to apply for the contract. The mayor had seen me on the stage, and, to my no small delight, recognized me. I explained to him that my father was an artist as well as a comedian, and that, the theaters being closed, he devoted his time to sign and ornamental painting; not, however, as an amusement. It was natural that the mayor—a jovial, and possibly not a very dignified or dreadful person—should be interested in a youngster having the effrontery and the promptness to be the first to apply for the contract.

My interview with the mayor was a success, and ended in my getting the contract for my father to paint the numbers. How delightful it was to go home with such good news! Then the charm of unfolding such an agreeable surprise to the family—what lovely revenge for the scolding my mother had given me the day before; and, above all, the tremendous round of applause that such an achievement must bring down.

My father was too sensitive and retiring to have ever dreamed of doing such a thing, and perhaps when I arrived at his age I might, under the same circumstances, have shrunk from it myself. But I was young and rash, and perhaps desperate; for if I had not received many hard knocks myself, my family had, and feeling the blows through them, I experienced a ferocious delight in doing battle with the world, and, as I was generally victorious, my success made me bold. The new industry furnished my father and myself with a month's work, so we were indebted to this stride in South-western civilization for at least a small addition to our income.

One of my father's ornamental signs, on which was painted an amiable tailor measuring a handsome young man for a fashionable suit of clothes, came under the notice of Mr. McAllister. This gentleman was the owner of a large billiard-saloon and bar-room, to which was attached a mysterious apartment where

late hours were kept. A large mahogany table covered with a suspicious-looking green cloth gave evidence of the kind of trade that was plied in this exchange, and strongly corroborated the popular tradition that Mr. McAllister's midnight visitors were "gentlemanly sports." The proprietor having, it seems, a turn for art, as well as for cards, arranged for my father to decorate his billiard-room first, and then his house. In the hall of the latter my father painted two landscapes from "The Lady of the Lake"—one representing Loch Katrine, with her ladyship paddling her own canoe in the distance, and a mountain torrent in the foreground with the bridge made famous by the combat of Fitz-James and Roderick Dhu. The subjects had been chosen out of compliment to Mr. McAllister, as he was of Scotch descent.

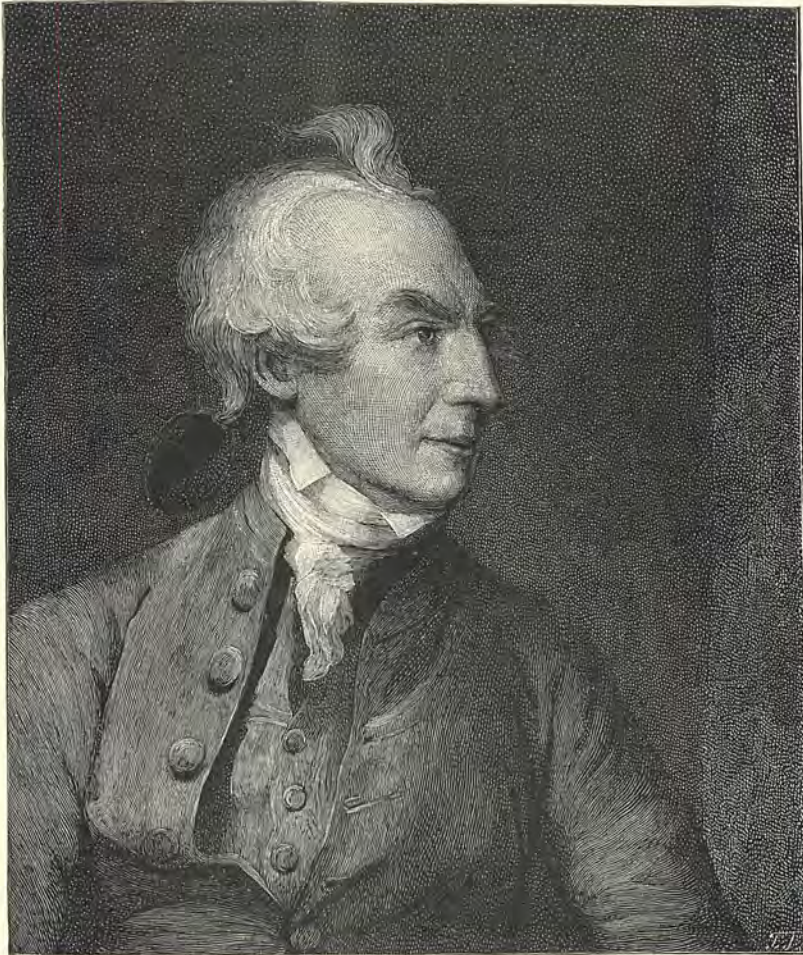
The time was drawing near for our departure from Memphis, as the season in Mobile was to begin in November, and the money due for decorating McAllister's house was necessary to defray the expenses of our journey down the river; but, to our great inconvenience, it was not forthcoming. Whether the "gentlemanly sports" had been more fortunate than the proprietor or not I am unable to say, but my father had written twice without receiving an answer, and I had been dispatched to make a personal appeal to him. We delayed our departure for two weeks, hoping to get some satisfaction; but no notice being taken of our demands, it was decided to wait no longer.

In our straitened circumstances we were forced to take a steerage passage on one of the steamboats between Memphis and New Orleans. This was both humiliating and inconvenient. But Mary was a host, and could, by her devotion and tact, have made us comfortable even under more trying conditions. I know that my mother's pride was wounded, and that in her mortification she wondered that my father could face the degradation with such fortitude; but from what I remember of him, and all that I have heard related in connection with his character, nothing short of sickness or death in his family could induce him to complain. This kind of philosophy can be learned neither from books nor from experience; it is a natural gift, and seems to come into the world hand in hand with the spirit that is to bear it company. No seed can sow it, and no soil can grow it; the quality is inborn, and is so deeply rooted that it defies cultivation or extermination.

After arranging ourselves as comfortably as we could, the mate gave notice that the boat would not start until late that evening. On hearing this my mother asked me some questions regarding Mrs. McAllister, whom, of course, I had seen and spoken with during the

time we had been engaged in the decoration of her house. My report of the lady being quite favorable, my mother started in company with myself to make an appeal. Mrs. McAllister, who had been out driving with her children, met us at the door. On my presenting my mother, we were asked into the house and proceeded with her to the drawing-room. My mother, after apologizing for our visit, explained the nature of it, calling the lady's attention to

When she placed the money in my father's hands he looked at it in amazement, and, after declaring that his wife was the most wonderful woman in the world, suggested that we should at once adjourn to the cabin; but the most wonderful woman in the world would not hear of it, and urged my father to bear the discomfiture, so that we might arrive at our journey's end with some means of support, dwelling upon the fact that otherwise he would have



JOSEPH JEFFERSON (GRANDFATHER OF JOSEPH JEFFERSON) IN THE CHARACTER OF "SOLUS," IN THE COMEDY "EVERY ONE HAS HIS FAULTS." (FROM THE PAINTING BY NEAGLE.)

the hard and honest work of her artist husband, and contrasting the elegant surroundings of the lady and her children with the degradation of her own. In an hour afterwards the lady left the house and returned with the money. Placing it in my mother's hand, she bade us Godspeed, and away we went with our heavier purse and lighter hearts.

We hurried to the boat with our treasure,—about two hundred dollars, I think,—and my mother was both delighted and triumphant.

to draw an advance from the manager on our arrival in Mobile, which not only would be humiliating, but might weaken his position. Of course he saw the force and wisdom of his wife's counsel, and I think rather reluctantly consented. As I reflect upon this situation, it seems strange that my mother, who felt most keenly this humiliation, was content to bear it rather than lose the means that would render our future position more secure; while my father, who could smile serenely at our con-

dition, would willingly have parted with all the money to have given us present comfort. It can be accounted for only by the extreme contrast in their natures: he was hopeful, my mother was apprehensive. May not generosity spring from one of these causes, and caution from the other?

As usual, my father was soon contented. This novel and uncomfortable mode of traveling, instead of depressing him, seemed to raise his spirits; for I can well remember that while the boat was steaming down the river he employed the time in studying some new parts that he was to act during the approaching season, and when it stopped to take in wood he would get out his tackle and fish from the stern of the vessel. One would suppose that this indifference to really serious inconvenience sprung from weakness, but this was not so; for though there was nothing of the tyrant in him, when he felt that it was time to make a stand he made a bold one, and was as solid as a rock.

We arrived at Mobile in October, 1842. The yellow fever was raging in the town, but we were forced to come before the rest of the company, as my father was the scenic artist as well as the comedian of the theater, and his presence was required at an early date, as the scenery needed repainting.

We had for years been traveling about the country and my father and mother congratulated themselves upon this present permanent situation, as it afforded them not only rest, but an opportunity of sending my sister and myself to school. Sadly enough the last wish of this hopeful man was shattered, for two weeks after our arrival he was stricken with yellow fever, and died on the 24th of November, 1842. I will not describe the effect of this awful blow on our family, not desiring to cloud the narrative of my life with the relation of domestic sorrow. It is sufficient to say that by this sad event we were deprived of a dear friend upon whom we depended for counsel and support.

My sister and myself were now engaged at the theater to act such children's parts as our size and talent warranted the manager in casting us in; appearing in fancy dances and comic duets, added to which I was to grind colors in the paint-room — assistant artist, I was called in the play-bill — and make myself generally useful, for which services we were each to receive six dollars a week. It was understood that this employment was given to us as a charity; but when I consider the numerous duties imposed upon us, and the small sum we received, my conscience acquits me of our being anything like an incubus upon the theater, and if there was any charity in the matter, I think it was on our side.

One of the programmes, I find, announces

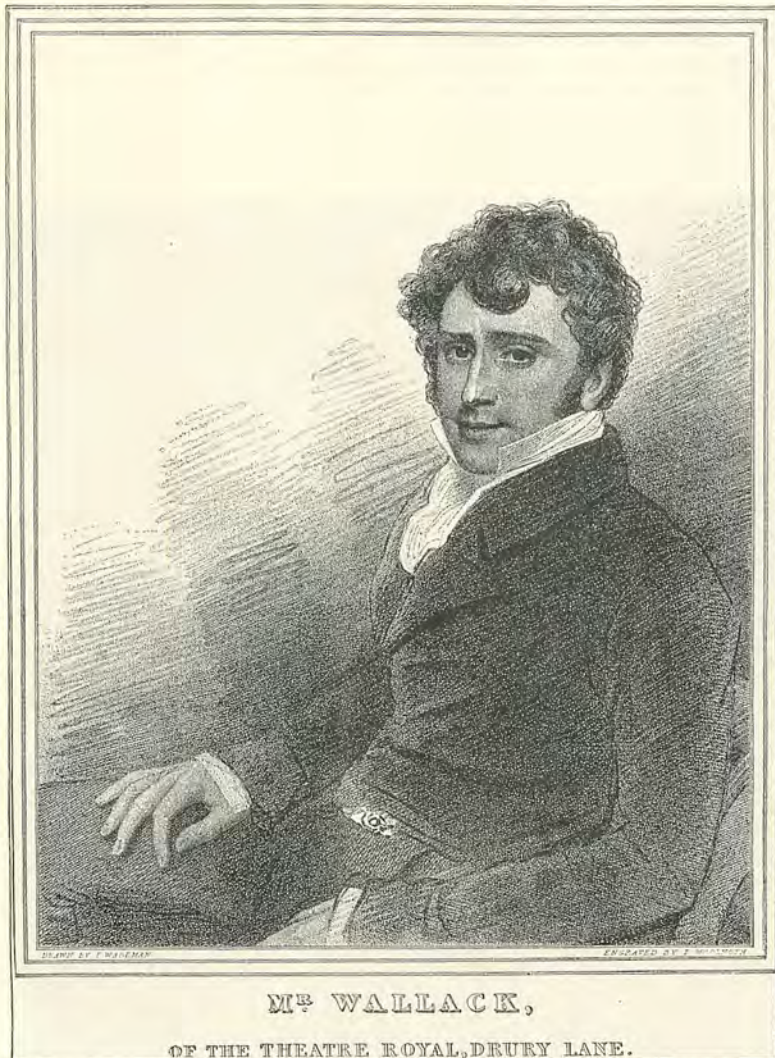
that after the play Master and Miss Jefferson were to "execute a fancy dance." Now, as our terpsichorean education had been rather limited, it is quite likely that the execution was complete.

It was soon apparent that our charity salary was not enough to support us, so my mother cast about for some means of increasing our income. She had no heart for acting now, and decided to open a boarding-house for the actors. From leading lady to landlady was rather a come-down for her; but my mother was a brave woman and endowed with that kind of pride that preferred the degradation of earning an honest living to the more elegant profession of getting in debt. A house had to be taken, a month's rent paid in advance, and furniture hired to fit up the establishment — but where was the money to come from?

It is said that in France, when the Government made a call on the people for a loan to pay off the war indemnity, thousands of patriotic Frenchwomen stood in line a mile in length at the treasury, each bearing a long worsted stocking filled with gold, ready to assist their native land in its great financial emergency; and I am told that in Louisiana this domestic bank is used by many of the French inhabitants as a receptacle for both small and large hoardings. My mother was a Frenchwoman, at least by inheritance, and I have no doubt came honestly by this national characteristic; for when matters were in a desperate condition the dear lady would mysteriously draw forth a long, dark-blue worsted stocking in which there was always "just one little gold piece left."

Unfortunately for my mother's venture, the theatrical season — following in the wake of all others I had as yet been familiar with — was a failure. Naturally the settlement of the board bills was consequent upon the payment of the salaries; and as the latter occurrence was fitful and uncertain, the weekly bills of my mother's landlord and butcher were both subjected to the same intermittent conditions.

At the time of which I write there lived in Mobile a talented and beautiful lady by the name of Madame Le Vert. She was the belle of the city and courted by the first in the land; her brilliancy and wit had placed her in the center of a rich setting of which she was the shining jewel. Added to her worth and elegance was a kind and beneficent nature, always seeking new objects to bestow its bounty upon. She was, moreover, a patroness of art and literature; nothing was too high for her understanding, or too lowly for her kind consideration. I think all who remember this fascinating woman will indorse my description of her character. It is natural that I should have



MR WALLACK,

OF THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

PORTRAIT OF JAMES WALLACK. (FROM THE COLLECTION OF T. J. MCKEE.)

a grateful remembrance of this lady, as what I shall relate will show.

My father's death and the failure of the boarding-house had attracted Madame Le Vert's attention. She called on my mother, and hinted in the most delicate manner that as the season was about closed she would like to get up a complimentary benefit at the theater for her children (though I think the widow was uppermost in Madame Le Vert's mind). Now, as the "stocking" was on the eve of suspension, my mother readily consented; so the belle of Mobile aroused the enthusiasm of her many friends, the public caught fire, and the benefit was a success.

In after years I remember to have seen Madame Le Vert surrounded by a circle of callers, entertaining them with wonderful grace

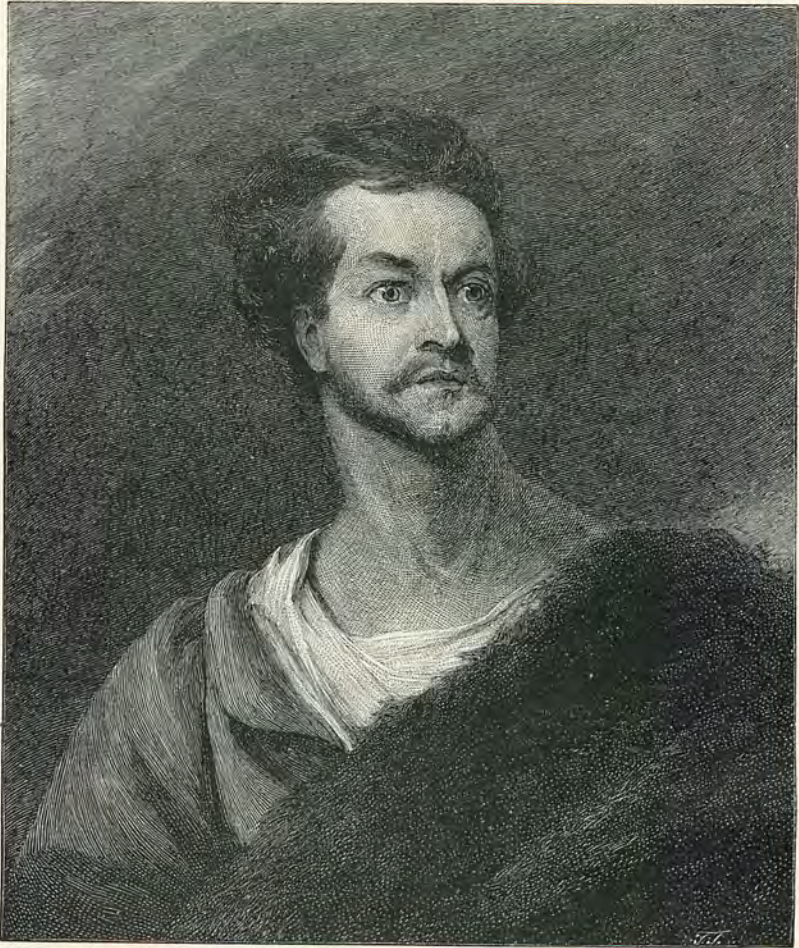
and tact, always saying the right things to the right persons, and at the proper time—a genius of society. But there came a day when this noble lady and her family were reduced in fortune; she whom I as a boy had known young and beautiful, surrounded by wealth and friends, was now an old lady in the unhappy condition of "genteel poverty." I am proud to say we were friends to the last.

During the war, or at its close, Madame Le Vert had made some enemies. It would have been impossible for a person of her prominence and ability to have done otherwise. I am not sure now which cause she espoused, and, in her case, I do not care. Her long and useful life has passed peacefully away, and her memory is honored by all who knew her.

And now we lost poor, dear old Mary. It

is perhaps vain for me to hope that I can interest the reader in any one of whom he knows so little; but how can I, her foster-son, who owe so much to her loving care, pass by her death without some tribute of affection? After sixteen years of disinterested domestic loyalty, attending us as friend, servant, and dear com-

ordinate position in the theater. He heard some one call me by name at the rehearsal, and turning around asked me if I was related to Joseph Jefferson of the Chestnut street Theater. I told him that I was a grandson of that gentleman. He said, "Let me shake you by the hand for the sake of my dear old friend."



MACREADY AS "WILLIAM TELL" (AFTER THE PAINTING BY HENRY INMAN, OWNED BY JOSEPH JEFFERSON.)

panion, this faithful creature died in my mother's arms. Who can say how high such a pure and loving spirit soars when it is released and takes its flight?

VI.

JAMES WALLACK, SR., THE ELDER BOOTH, AND MACREADY.

JAMES WALLACK, Sr., played an engagement in Mobile, and one little circumstance occurred in connection with it that I have always remembered most pleasantly. He was an actor at the head of his profession and in the height of his fame. I was only a boy holding a sub-

The remark was made with much feeling, and the remembrance of it has, I think, often prompted me to do the like for others. James Wallack, Sr., was an actor of rare attainments; as a legitimate tragedian and comedian he ranked very high. The parts that I remember him in are those of *Alessandro Mazzaroni* in "The Brigand," and *Don Cesar de Bazan*.

Mr. Macready and the elder Booth both acted in Mobile during this season; and as the contrast between these tragedians was quite remarkable, I will introduce them here, although my judgment of them was formed upon a later experience.

The methods by which actors arrive at great

effects vary according to their own natures; this renders the teaching of the art by any strictly defined lines a difficult matter. Macready and the elder Booth offer striking examples of these distinctions. Macready depended upon the mechanical arrangement of the scene, while Booth relied almost entirely on the impulse of the moment, caring little for set rules. As soon as Macready entered the theater he began to assume the character he was going to enact. He would remain in his dressing-room absorbed with the play; no one was permitted to enter; his dresser was not allowed to speak to him, but stood outside ready to open the door just before it was time for the actor to go upon the stage. If the mechanism of the play remained intact, he became lost in his character and produced grand effects, but if by some carelessness he was recalled to himself, the chain was broken and he could not reunite it. He now realized that his acting would be tame, and then his rage knew no bounds; he would seize the unlucky actor who had "ruined him," shake him, throw him aside, and rushing to his dressing-room fall exhausted upon the sofa. This was not affectation, it was real; he could not conquer his unfortunate temper. In my youthful days it was the fashion of thoughtless actors to ridicule these "Macready tantrums," and I regret to say I often joined in the sport; but as I look back on his suffering and read the pages wherein he chastises himself for his ungovernable temper, and when I know how useful and benevolent he was in the closing scenes of his life, I feel a great sympathy for him. "He poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once," but I forgive him.

I acted with Macready and Booth during this season, and an anecdote of each will serve to illustrate their different characteristics. Macready was acting *Werner*. I was cast for a minor part. In one scene a number of characters had to rush off, bearing lighted torches, in search of some delinquent. At rehearsal the tragedian particularly requested that we should all be sure and make our exit at night at just the same time and place, so that we might not disturb the arrangement of the scene. All went well up to the time for making our hurried exit, when to my horror I found *Werner* standing exactly in line with the place of my exit at rehearsal. I presume that when he had given his directions in the morning he had not observed me. What was I to do? The cue was given and there was no time for argument. I rushed past him, torch in hand. I heard his well-known groan; but as I flew by an unmistakable odor of burnt hair filled the atmosphere, and I knew that I had singed his wig. When the curtain fell I turned in horror

to see the effect. The enraged *Werner* had torn his wig from his head and stood gazing at it for a moment in helpless wonder. Suddenly he made a rush in my direction; I saw he was on the war-path, and that I was his game. And now the chase began. I dodged him up and down the stage; then around the wings and over "set" rocks and gauze waters. He never would have caught me but that in my excitement I ran head first into the stomach of a fat stage-carpenter. Here I was seized. The enraged Macready was so full of anger and so out of breath that he could only gasp and shake his burnt wig at me. Of course I was disgraced and not allowed to act again during his engagement. To make matters worse, the whole affair got into the papers, and the next morning one of the critics remarked that he had never seen Macready act with so much fire! Now all of this could have been avoided if he had but moved six inches farther up the stage when he saw me coming; but no, he had never shifted from that spot before, why should he do so now? I believe if I had singed his very eyebrows he would have stood his ground.

Booth's whole nature was the reverse of Macready's. He would saunter into the theater just a few minutes before the play began; robe himself, sometimes quite carelessly; converse freely upon local matters in a plain, practicable way, or perhaps give some reminiscence of bygone years,—his memory was wonderful,—ending with an amusing anecdote, and in the next moment walk upon the stage in the full assumption of his character, overawing the audience by the fire of his acting. The following incident will serve to show the wonderful manner in which Booth could drop his character and instantly resume it.

I was acting *Sampson* in "The Iron Chest" to his *Sir Edward Mortimer*. During the play he spoke to me of my grandfather's playing the same part with him when he (Booth) was a young man. "He used," said he, "to sing the original song; it ran thus": and assuming a comical expression he began to sing in an undertone:

A traveler stopped at a widow's gate.

At this moment his cue was given and he rushed upon the stage, discovering *Wilford* at the chest. The scene is here very powerful, and I never saw him act it with more power. The audience was most enthusiastic, and as he rushed from the stage amid a storm of applause he met me at the wing, and, reassuming the comic expression of his face, began the song just where he had left off, while the approbation of the audience was still ringing in his ears.

It must not be understood by this that Booth never became absorbed in his character; on the contrary, he sometimes carried his intensity in this respect to an extreme. It is only meant to show that he had also the power of dropping

been ill for some time, and as he was held in high esteem his friends arranged for him a complimentary testimonial at the Holliday Street Theater. Mr. Booth was at that time manager of another theater, and, unsolicited,



JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH AS "RICHARD THE THIRD." (FROM A COPPERPLATE ENGRAVING AFTER A DRAWING BY C. SHOOSMITH. FROM THE COLLECTION OF EDWIN BOOTH.)

his character in the midst of his concentration, resuming it again at will. Macready had no such faculty whatever. The beam once kicked, the balance was destroyed beyond recovery.

In his private character Mr. Booth was simple, unostentatious, and benevolent. I know of an instance of a curious and somewhat eccentric kindness that occurred many years ago in Baltimore.

An old and retired actor and manager had

tendered a benefit at his establishment to the same gentleman. The house was crowded, Booth himself acting. After the performance he went to the box-office, collected the entire receipts, and, late as it was, took them to the house of the beneficiary, and spreading the money out on the table said to him, "There is your share."

"But will you not deduct the expenses?" said his old friend.

"The only expense incurred," said Booth, "has been the bringing of the money to you; but as I walked, the cost is merely shoe leather, and I will not charge for that." So saying he turned on his heel and left the room before he could be thanked.

VII.

OUR VOYAGE ON A FLATBOAT.

FROM Mobile we went to Nashville, Tennessee, and after a short season traveled through the State. Business was bad, and on one occasion the gentlemen of the company, myself included, walked from Gallatin to Lebanon—not, however, for the exercise.

Upon our return to Nashville it was time to think of going South, as most of the company had engagements in New Orleans, Mobile, and Texas, but the Cumberland River had fallen so low that no steamboat could navigate it. In this dilemma there was but one course left—the company must come together, buy a barge, fit up a cabin, caboose, and sleeping-apartments. This was done. Where the money came from to pay for the boat and the lumber I cannot tell, but this floating camp was put together, and we all departed down the river in the queerest looking craft that ever carried a legitimate stock company of the old school. To a boy of my age this was heaven. To stand my watch at night gave me that manly feeling that a youngster just before he grows his beard enjoys beyond everything.

We stopped at Clarksville and gave one entertainment, playing "The Lady of Lyons." I acted *Glavis*. This was another manly stride for me; I was getting on. The whole of this trip was to me delightful. It was in that rich and mellow season when the foliage seems to change from day to day. The river was full of ducks, which I could sometimes shoot from the deck of the flatboat; great flocks of wild pigeons filled the air for days together, so that I could supply our table well with game. There was a small set of scenery on board that had been brought in case of an emergency. We had used it only in Clarksville so far, but now the time came when it could be displayed and utilized in a manner "never attempted before in the annals of the stage." When we reached the Mississippi the river widened out, and some stretches were from five to six miles in length; so, if we had a fair wind blowing downstream, by hoisting one of the scenes for sail we could increase our speed from two to three miles an hour. A hickory pole was cut from the shore, and a drop-scene, with a wood painted on one side and a palace on the other, was unfurled to the breeze. The wonder-stricken farmers and their wives and children

would run out of their log-cabins and, standing on the river bank, gaze with amazement at our curious craft. It was delightful to watch the steamboats as they went by. The passengers would crowd the deck and look with wonder at us. For a bit of sport the captain and I would vary the picture, and as a boat steamed past we would first show them the wood scene, and then suddenly swing the sail around, exhibiting the gorgeous palace. Adding to this sport, our leading man and the low comedian would sometimes get a couple of old-fashioned broadswords and fight a melodramatic combat on the deck. There is no doubt that at times our barge was taken for a floating lunatic asylum.

We would often tie up the boat for a day and go fishing in some lake in the interior, stopping perhaps at a farm-house to replenish our stock of butter and eggs. Our voyage was continued to Cairo, where the Ohio River joins the Mississippi, and so on until we reached Memphis; here we deserted the barge and took a steamboat for New Orleans.

This season I acted at the St. Charles, under the management of Ludlow and Smith. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean, Mrs. Anna Cora Mowatt, and James H. Hackett were among the stars. At the end of the season—which does not seem to have been a very eventful one—our company, under the same management, traveled up the Mississippi River to St. Louis, acting there during the summer. The only occurrence worth noting so far as I was concerned happened on the night of the Fourth of July, when the company was called on by the management to sing "The Star-Spangled Banner." I was in a feverish state of excitement all day, having been selected to give the first stanza. I had studied it and restudied it so often that I knew it backwards; and that is about the way I sung it. But I must not anticipate. The curtain rose upon the company partly attired in evening dress; that is to say, those who had swallow-tail coats wore them, and those who were not blessed with that graceful garment did the best they could. We were arranged in the old conventional half-circle, with the "Goddess of Liberty" in the center. The "Mother of her Country" had a Roman helmet—pasteboard, I am afraid—on her head, and was tastefully draped with the American flag. My heart was in my mouth as the music started up, but I stepped boldly forward to begin. I got as far as "Oh, say, can you see?" and here the words left me. My mind was blank. I tried it again: "Oh, say, can you see?" Whether they could see or not, I am quite sure that I could not. I was blind with fright; the house swam before my eyes; the thousand faces seemed to melt into one huge, expressionless physiognomy. The audi-

ence began to hiss — oh, that dreadful sound! I love my country, and am, under ordinary circumstances, fairly patriotic; but at that moment I cursed our national anthem from

on, Yo!" But "Yo" could n't go on, so "Yo" thought he had better go off. I bowed, therefore, to the justice of this public rebuke, and made a graceful retreat. My poor mother stood



J. B. Booth

J. B. BOOTH AS "RICHARD THE THIRD." (AFTER THE ETCHING BY S. A. SCHOFF, PUBLISHED BY H. B. BULT. FROM THE COLLECTION OF EDWIN BOOTH.)

the bottom of my heart. I heard the gentle voice of the Goddess of Liberty say, "Poor fellow!" The remark was kind, but not encouraging. The hissing increased. Old Muller, the German leader, called out to me, "Go

at the wings in tears; I threw myself into her arms, and we had it out together.

Of course I intend this anecdote to illustrate one of my early professional distresses, but it has another and a more important side

to it. The hissing and jeering that was so liberally bestowed on me will never be vented again in this country for so slight an offense. The well-dressed, decorous audience of to-day, when an accident occurs, sit quietly, bearing it with patience and consideration, and when it is righted they break forth in encouraging applause. Look at the decorum observed by the vast assemblages that go to witness our national games. Disturbances are very rare.

It would have been indecorous, if not dangerous, when I was a boy, for ladies and gentlemen to visit any public grounds containing such large masses of people, whereas now they can do so with perfect safety. What lies at the foundation of this improvement? People went to church in those days as readily as they do now, and the laws were administered quite as rigidly. There is only one solution to this problem—the free school has done this work.

(To be continued.)

Joseph Jefferson.

A DYING BUTTERFLY.

HERE in my path it struggling lies,
A small cloud made
To mar the crystal of my skies
With piteous shade.

Lie in my palm, frail creature, so;
Still the vain beat
Of thy poor heart, whose currents flow
So strangely fleet.

Ah, how it throbs! With that last throe
Of pain, it dies.
Think, for a butterfly to know
Such agonies!

How like a broken rainbow seems
Thy hanging wing;
Like the cleft promise of our dreams
On wakening.

Thy pinions' colors mock my dole,
They are so fair.
'T would seem, almost, thy brilliant soul
Were hovering there.

How mute, how pitiful the end
Of thy proud state!
Thou hadst not fallen so, fair friend,
Had I been fate.

Cannot proud Nature's power dare
Recall thy death?
Or the whole universe of air
Spare thee a breath?

Not one. Lie there upon the sod,
And that same hue
Will paint the summer flowers, as God
Hath painted you.

Louise Morgan Sill.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JOSEPH JEFFERSON.¹

BARN-STORMING IN MISSISSIPPI.



It is to be hoped for the credit of humanity that the old philosopher was in error when he said that we feel a sad gratification even in the distress of our dearest friends. But, be that as it may, it is quite certain that those of our fellow-creatures whose lives have been burdened with sorrow command our respect and excite our interest more than the high and mighty. Belisarius, stricken

blind, wandering, a beggar in tattered rags, and asking alms of the people he once led to victory, presents a figure that calls for our deepest sympathy; while we cannot shed tears over a dethroned monarch with a corner lot. By these reflections I am strengthened in the hope that I may not be tiring my reader with the continuous recital of our misfortunes, and that he will not grow as weary of them as we did. If he will but patiently wade a little farther through this "slough of despond," I promise in the latter part of my narrative to give some account of my less interesting success.

Our disastrous seasons were not exceptions. The country had been in a chronic state of theatrical bankruptcy since the panic of 1837, and continued in it for many years. Actors often had to turn their hands to something else for a livelihood besides the profession. My father painted signs for a whole summer in Vicksburg, and our leading man manufactured genuine Havana cigars in the same studio. I often acted as "drummer," and, when business was slow, would sally forth among the wharf boats to solicit orders.

It is likely that some of the events I have recorded may not have followed in the order in which I have placed them, but I do not feel that this is of much importance. Accurate statistics, with dates, long rows of figures, and unimportant casts of plays, are somewhat tedious. Tony Lumpkin says, with undoubted truth, that "the inside of a letter contains the cream of the correspondence." I must therefore crave your Honor's pardon for acting on this hint by endeavoring to trace the interesting portion of this history,—if it has any interest,—casting unimportant details into oblivion.

Mary's death reduced our quartet to a trio,

and I next found myself in the town of Grand Gulf, in the State of Mississippi, with my mother and sister. We were there awaiting the arrival of my half-brother, Charles Burke, who was somewhere in the interior of the State, with a small company of actors, struggling along from town to town. Our letters to him had crossed or miscarried; so we were obliged to remain there for several weeks until we could hunt him up. There was no telegraph in those days, and postal communication was uncertain.

The money had run out, and we were in a straitened condition, when, to our joy, my brother arrived. He burst like a ray of sunshine into the house, and we crowded about the dear fellow, smothering him with tears and kisses. It seems that his company was at Port Gibson, only eight miles away, where they had arrived the night before, and he had started at daylight, walking to Grand Gulf to meet us. After breakfast he went out for the purpose of hiring a wagon and team to take us on. This was soon done, and we started on our journey. We had got but four miles from the town when I observed my brother and the driver in close conversation. I saw that something was wrong. Presently the driver pulled up and the wagon stopped. My brother turned round and said: "Mother, I have made a bargain with this man to take us to Port Gibson for ten dollars. I have no money, and expected to pay him out of to-night's receipts after the play. He says this arrangement will not do for him; he seems unwilling to trust me, so he must be paid now or he will turn back." I looked at my mother and hinted that perhaps, if she searched hard, something might be found in the stocking. Her eyes filled with tears, and I saw by her face that the bank was broken. There was nothing left us but to get out of the wagon and remain by the roadside until my brother should go back and make another trial. The rain came down, and we took shelter under a large tree, awaiting his return. My mother had once been one of the most attractive stars in America, the leading prima donna of the country, and now, from no fault of her own, was reduced to the humiliation of being put out of a wagon with her two children, in a lonely road in the far-off State of Mississippi, because she could not pay a wagoner the sum of ten dollars.

This was so far the darkest hour we had

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passed. About noon the sun shone bright, and shortly afterwards my brother appeared in sight, mounted on top of an ox-cart driven by an old negro. We were only four miles from Port Gibson, but it required as many hours to make the journey, so about sundown our party alighted at the hotel.

We now entered upon a course of the most primitive acting, going from town to town and giving entertainments in the dining-rooms of the hotels. As there were no papers published in these small villages, there were no printing-offices, consequently no bills; so flaming announcements of our arrival in a bold handwriting were displayed in the three important points of the town, viz.: the hotel, the post-office, and the barber-shop. It fell to my duty, being an adept with the brush, to write, or rather paint, these advertisements. The plays were acted in costume, but without scenery or curtain. The nightly receipts were small—just about enough to get us from place to place.

Our objective point was the town of Liberty, Mississippi; but there was some difficulty in getting there, as the distance was greater than we could accomplish in a day. A farmer who had been to the theater the night before for the first time in his life was so struck by the performance that he proposed to have his teams brought in and take us to his farm-house, about twenty-five miles distant. According to his suggestion we were to rest for a day, give an entertainment in his barn, and so go on to Liberty.

"But," said my brother, "you tell me there is no other house there but your own. What shall we do for an audience?"

"Well," said the farmer, "all my family will come, to begin with, and there is a dozen or more on 'em; then there 's eight or ten farm-houses close by, and if one of your men will drive there with my son and blow the horn they will all come, for there ain't one on 'em ever seen a play before. I 'll insure you a full barn."

So the matter was settled, and we actually played in a barn, the house that we staid in being the only one in sight. It seemed in vain to look for an audience in such a lonely place, but the farmer was right. Soon after the sun had gone down the full harvest moon rose, and by its dim light we could faintly see family groups of people, two and sometimes three on a horse, coming from all directions over the hill—now a wagon with a great load. Some of them walked, but all were quiet and serious, and apparently wondering what they were going to see.

Those who have traveled through the Southern States will perhaps remember the kind of barn we acted in: there were two log houses joined together with an opening between them which was floored and covered in. The seats were arranged outside in the open air—benches,

chairs, and logs. The double barn on each side was used for dressing-rooms and for making entrances and exits, while the opening was devoted to the stage. The open air was well filled, containing an audience of about sixty persons. Our enthusiastic admirer, the farmer, collected the admission fee, a dollar being charged and freely given. The plays were "The Lady of Lyons" and "The Spectre Bridegroom." The farmer had supplied us liberally with candles, so that the early part of the entertainment was brilliantly illuminated, but the evening breeze had fanned the lights so fiercely that by the time the farce began the footlights were gone. The little "flaming ministers" had all sputtered out, so "The Spectre Bridegroom" was acted in the moonlight.

It was curious to watch the effect of a strong emotional play like "The Lady of Lyons" upon an audience that had never seen a drama before: they not only were much interested, but they became excited over the trials of the hero and heroine; they talked freely among themselves, and, at times, to the actors. One old lady insisted that the lovers should be "allowed their own way," and a stalwart young farmer warned the villain not to interfere again "if he knew what was best for him."

We continued traveling through the State of Mississippi, sometimes in wagons or on a stray stern-wheel steamer that was hailed from the bank of some little village where we had acted. As the spring opened the rainy season set in, and the roads became almost impassable. Fortunately at this time my mother received an offer for us to join the new theater in Galveston, to which place we proceeded, my brother and his wife going North to act under Mr. Burton's management at the Arch street Theater, Philadelphia.

PUDDING STANLEY.

At the termination of our Galveston season the company embarked on board a small stern-wheel steamer that wound its way through a narrow, crooked stream and landed us at the city of Houston. I say the company, but it was only a remnant of it, as most of its members, being weary of the hot weather and despairing of any more regular-salary days, had returned to the North. We acted for several weeks in Houston, but with a feeble kind of patronage that just enabled us to keep our heads above water; still, the ever-hopeful disposition of the itinerant actor buoyed us up, and we struggled on in the anticipation of a reaction.

We had by this time resolved ourselves into what was called a "sharing scheme," dividing the profits, when there were any, *pro rata*

with our salaries. First the board was paid for, then the rent, then the printing, then the orchestra—the latter always ready to strike at a bar's notice; the rest we shared. These uncertain dividends were looked forward to with much interest, for home was far away and difficult to reach.

As the season approached its close and the disbanding of our company was under discussion, a new sensation occurred in the arrival of an old actor and ex-theatrical manager by the name of Stanley. This remnant of an earlier era had been upon the retired list for many years, and now suddenly burst upon us with enticing schemes to better our condition. I had never seen him before, but several of our company knew and recognized him as a veteran barn-stormer of the olden time. He had been living in San Antonio for many years, and having heard that a company of players were at Houston the slumbering old war-horse within him was awakened, and disdaining the dangers of a long journey through the chaparral,—for the country was at this time full of hostile Indians,—he had ridden three hundred miles in the wild enthusiasm of an old manager-actor, thirsting for the revival of three-sheet posters and a high stool opposite that fascinating spot, the pigeon-hole of the box-office. Naturally, in the first flush of his arrival, laden as he was with flattering promises of double salaries and clear third benefits, we were in a delightful flutter of anticipation. His accounts of San Antonio and the surrounding country were dazzling. There had been no dramatic entertainment ever given there, the gold mines of Mexico were close at hand, and, in short, it seemed quite clear that our fortunes would be made if we concluded to embrace his offer. He further informed us that he was well known all through Texas, and that his popularity was second only to that of the late Davy Crockett; that, under the very "shadow of the Alamo," as he poetically expressed it, he kept a bar-room in conjunction with a fandango, a keno table, and a faro bank—by which means it seems he had endeavored to refine the depraved tastes of the citizens. Mr. Stanley's figure was portly, so that his friends, in order to distinguish him from the other and less important Stanleys in town, bestowed upon him the title of "Pudding Stanley," or "Pud," as he was more briefly and affectionately called.

As I have said, we were at first overwhelmed with his amazing description of our future Eldorado, but upon holding council to consider the situation dispassionately our ardor cooled. First came the dreaded journey of three hundred miles through a wilderness of chaparral inhabited only by jack-rabbits and hostile Indians.

Our leading actor remarked that he did not mind jack-rabbits, but considered the Indians an impediment. He was a courageous man, too, upon the stage. I had seen him play the *Chief Osceola*, and scalp one "super" after another with great nerve; but now he seemed to think with *King Lear* that "Nature 's above art in that respect," and while he reveled in being the hero of an artistic assassination, realistic effects of this kind were not to be thought of.

Another reason for our not relishing the proposal was contained in the recollection of a really serious matter in connection with actors and Indians that had occurred in Florida during the Seminole war. It seems that a manager by the name of William C. Forbes had taken a theatrical company into the very jaws of the disturbance. The troupe acted at the different forts and garrisons along the line of battle, and on one occasion, while going from one military station to another, without an escort, it was attacked and roughly handled by the savages. Forbes and most of his people escaped, but two unfortunate actors were captured and butchered. The theatrical wardrobe belonging to the company fell into the hands of the Indians, who, dressing themselves up as Romans, Highlanders, and Shakspearean heroes, galloped about in front of the very fort, though well out of gunshot, where Forbes and the more fortunate members of his company had fled for safety. Several of the Indians were afterwards taken, and as they were robed and decked in the habiliments of *Othello*, *Hamlet*, and a host of other Shakspearean characters,—for Forbes was eminently legitimate,—their identity as the murderers was established, and they were hanged in front of the garrison.

The recollection of this incident acted as anything but a stimulus to our wavering courage, and we took the liberty of mentioning to the ex-ranger that it was within the bounds of possibility that the warlike Comanches of Texas might have no more respect for the legitimate drama than the Seminoles of Florida, in which case history would inconveniently repeat itself.

The tempter ridiculed our fears, looking upon us, I think, with a ranger's contempt. He said there were a few Indians here and there certainly, but they were cowardly, and generally kept themselves concealed in the chaparral. On being cross-questioned as to why they concealed themselves in the chaparral, he replied, "Well, possibly ambush; but they are great cowards." He said the safest plan would be for the entire party to keep together; going all in one wagon, we would then exhibit "the full strength of the company," and well armed with such theatrical weapons as we might

possess, there would be no danger. Theatrical weapons — just think of it! The armory of a theater in those days consisted of two pairs of short broadswords, a half-dozen stuffed sticks, and a rusty flint-lock horse-pistol that always snapped once and generally twice before virtue felt itself secure. A cold shiver ran down my back as I imagined myself facing a Comanche with an article whose uncertainty had on more than one occasion compelled the heavy villain to commit suicide with a table-spoon.

It is needless to say that I had inwardly resolved not to go, and I think the entire company were of my mind. Of course we laid it all on the leading man, who had at least been bold enough openly to express his fear; but we decided not to go!

Stanley was of course disappointed, as he had looked forward, he said, not only to the renewal of managerial responsibility and importance, but to donning again the sock and buskin and acting with us. Upon this hint we suggested that if he really desired to act again, and would appear one night in Houston for our benefit, we should be proud to support him. If *Richard III.* could tempt him — we knew this to be his weak point — it was at his service. Of course at first he pretended to demur, saying that he had no wardrobe, and that it was so long since he had acted that he “really feared.” But he could not conceal an undercurrent of secret delight at the thought of again striding the stage. He consented. He was so well known in Texas that we felt quite sure, in securing his services for a joint benefit to the company, our treasury would swell from its present slender dimensions and give us the means of returning to Galveston with flying colors.

Stanley's professional and private histories were both interesting, as they covered a period when artistic, commercial, and military matters were curiously mingled. He had acted in the then far West under the management of Alexander Drake both in Louisville and in Cincinnati; he had then drifted off into Texas, joining the rangers against Santa Anna; then back again to the Mississippi, where he encountered the celebrated Chapman company, who had ingeniously fitted up a steamboat and converted it into a floating theater. This huge dramatic barge used to ply from one town to another on the Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri rivers, giving theatrical entertainments at the various points where there were no theaters. The roving spirit again taking possession of him, he left the Chapmans and returned to Texas.

The night was arranged for the benefit, and such was the popularity of the volunteer that tickets amounting to the capacity of the thea-

ter, and even beyond it, were sold without delay. As I before said, *Richard III.* was his pet part; and while he considered himself unequaled in the character, he confided to me that he did not mind privately confessing that in the later scenes he drew his inspiration from the example of Edwin Forrest. Stanley now employed his mornings in walking as majestically as his ungainly figure would permit up and down the stage, gesticulating violently and roaring out the soliloquies of *Richard*; and his afternoons in accumulating raw cotton, in order that the hump and the bandy-legs of the crook-backed tyrant might be properly deformed and traditionally disfigured.

Our volunteer reminded me of an actor I once knew who used to wear upon the stage a red wig so like his own hair that whether he had it on or off there was no perceptible difference in his appearance. So with Stanley: his bandy-legs and round shoulders, even when unadorned, quite harmonized with the accepted idea of Gloucester's deformity; but, looking upon himself as an Apollo, our hero had piled such a mountain of cotton on his natural hump that it made “Ossa like a wart.”

On the auspicious night the house was packed to the doors. A few ladies came; but their escorts, seeing that the audience were disposed to be turbulent, took them away, so that the friends and admirers of the star were unchecked in their noisy cat-calls and demonstrations. Law, order, and decorum were set at defiance. The friends of the old ranger had come for a frolic and evidently intended to have it. The placard of “No smoking” was totally disregarded. Pipes and cigars were vigorously puffed, and the house was so filled with smoke that one would have supposed that the battle of Bosworth Field had taken place before the opposing forces met. The weather was sultry, and the general heat, combined with the stifling atmosphere of a crowded house, ran the little box of a theater up to the temperature of an oven in full force.

At the rise of the curtain the expectant audience was on tiptoe to greet their comrade. At the wing stood the sweltering *Richard*, absorbed in his character and embedded in cotton, and as he strode upon the stage the theater rang with applause and shouts of welcome. After bowing low his acknowledgments he began the famous soliloquy. The performance proceeded quietly for a time, the silence being broken now and then by expressions of approval in complimentary but rather familiar terms. During the love scene with *Lady Anne*, her ladyship was warned by some one in the audience, who claimed to have an intimate knowledge of *Richard's* private domestic affairs, that the tyrant had already two Mexican wives in San

Antonio. Nothing daunted at this public accusation of polygamy, "Pud" pressed his suit with ardor.

The retired actor had not forgotten some of the old-fashioned tricks of the art, and would take the stage with tremendous strides from the center to the extreme right or left after making a point, thereby signifying to the audience that if they desired to applaud then was their time. "Off with his head! so much for Buckingham!" and away he would go. In one of these flights, being over-stimulated by excitement and applause, he nearly tumbled into the private box. Straightening himself up, his ostrich plumes became entangled with a spermaceti chandelier and set him in a blaze of glory. He glared with indignation at the convulsed audience, being himself entirely innocent of the illumination until the unmistakable odor of burnt feathers warned him that his diadem was in danger. In the death scene, just as *Richard* expired, a voice, signifying that the game was over, shouted "Keno!" This allusion to "Pud's" commercial pursuits brought him to life, and as the curtain was descending he sat up and warned the interlocutor that he would "keno" him in the morning.

IN MEXICO.

THE declaration of war with Mexico caused a great stir in Galveston; speculations were rife in all quarters as to the probable result from a commercial point of view. Of course no doubt existed as to the ultimate success of our side; but the question as to how much was to be made out of it seemed to absorb the public mind. Our manager was a thrifty soul, and foresaw the prospect of good financial results by following up the army with his dramatic forces. My mother was considerably alarmed lest I should be conscripted, and I was not a little uneasy on those grounds myself.

In May, 1846, we embarked on board a condemned Mississippi steamer for Point Isabel. This leaky old boat, crowded with soldiers, gamblers, and a few actors, feebly wended its uncertain way along the coast and arrived at its destination in about four days. Luckily, the sea was as calm as a mill-pond; for if one of those dreadful cyclones so frequent in the Gulf had overtaken us, many good soldiers, indifferent gamblers, and bad actors would have found their way to the bottom of the sea, and these important reinforcements to General Taylor never would have put in an appearance. Point Isabel, on our arrival, was all bustle and activity. It was a flat, sandy, and uninteresting place, covered with tents and boiling over with military preparations. The battle of Palo Alto was fought on the 8th of May: these were

the first guns fired, and we could distinctly hear the booming sounds of opposing cannon; it ended at sunset with victory for the American army. The next morning I saw the ambulance bringing in the wounded form of Major Samuel Ringgold, who died soon after. This celebrated hero introduced into this country the flying artillery, to the efficiency of which the success of the day was attributed. The Mexicans had retreated only a few miles, and, being reënforced, gave battle the next day, and the memorable engagement of Resaca de la Palma was won by the gallant charge of Captain May at the head of his dragoons. Then came the bombardment of Fort Brown, and on the 18th of May the city of Matamoras was occupied by the United States army, with our gallant band of comedians bringing up the rear, elated at our military success.

The manager took advantage of the distressed position of the town, and, by permission of the American commandant, occupied the old Spanish theater. Victory had crowned our arms; so the soldiers, settlers, gamblers, rag-tag and bob-tail crowd that always follow on in the train of an army, like "greedy crows" that hover over the heads of the defeated party, "impatient for their lean inheritance," were ready for amusement. Here we acted to the most motley group that ever filled a theater. But in the middle of September the trumpet blast sounded in our ears again; the soldiers were ordered to march on to Monterey. The town was deserted and the theater closed. Our manager, seeing that all further hopes of their return had vanished, disbanded his company, and with all the cash he could collect, including our back salaries, "wandered away, no man knew whither." Here I was left with my mother and sister, thrown on our own resources, which were very small, in a strange country, and among a people not at all on good terms with us. The only member of the company left besides ourselves was Edward Badger. He was my brother comedian and friend; his father was the well-known Alderman Badger of Philadelphia. Our situation was somewhat desperate; so we held a council of war to determine on our future movements. The soldiers had gone, but the gamblers remained; and the brilliant idea occurred to us, that as we could no longer minister to their intellectual entertainment we might make something by furnishing them with internal comforts. So we boldly resolved to open a coffee and cake stand in their interest. We arranged to place the stand in a bar-room in the central part of Matamoras, the locality offering the best position for our commercial enterprise. The establishment was dignified by the high-sounding title of "The

Grand Spanish Saloon," and consisted of a long room, with a low ceiling, having a counter, or bar, running the full length on one side, and a row of gaming-tables on the other, where roulette, keno, chuck-a-luck, and faro were industriously pursued with the usual integrity which generally attaches itself to these pastimes. The walls were beautifully whitewashed and the floor was well sprinkled with sand. In front of the bar and at regular intervals were kegs cut into halves and filled with sawdust, these being the cuspidores of the pioneers. From the ceiling were suspended chandeliers made of barrel-hoops, tastefully covered with pink, blue, and white paper, cut in different patterns, in which candles were placed to illuminate the cheerful and tragic scenes that alternately occurred in this fascinating but dangerous place.

Badger, after convincing the proprietor that the introduction of a stand for cake and hot coffee at one end of the room would not only add to the refinement of his establishment, but increase its custom by providing the patrons with refreshment during their hours of relaxation from business, came to terms with him. We were to furnish everything and give him ten per cent. of our gross receipts for rent, it being verbally understood that if either Badger or myself came to an untimely death at the hands of any of his attachés the person so offending should be discharged from his service at once.

Nothing could be more satisfactory than this arrangement, so I at once set about the decoration of our café, while Badger went off in search of an old Mexican woman, said to be an expert in the manufacture of coffee and pies. The construction of our stand was simple and effective; a large dry-goods box on which two boards were placed so as to reach the bar-counter made a permanent and secure foundation for the reception of our viands. The boards were tastefully draped and masked with Turkey-red reaching to the floor. Large sheets of white paper were spread over the top, and on the right, next the counter, stood a large and elaborate tin coffee-urn, and beneath it an alcohol lamp emitting a beautiful blue flame. This monument was surrounded by a dozen old cups and saucers, in which, placed at right angles, gleamed a corresponding number of shining spoons, giving a pure German silver flavor to everything they touched. A fat sugar-bowl and an attenuated milk-pitcher completed the coffee service. Four flat pies, two pyramids of sandwiches, a box of cheap cigars tilted up on a brick, and a large plate of homemade Mexican cakes completed the assortment. Among the dainty articles which adorned our counter were some large, round, burnt-sienna-looking cakes called mandillos. I think they must have been indigenous to the soil of Mex-

ico, for I rejoice to know that I never saw one anywhere else. They were sparingly sprinkled with dry currants, and glazed on top with some sticky stuff that never dried during the whole summer: if an unlucky fly lit on one of these delicacies his doom was sealed. I have no idea what they tasted like, for I never had the courage to try one; nor did I ever know a customer who ventured on one for the second time. One gentleman—an epicure from Texas—said that he would not mind giving one a trial if he could be sure which were the currants and which were the flies. This kind of pleasantries we could afford to smile at, but when a ranger remarked on one occasion that any man who would sell such things ought to be shot, we decided—for the sake of our customers—that we would remove this objectionable feature from our bill of fare; so the cakes were forthwith banished to the top shelf, well out of sight, and utilized as fly-traps for the rest of the season.

When our arrangements were first completed Badger and I stood with folded arms at the far end of the long room, contemplating the effect with pride and satisfaction. It was now about time for the doors to open. We were quite nervous and excited; for, in the innocence of our natures, we expected a great rush from the public. Our spirits were somewhat dampened, therefore, to find that no one seemed to know or care anything about us or the new venture in which nearly all of our available cash was invested.

As the day wore on, stragglers dropped in one by one; blear-eyed gamblers, freshly shaved, with shaky hands and gloomy looks, called for their morning cocktail at the bar. Now and then we caught a stray customer: our coffee, clear and strong, was a great success; and the pies did pretty well, too, but the "Colorado Claros" were a dead failure. Our point now was to watch the public; if an article was not in demand we discarded it at once, and offered another in its place. By these tactics, before the week was over, the cash returns were more than satisfactory. My partner and myself conformed to the regular business hours of the establishment: at about three o'clock A. M. the order to close was given and "Vamoose!" was shouted by the stentorian lungs of the proprietor. The roulette ceased to revolve, the dice were discarded, the faro cloth was rolled up, and our alcohol lamp was extinguished. Those members of the sporting fraternity who could stand on their feet reeled home (?), and those who could not were dragged along the sanded floor and deposited on the sidewalk; the candles were blown out and the doors of "The Grand Spanish Saloon" were closed to the world. Badger and I would trudge to our

room arm in arm, carrying our money in a shot-bag between us, and each armed with a Colt's patent "pepper-caster."

The dwelling-houses in Matamoras were generally one story high, built of brick, plastered, and painted yellow; one door and an iron-barred window in front on the street, and the same at the back, leading to a courtyard which was used in common by the occupants of the house for washing, ironing, cooking, and eating. We occupied one of these establishments.

In the morning little tables, with white cloths, were brought out and set for breakfast in the open air. The different families would sit at them and drink their hot coffee, eat their fruit and bread, smoke their cigarettes, and talk away as gaily as if no war were going on. The courtyards were entered by a large gate, and hired out to passing caravans of muleteers or rancheros, who occupied the middle of the space. Here they also took their meals and sold their fruit, vegetables, chickens, and dry goods of cheap and gaudy-colored stuffs, Mexican blankets, sombreros, and baskets. The courtyard at night was a lovely sight. The little houses surrounding it were all lighted up within, the doors wide open so that we could see the families, men, women, and children, knitting, smoking, dancing, singing, and playing cards—always for money (everybody gambled in Mexico); and groups of muleteers in the center were seated around their camp-fire, which would blaze and shed its light over the scene. I had a great fondness for this locality, for here I met my first love. Her mother was a full-blooded Mexican, but her father must have been pure Castilian, for the girl was not only beautiful, but her features were aristocratic. She had the prettiest little feet and hands that could be imagined. Her merry black eyes fairly danced and sparkled with brilliancy, and when laughing she would throw her head back in ecstasy, showing two rows of pearly teeth. Metta—that was her name—was as wild and graceful as a deer. I was quite in love with her at first sight, and when she began to teach me to play the guitar and smoke cigarettes I was entirely captured. She had that rich, olive complexion that one sees in a pale Key West cigar, and, like that article, was about half Spanish. Her great delight was to make a full half-dozen of her Mexican sweethearts jealous by flirting with me; but as she spoke not a word of English, and I was entirely ignorant of Spanish, we could only make eyes and smile at each other. Perhaps this was all for the best, because had it been otherwise, I am afraid that, though I was only eighteen, my mother would have been astonished with a Mexican daughter-in-law before we left the country.

Our business affairs were flourishing at the saloon, and but for a strong propensity that my speculative partner had for trying his luck at the side tables now and then, we should have made a small fortune. Of course there was a heavy risk of life and property in such a place, as the frequenters of the "Grand Spanish" were more numerous than select, and, to paraphrase an old saying, "when the rum was in, the knife was out." Several times the firm had dodged under the counter to escape contact with a stray bullet, and on one occasion the offending coffee-urn had been fatally shot.

I now divided my time between attention to commerce and learning the Spanish language from Metta, but I am afraid it was a case of pleasure before business. She was the most innocent, simple child of nature that I ever saw, and yet, with all her modesty, a perfect miniature coquette. She would jump for joy and clap her little hands together if she only could contrive to make any of her lovers jealous. The scowling brows of one of her native admirers, together with the liberal display of a small arsenal of unconcealed weapons encircling his waist, always gave me a disagreeable turn, and at these times I would insist on Metta's not lavishing so much public attention on me. I never saw the fellow's dark eyes glaring at me but there came up a vision of that old engraving of the Spanish lady on a moonlight night smiling from her window on her favorite lover, and a melodramatic looking rival in the background peering around the corner and grasping a stiletto as big as a hand-saw, ready to stab the accepted lover in the back.

A noted character on the border line in those days, one Buck Wallace, was a frequenter of this place—a lump of good nature and kindness when unmolested, but if the demon in him was aroused he became a desperate and dangerous man. He was a Philadelphian by birth; and as that was my native city, Wallace and I struck up a great friendship, though he was full thirty years my senior. He was an interesting fellow, with a strange mixture of tenderness and ferocity. His life had been an adventurous and romantic one; as a boy, he had served under Captain James Bowie, after whom the famous Bowie-knife is named, and was with Davy Crockett at the fall of the Alamo. After the assassination of Crockett and Bowie by the Mexicans, Wallace returned to Philadelphia, and, as extremes meet, strangely enough married a beautiful young Quakeress. He now resolved to settle down and lead a steady life, but the City of Brotherly Love was a trifle too peaceful for his belligerent nature; so, taking his young wife on his arm, he again sought the border, squatting on a ranch in the

heart of a wild and lonely spot on the banks of the Nueces. This river marked the fighting line between Mexico and Texas, so it was congenial soil for "Bully Buck," as he was familiarly called, though I am afraid the friendly spirit of his gentle wife was often shocked by his deeds of daring. He used to talk to me of this sweet lady and their only child with tears in his eyes, for he was a loving savage. They had been cruelly murdered by the Comanche Indians during the absence of Wallace from his home. This crazed him for several months, and when he came to himself a morbid craving for revenge took possession of him. It is said that if Buck met a Comanche alone, it was all up with the redskin. His knowledge of the country made him of much importance at this time to the United States Government, by whom he was employed as spy, scout, ranger, and detective; his bold nature won for him the admiration of his friends and the fear of his enemies. He had in his way educated himself, and was very fond of quoting poetry of the morbid and romantic order. Byron's "Corsair," Poe's "Raven," and Scott's Highland tales were special favorites with him; but he had a thorough contempt for Cooper's novels, and put no faith in the existence of "Boston Indians."

One evening—the last on earth for him, poor fellow!—just as the candles were lighted and the games in the "Grand Saloon" were in full play, Wallace, without hat or coat and with his hair disheveled, rushed wildly into the room. He shouted to the crowd: "Give me a knife or a pistol, for God's sake, quick, or I'm gone!" Everybody started to his feet; the man was so well known that the sound of his voice and his desperate appearance seemed to terrify the crowd. In the midst of the confusion three dark-looking Mexicans rushed into the room and began a furious attack upon Wallace. He was unarmed, and, seizing a chair, he fought desperately for his life. He felled the first man to the ground, but before he could turn he was stabbed to the heart by one of his other assailants and fell heavily to the floor; the assassins, brandishing their knives, cleared a way through the crowd and escaped. This was the darkest tragedy I had yet seen, and that night, as I turned the matter over in my mind, I felt that however congenial this atmosphere might be for a Texan ranger, it was no place for a legitimate comedian. So I proposed to Badger that we should at once hunt up some Mexican having a commercial turn of mind and sell out. This was easily done; the business was a thriving one, and the death of poor Wallace seemed to have made the place more popular. So we sold the good-will, divided our capital, and dissolved.

I had to break the dreadful tidings to Metta

that I must go away. I do not think she cared half so much for me as I did for her; but when she realized the fact that I was about to "vamoose" she got up quite a little scene. Through our interpreter I told her I should soon make my fortune and return to her to claim her as my bride, and bear her off with the whole family—there were sixteen of them—to my own country. It was pretty hard to make her understand that there was any other country but the one she was living in: she had often wondered where I and all the other cruel people had come from to make war on her family, and always fancied that the little town where she was born was the all and end of everything. In fact, Metta in Matamoras was like the minnow in the brook; she "knew not of the sea to which the brook was flowing."

The parting between Metta and myself was very affecting; her mother and all her little barefooted brothers were weeping away in the Mexican tongue as I departed. In a month after that I had quite forgotten Metta, and the chances are that within a year she had allied herself to that animated arsenal the dark-eyed rival.

MR. AND MRS. JAMES W. WALLACK, JR.

WE had a permit to leave Matamoras in one of the Government boats that was taking back wounded soldiers to Brazos Santiago. Many of the poor fellows were on board, and, having left various members of their bodies on the battlefields of Mexico, they were anxious to get what was left of them home as soon as possible. I was an eye-witness to much of the suffering; the water, the climate, the blazing sun, and the drenching rain thinned their ranks with more effect than Mexican valor could have done. One by one they dropped off, and by the time we reached Brazos Santiago there were but few left alive. Here we left the Government steamer and took passage on a brig bound for New Orleans.

I am not aware as to how attractive their places of business may be to the members of other professions, but when I was a youth the first place an actor sought out when he arrived in town was the theater. Actors seemed to be in love with their vocation and fluttered about the footlights, whether they had anything to do or not. I scarcely think that the attachment is so strong to-day, and there are many reasons, too, why it should not be so. At the time of which I write actors mixed but little with the public and seldom went into society. Salaries were small, so they could not afford expensive amusements, and I cannot call to mind that there was a dramatic club in America. Now they have their yachts, their horses, their clubs,

and their country homes. Then their only place of rendezvous was the theater.

It is not to be wondered at, then, that on our arrival in New Orleans the brig we came in had scarcely touched the wharf when I leaped ashore and bought a morning paper to see what theater was open. At the St. Charles—still under the management of Ludlow and Smith—there was announced the "Tragedy of King Richard III." from the original text, the stars being Mr. and Mrs. James W. Wallack, Jr., who appeared as the *Duke of Gloster* and *Queen Elizabeth*, the evening's entertainment concluding with the farce of "A Kiss in the Dark," with the then rising young comedian John E. Owens as *Mr. Pittibone*. Of course I went at once to the theater. As I had acted there the season before, I knew all of the attachés and most of the company, and I naturally expected to be something of a lion, having just returned from the seat of war. In this, however, I was somewhat disappointed; for as I had arrived in a sailing vessel, they knew more of the conflict than I did. That night I saw the performance. James W. Wallack, Jr.,¹ was in those days at his best. Young, vigorous, and handsome, he was the most romantic-looking actor I ever saw; there was a dash and spirit in his carriage, too, that was charming. I say he was at his best in those days, because in after years the acting of Macready, whom as an artist he idolized, had an unfortunate influence upon him, as he ultimately became imbued with the mannerisms of the English tragedian, which were so marked that they marred the natural grace of the imitator. All who remember Mrs. James W. Wallack, Jr., will attest the force of her tragic acting. In the quality of queenly dignity I think she even surpassed Charlotte Cushman, though she lacked perhaps the spirit and fire of the latter. War usually increases the nightly receipts of the theater, but the struggle with Mexico seemed to have a contrary effect. So I remember that, though the bill would have been considered an attractive one under the usual condition of public affairs, the audience was small. The American Theater, then under the management of James Place, was not open, but the company was still in town, and there were as many actors as citizens in front.

The play was finely acted but indifferently mounted, the armies of York and Lancaster being wretchedly equipped and quite limited as to quality and quantity. The faint and un-military efforts that they made to march with time and precision gave them anything but a warlike aspect. In keeping step there was a glaring difference of opinion, the pursuing army treading more upon their own heels than

¹ So called to distinguish him from his uncle, who was the father of Lester Wallack.

upon those of the enemy, and in the final collision there was a friendly tapping of tin spears on pasteboard helmets that told too plainly of a bloodless battle.

But the really furious fight between *Richard* and *Richmond* made amends for the docility of the rank and file. Wallack was a superb swordsman, and I do not remember to have seen a stage combat fought with finer effect.

JOHN E. OWENS.

I HAD for the last year at least been buffeting about in barns and tents, so that anything like a legitimate production was a great treat. But my chief interest on this occasion was centered in the farce, and my thoughts were dwelling on the approaching efforts of the rising young comedian—and why not? Was I not a rising young comedian myself? I certainly had reached that height in my own estimation, at least, and I felt a burning desire that a time should come when some newspaper would proclaim it for me as the New Orleans "Pica-yune" had that day announced it for Owens.

At last he came, and certainly he conquered. As he entered briskly upon the stage, humming a sprightly song, I thought him the handsomest low comedian I had ever seen. He had a neat, dapper little figure, and a face full of lively expression. His audience was with him from first to last, his effective style and great flow of animal spirits capturing them and myself too—though I must confess that I had a hard struggle even inwardly to acknowledge it.

As I look back and call to mind the slight touch of envy that I felt that night, I am afraid that I had hoped to see something not quite so good, and was a little annoyed to find him such a capital actor; in short, I experienced those unpleasant twinges of jealousy that will creep over us during the moments when we are not at our best—though these feelings may occasionally produce a good result. In me, I know, it stirred up the first great ambition that I remember ever to have felt, and from that night of pleasure and excitement I resolved to equal Owens some day, if I could.

CROSSING THE ALLEGHANIES.

It was now decided that my mother and sister should remain in New Orleans with some old friends while I went to join my half-brother in Philadelphia. He had been urging us for some time to come to the North, writing that arrangements were made for me to act the second comedy to himself and W. E. Burton, then manager of the Arch street Theater. My mother was banker, and so had charge of the money. I took enough to see



MRS. JAMES W. WALLACK, JR.
(FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY FREDERICKS.)¹

me to Philadelphia, supposing that no accident would happen; but before our steamer arrived at Wheeling the river was blocked with ice, and we were delayed over a week before we could reach the line of stages that crossed the Alleghany Mountains.

Some of the old folks of to-day, who live only in the past and stolidly witness the improvements of the present, passing no remarks upon them except when there is an opportunity to condemn, are always preaching about the delights of the olden time and extolling the comforts of the stage-coach. I will describe, by way of contrast with travel of the present day, how the Alleghany Mountains were crossed in 1846.

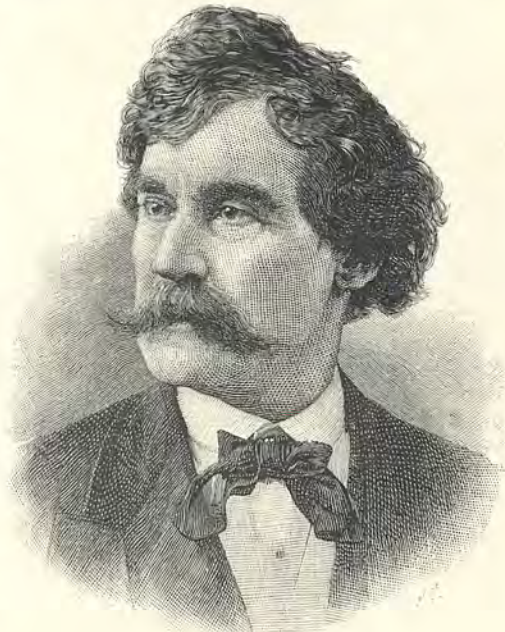
It was midwinter when we arrived at Wheeling. Our steambot was tied to the wharf about three o'clock in the morning, and as the stage-coach was to start at five no one thought of going to bed, so we wended our way along the frozen streets to secure through tickets to Philadelphia. The morning was pitch-dark and bitter cold — that damp, penetrating weather piercing wraps and overcoats until it reached the very marrow in one's bones.

We got to the little "den," by courtesy called the "office," where we found a half-dozen more passengers equally damp, cold, and ill-natured with ourselves. There was a handful of coal burning in a very small grate, about which were grouped the round-shouldered, unsympathetic people who were to be our fellow-travelers. They glanced up at us as we entered, and, closing up all the open space near the fire, said as plainly as they

could without speaking: "You don't get in here, we can tell you. You have no right to travel in our coach, anyhow."

At one side there was a small table on which stood a large coffee-pot, some white cups and saucers, a plate of cold sausages, — frozen stiff, — and an unattractive loaf of bread; behind this banquet was a tall darky, leaning against the wall, and fast asleep. Here he remained undisturbed, not only because his refreshments were not tempting, but because we were given to understand that we could get a good breakfast twenty miles from Wheeling. At the appointed time the heavy old coach came up and we all climbed in. As our places were not designated on the ticket, we stowed ourselves in pell-mell, and I presume no one got the seat he wanted.

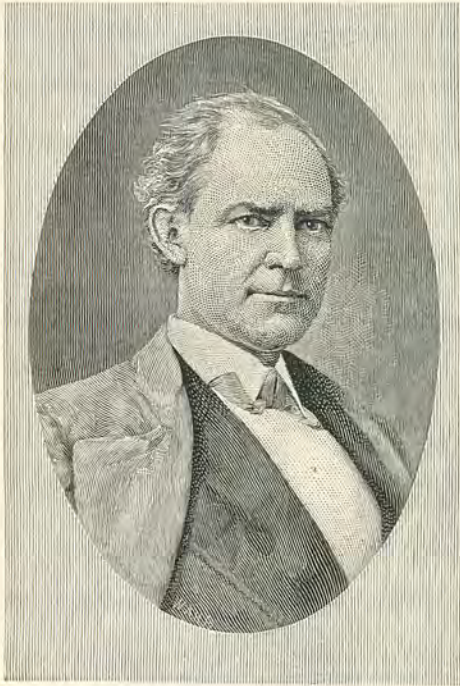
A short way from town there was a long hill up which the horses toiled, so this gave the inmates of the coach time to settle themselves down for a quiet nap. One snore after another announced the accomplishment of this feat, and in a few minutes at least six out of the nine passengers were oblivious of their miserable condition. I never before had so fine an opportunity to study the philosophy of snoring. A large, fat man opposite me had a short, angry snore; at one time he snored so loudly that he woke himself up, and he had the impudence to glare about at the company as though he hoped that they would not make that noise again. The old lady who was crushing me up in the corner snored deeply and



JAMES W. WALLACK, JR.
(FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY GURNEY.)

¹ Unless otherwise stated, the pictures in this article are from the collection of Thomas J. McKee.

contentedly. Some one off in a dark corner, whom I could not see, had a genial way of joining in, as though he snored merely to oblige the passengers; but the grand, original musician of the party sat opposite me. I never heard anything approaching him, either for quality or for compass. It was a back-action snore that began in a bold *agitato* movement, suddenly brought up with a jerk, and terminated in a low whistle. As the coach steadily moved up



JOHN E. OWENS.
(FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BACHRACH.)

the hill the band was in full play. The summit gained, there was a sharp crack of the whip, the horses started, and as everybody was jerked violently backward, the snoring gave place to oaths and pshawes and jolting about. As soon, however, as we got used to this sensation, the chorus began again; and as I was quite overcome and tired, I joined in until the coach came to a full stop at the stable where the horses were to be changed. The sun now rose, and came in at all sorts of places, waking and blinding everybody. What a discontented and unhappy lot we were! and how we all hated one another!

Breakfast at last! Ah, hot coffee, ham and eggs, and buckwheat cakes! The meal was not half over before we were a band of brothers. We could not do enough for one another, and all was harmony and peace. Of course under these conditions we became more familiar, and one vied with another in making the time pass agreeably.

Two gentlemen pitted themselves against each other in telling funny stories. Their talents and qualities in this respect differed very widely; one invariably began his anecdotes by telling the joke first and then relating the story, whereas the other told his tale in a capital way until he came to the point, and that he never could remember. The fat man sang a sentimental song about "My Mother, Oh, my Mother." His voice was not bad if he had only kept in one key, but his natural independence set all such trifles at defiance, and in his most extravagant wanderings he would look about with an expression of countenance which clearly admonished us not to give him any advice in the matter.

Of course I was expected to contribute my share of amusement, particularly as it leaked out that I was a young actor; in fact, I should have been offended if they had not pressed me. I sang a comic song about "The Good Old Days of Adam and Eve," the passengers liberally joining in the chorus. I followed this up with some bad imitations of Forrest and Booth. These seemed to give great satisfaction, the old lady exclaiming that the imitations were wonderful; but as it afterwards turned out that she had never seen the originals, her criticism must be received with some caution. The day rolled slowly away, and as the darkness came on a mountain storm of snow and driving wind enveloped us. As we ascended the mountain the cold became intense.

It was rather late in the night when we arrived at the supper station, as in consequence of the slippery state of the roads we were fully three hours behind time; but the cheerful look of the dining-room with its huge blazing fire of logs repaid us for all the suffering we had endured. We found that a large pile of bricks was being heated for us in front of the fireplace: these comforting articles were intended for our feet in the coach, and nothing, not even the supper, could have been more welcome.

The horses changed and the passengers aboard, we were again ready for our journey—more perilous now than ever, for, as we reached the summit of the mountain, the storm increased in its fury. At times we thought the stage would blow over; the icy roads caused the horses to slip, and several times the leaders went down. It was a night to be remembered. A little after daylight we rolled into the town of Cumberland, the terminus of the stage line and the beginning of the railroad. Shivering and benumbed with cold, we alighted and sought the hotel for warmth and shelter. The driver of the coach was frozen stiff and had to be assisted down from the box. Another hour on the road would have been fatal to him.

Twenty-four hours of suffering and peril took

JOHN E. OWENS AS "SOLON SHINGLE."¹

us from Wheeling to Cumberland—a journey now made in six, with a comfortable bed to lie on and a warm sleeping-car for shelter.

MY FRIEND THE SCENE PAINTER.

A REUNION with my brother was always delightful. We took the greatest pleasure in each other's society, and he seemed never tired of making any sacrifices for my advancement, and, while we were both acting at the Arch, would often persuade Mr. Burton to cast me for parts far beyond my reach.

At the end of the season Burke joined the Bowery Theater in New York, and I was installed in his place at the Arch. I was destined to meet in this theater one of my oldest and dearest friends, Tom Glessing. (Dear Tom, as I write your name how my thoughts run back to the olden time—not that we were happier then in each other's friendship, for it is a great comfort to reflect that throughout the many years we knew each other our affection never weakened.)

Tom was the scenic artist of the Arch street Theater, and noted for great rapidity in the

execution of his work. The same generous nature that prompted him to lavish all he had upon his friends rendered him equally prodigal in the use of paint; he wasted more than he used, and bespattered everything and everybody, himself included. Such was the generosity of his double-pound brush, that it scattered benevolence in all directions, and woe betide his dearest friend if ever he came within the circumference of its bounty. His was the loudest and the heartiest laugh I ever heard. Nor had he any control over it, and often during the quiet scene of some play that was in preparation his boisterous roar of merriment would burst forth from the paint room and, echoing through the theater, upset the serious business of the play. At such times the stage-manager would have to assert his authority, and demand of Glessing that he should stop that "dreadful roar" in order that the rehearsal might go on. If he had a fault it was that he was a trifle mischievous, and his enjoyment of a practical joke, played on any of

¹ From an article by Brander Matthews, entitled "The American on the Stage," in this magazine for July, 1879.

his companions, was delightful to behold: when he tried to tell of it he would laugh so immoderately that one could never understand half he said. Fortunately, none of his pranks resulted seriously, except sometimes to himself; and when recounting some of the mishaps that had befallen him, in consequence of indulging too freely in his sport, he seemed to enjoy his own discomfiture quite as much as that of the other party. Practical jokers, like physicians, seldom take their own prescriptions with pleasure; but Tom was an exception, and would even delight in being the victim of the game.

I recall the first time we met in the paint room: he was hard at work, splashing in a turbulent ocean with angry billows breaking upon the rocks. The storm was very severe, and the artist must have had a narrow escape, for he was so bespattered with spray that he seemed to have been battling with the breakers.

We were friends from the first moment. Sincere attachments usually begin at the beginning. He had but one sorrow—it was a domestic one—and he bore it nobly, never uttering a word against those who had caused his unhappiness. Years afterwards he married again, and so happily that it repaid him for the trouble he had passed through in his youth. Gaiety became contagious in his presence, and cheerfulness followed in his wake. He dreaded to look upon the serious side of life, for his nature was so sympathetic that he suffered the pangs of others, and at the mere recital of human grief his eyes would fill with tears. He was fond of acting, and could n't act a bit, poor fellow; but it was delicious to hear him recount his failures.

Mr. Burton had married Tom's sister, and he and Glessing traveled together through the South on one of the comedian's starring trips. In Natchez, Mississippi, the manager offered to give Tom a benefit if he could prevail upon Mr. Burton to play for him. This was arranged, and for two days he practiced the speech he intended to deliver in front of the curtain, as a tribute of gratitude to a generous public. He had written it out, and had sat up all the previous night to commit it to memory. It began, "Being totally unprepared for the honor you have done me." After rehearsal he walked out to the edge of the town, so that he could practice it in the open air, where he could elevate his voice without disturbing the citizens. On his way towards the woods he met a drunken Indian, who was staggering from side to side in the road, and flourishing an empty whisky-bottle at the white man in general and Glessing in particular. When any one is anxious to avoid a drunken man, by some strange fascination the intoxicated person invariably makes directly for him; you

may look the other way, or pretend to be unconscious of his existence, but it's of no use: he will introduce himself. The Indian was no exception; for though poor Tom, who was frightened to death, whistled a lively tune and looked up at the tops of the trees, the gentle savage would not be avoided.

"Hey! you white man, look me too. Me good Indian, good Indian. Yes, ah?" said the red man.

To which Tom assented at once, most emphatically: "Certainly, you are a splendid Injun; you're as good—I may say you are the best Injun I ever saw."

"You think me drunk, eh?"

"Drunk!" said Tom. "No. Let me hear any one dare to say you're drunk, and I'll kill him. Give me that bottle and I'll kill him with that."

"No; me *am* drunk," said the savage, glaring fiercely at Tom.

"You may be a little drunk, but not much—just enough, eh?" said Tom, desirous of agreeing to anything under the circumstances. The Indian became sullen and moody, as if brooding on the wrongs that the white man had inflicted on his ancestors, when it suddenly occurred to Tom that the United States Government, when the Indians got troublesome, always softened their anger by the bestowal of costly presents; so, offering a dollar to the chief, Tom bade him return to his wigwam and take some whisky home to his squaw and papoose. The offering was accepted, and had the desired effect. After two or three affectionate embraces they parted, and Tom got away in the opposite direction.

Finding himself once more alone, and in a secluded spot, he began to go through his speech. He tried various methods, first the cheerful; and, stepping forward with bright, jaunty manner, he raised his voice in a high key: "Ladies and gentlemen, being totally unprepared for this honor." On second thought, it appeared to him that his manner was a little too free and undignified, so he now assumed the grave and thoughtful. Placing one hand in his breast, and pulling his hair over his eyes, to give him a poetic and dreamy air, he paced slowly forward, and in a solemn, deep voice began again: "Ladies and gentlemen, being totally unprepared." Just at this point he raised his eyes and observed the astonished heads of two farmers peering over the rails of a worm fence. He immediately gathered up his hat and manuscripts and started for the town at a brisk pace; but remembering that the "good Injun" might be in ambush awaiting his return, he was forced to skirt the town for miles before he reached his hotel.

He would go on by the hour and tell such



WILLIAM E. BURTON AS "DOCTOR OLLAPOD." (FROM THE PAINTING BY INMAN, AFTER AN ENGRAVING BY SARTAIN.)

stories, and was always the most pleased when he was the hero of them and placed in some absurd position.

About this time I was haunted by a professional borrower. Just eighteen, and in the receipt of what was considered in those days a fair salary, I was a shining mark for his skill, though I was such easy game that I think he held me in slight contempt. But, for all this, he was crafty enough to impress me with the simplicity of his nature, and what a toy and plaything he had been for fortune's sport! He was a dreadfully bad actor on the stage, but a star of the first magnitude in private life; so much so that for many weeks he tortured and defrauded me with the ease and confidence of a master.

Conventional beggars are as conventional as any other professionals. That time-honored custom of assuming a nervous and uncertain manner, as if this was the first time they were placed in such a position, is a favorite attitude with them; while in reality they are cool and collected. My tormentor was an expert, and his costume quite a study for an amateur in the business. Although his ample

shoes were full of gaping wounds, they shone with a high polish that any man might feel proud of; and if his tall hat was a trifle weak, it had a gloomy, ruined-tower look that won him respect from strangers; and his clothes were of a shabby black, just "sicklied o'er with the pale cast" of time. Sometimes he would meet me with a sad, sweet smile, clasping my hand warmly, and regarding me as if I was the one ray of light that illumined his gloomy path. I believe he once said these very words; at all events he looked them, and at times I really thought I was. The first thing a sly old rascal like this does is to study the weak points of his victims; and he knew mine better than I did. He had a large supply of tears that he could turn on at will, and after getting under a full headway of grief he would revolve slowly round and dry his eyes with his back to me. I used to imagine that he did this so that I might not observe him weep; but since then I have thought differently of it.

He knew perfectly well when salary day came, and would waylay me at the stage door. On these occasions he would assume a surprised and startled look, as if we had met

quite by accident; and then he would exclaim, in a half-retrospective tone, "Dear me! dear me! it must be nearly a week since we last met." It was just a week, to the minute, and he knew it, the villain! At such times Tom Glessing would fairly revel in my discomfort. If he saw that my tormentor had buttonholed me on the corner, he would delight in passing close to us with an "Ah, how are you? At it again, eh?" And on he would go, fairly holding his sides with laughter, while my "corkscrew," as Glessing used to call him, was drawing the dollar notes out of my pocket, one by one. The most provoking thing about the fellow was the air of patronage he assumed when negotiating a loan: in our early transactions he used to make me feel that he was doing me an immense favor by levying these little drafts on my slender income. He would



WILLIAM E. BURTON AS "CAPTAIN CUTTLE."
(FROM A DAGUERRETYPE BY MEADE BROTHERS, AFTER A
LITHOGRAPH BY SARONY & MAJOR.)

begin by saying that if it were not for the regard he had formerly felt for my father he would not demean himself by sinking so low. I put up with this for some time, not out of any charity, for I had gradually lost all respect or pity for him, but from a kind of fear. He had an overawing and at the same time despair-

ing look that quite terrified me, and as lately he had hinted that the time was drawing near when he thought of trying his luck in the Delaware, I really feared he might commit suicide.

I can hardly describe what I suffered from the persecutions of this man, and it was nothing but a sense of shame at being the dupe of such a low fellow that determined me to break my bondage and turn from him. When he saw that I made a bold stand against him he became abusive; finding that this did not have the desired effect he lapsed into the dismal, whining and mourning over his crushed feelings, and lamenting his personal degradation. But I had discovered his cloven foot, and it was too late for him to attempt further imposture.

Such men are to be found in all grades of life, and they are usually adroit and cunning fellows, attacking their victims right and left, and using just the sort of weapons that are the most difficult to parry. They lie in ambush for the innocent traveler, and suddenly pounce upon him with a well-told tale, so got by rote, and so often rehearsed, that they act the part of injured innocence to the life. If the victim be timid he is lost, for they recognize his nervousness at once, and browbeat him out of his benevolence.

This vile weed—the borrower—grows and luxuriates in all the capitals of States and countries. The ever-changing soil of fresh visitation seems well adapted to nourish it. Sometimes women indulge in this practice, but not often; you are at least safer with them than with the men, particularly if they are old. A feeble old mendicant generally uses her collection for some purpose that gives her comfort at least. Coal, tea, and warm worsted stockings are necessary, and they must and should have them; but the man has many avenues through which he can filter your bounty—the gaming-table, the bar-room, and worse.

WILLIAM E. BURTON.

If Mr. Burton was not at this time a fixed star, he was certainly a managerial planet of the first magnitude, and in this position was naturally surrounded by a number of small satellites that basked in the moonshine of his affection. These lesser lights seemed to gyrate in eccentric orbits, generally going out of their way to carry tales to their superior.

Nothing is more distressing to the members of a stock company than to have spies set upon them who eavesdrop and report every little trifle to the manager. It is natural that the occupants of the dressing-room, and even of the greenroom, when the manager is not present, should now and then indulge in the

harmless amusement of criticizing and even censuring the policy of the theater; it serves to pass away the time between long waits, and, like *Doctor Ollapod's* small dose of magnesia, does "neither harm nor good."

The tale-bearing element in Mr. Burton's theater was fully organized under the generalship of one of the most ingenious informers that I have ever met with. If I do not speak affectionately of this gentleman, it is because I was at that time smarting under the effects of one of his secret-service reports to the Star-chamber, to which apartment I had been summoned on a charge of "contemplated desertion." It seems that I had been incautiously bragging among my comrades in the dressing-room of a large offer I had received to leave the Arch and join Mr. Killmist at his theater in Washington, stating that I was shortly going to send in my resignation to Mr. Burton. I had also been abusing the management, both criticizing and condemning its short-sighted policy; and though there was no stated reward offered for the exposure of such offenses, the informer was anxious to get me out of the theater, looking for his compensation in being cast for some of the good parts that were already in my possession.

I was ushered into the manager's office by the call-boy, and stood there like a prisoner ready to be sentenced to the rack for daring to express my opinion of the "powers that be." Mr. Burton sat in state at the farther end of a long table, supported on each side by his stage-manager and the prompter; this august tribunal frowned on me with a most discharging countenance as I stood before it. The scene as I look back at it seems comical enough, but just at that time it was a serious matter for me, as my prospective engagement was not positively settled, and under the most favorable circumstances could not be entered upon short of two months, and a dismissal just at that time would have been financially inconvenient. The accusation of a "contemplated desertion" being made, I demanded the name of the informer. This being withheld, I declined to make any answer to the charge. Those who remember Mr. Burton's face will recall its wonderfully comical expression, even when he was serious; but when he assumed a look of injured innocence the effect was irresistible. I did not dare laugh then, but I do enjoy it now when I think of it. The examination proceeded, and on the first question being again put I acknowledged the fact point-blank, stating also that being engaged for no stated length of time I intended to give the customary notice and to resign.



CHARLES BURKE.
(FROM A PAINTING IN POSSESSION OF THE AUTHOR.)

The manager demanded to know on what grounds I presumed to take such a step without first consulting him. I told him that I had been offered double the salary I was then receiving. Upon his asking who made me worth "double the salary," I replied that I was quite willing to admit that he did, and proposed that he should give it to me. At this rather impertinent remark he waxed wroth, and said I was not worth it, and never would be worth it, but that I had been insubordinate and disloyal to him, and that he should take legal steps to prevent my appearing at any other theater if I left him.

There is no doubt that Mr. Burton thought that his denunciation and threats of an action would crush me, but he knew little of human nature, for I now went up at least one hundred per cent. in my own estimation. The very thought of being threatened with a lawsuit made me feel at least an inch taller. I, who up to the present time had thought myself of small consequence, threatened with an action for breach of contract! It was delightful; and I have no doubt that I drew myself up with much dignity as I informed him that he could pursue whatever course he pleased in the matter—swaggering out of the room with the defiant air of a "heavy villain."

Of course quite a little knot of actors were waiting at the back door to hear the result of the trial and learn the verdict of the judge. When I informed them with a lofty pride that I presumed the affair would end in a lawsuit, they were amazed. If they had never envied me before, they certainly did now. It was not



MR. C. BURKE. AMERICAN COMEDIAN.

in Comedy, Drama, Farce & Burlesque.

(FROM A LITHOGRAPH BY J. L. MAGEE.)

a hanging matter, and the most serious result could not go beyond "damages for the plaintiff"; and what actor of my position in those days could ever have afforded to pay damages? We might have dreaded a long vacation in the summer, or quaked at the rebuke of a dramatic critic, but the law! So far as damages were concerned, we defied it! The case, however, never came to trial; for about a week after this the Washington theater was destroyed by fire, and I was only too glad to remain where I was without double the salary.

As an actor of the old broad farce-comedy Mr. Burton certainly had no equal in his day, and his dramatic pictures of the characters of Dickens would have amazed the author if he had been so fortunate as to see them. *Captain Cuttle* and *Micawber* were his greatest achievements; his face was a huge map on which was

written every emotion that he felt; there was no mistaking the meaning of each expression. His entrance as *Van Dunder*, in the drama of "The Dutch Governor; or, 'T would Puzzle a Conjurer," was a comic picture so full of genius that it stamped itself indelibly on the mind, an effect never to be forgotten. The great stupid face was a blank. The heavy cheeks hung down stolidly on each side of a half-opened mouth; the large, expressionless eyes seemed to look hopelessly for some gleam of intelligence. There he stood the incarnation of pompous ignorance, with an open letter in his hand. The audience swayed with laughter; for, though he had not said a word, they knew that he had just received an important state document and could not read it.

As a manager he achieved much success, but met with some disastrous failures, not seem-

ing to understand the difference between competition and opposition. The first deals with our own affairs, and, if pursued with honesty and industry, invariably leads to good results. The latter meddles with the business of other people, and generally brings about the downfall of the opposer. Burton was always temperate, and very industrious; he had literary talent, too, as his contributions to "The Gentleman's Magazine" (which he edited) will attest. Edgar A. Poe was also a contributor to this periodical, but he and Burton were always "at daggers drawn"; they had a paper war for many months in Philadelphia, and splashed their angry ink at each other much to the amusement of the public. Poe lost his temper, and Burton, seeing his advantage, fired off his humorous artillery, so that the comedian got the better of the poet. If people could only realize how little the public care for the private quarrels of individuals — except to laugh at them — they would hesitate before entering upon a newspaper controversy.

I have often thought that Mr. Burton must have had Irish blood in him, for he was continually spreading the tail of his coat for a fight—I mean an intellectual fight, as physically he was not pugnacious. Quarrelsome persons who do not indulge in pugilistic encounters are fond of lawsuits; it is only another way of having it out, and Burton must have spent a fortune in fees. His humor on the witness-stand was quite equal to that of Sam Weller. On one occasion, while the actor was going through bankruptcy, an eminent lawyer in Philadelphia thought he detected a desire on Burton's part to conceal some facts relative to a large sum of money that he had made during the production of the "Naiad Queen." Rising with great dignity, and glaring fiercely at Burton, he demanded, "What became of that money, sir?" The comedian looked him straight in the face; then rising in imitation of an attorney, he replied, "The lawyers got it."

AN EFFORT IN GREEK TRAGEDY.

DURING the first season that I acted at the Arch great preparations were made for the production of a Greek tragedy, the "Antigone" of Sophocles. In a theater, as we have seen, there are apt to be two or three discordant spirits that criticize and condemn the course of the management, and I presume that most public institutions are honored by small private bands of conspirators; so that on being confronted by this ancient drama in the greenroom we naturally shrugged our shoulders and wondered what Mr. Burton meant by it. This same sublime tragedy of "Antigone" had been freely translated and acted in Dublin at the Theater

Royal some forty years before. The audience was quite bewildered by this performance, and at the close of the play called for the author; whether to applaud or to chastise him does not appear. The manager came forward to apologize for the absence of Sophocles, but promised faithfully to produce him if ever he allowed one of his plays to be acted under his management again. Notwithstanding that this Greek tragedy had always failed to attract public attention, our manager determined to revive this previously unfortunate drama. It has been said that Mr. Burton was classically educated; naturally he felt justly proud of his scholastic attainments, and having a desire to display them he selected the Greek tragedy as just the thing for its accomplishment. Apart from his undoubted claim to erudition, he had that wonderful stage tact and executive ability that thoroughly qualified him for the management of a theater; so that whether he had drunk deep at the "Pierian spring" or not, he certainly had quenched his thirst at the public fountains, and refreshed himself at all those little intellectual brooks that flow along the roadside of an actor's life. This kind of knowledge may be superficial, but it is most useful to an actor-manager.

But to return to "Antigone." During its rehearsals a marked change came over our manager. In arranging the lighter and more colloquial plays he was accustomed to be cheerful, and rather inclined to intersperse his directions with anecdote; but now he assumed a dignity strangely at variance with his usual manner, and we, the company, who had been in the habit of associating his comical figure with *Paul Pry* and *Jem Baggs*, could scarcely be expected at this short notice to receive this change of demeanor with the same solemnity with which it was given. Of course we did not dare exhibit our irreverent feelings, for there is no doubt that had Mr. Burton detected the slightest attempt to guy either him or his new venture an immediate discharge of the offending party would surely have followed. Tom Glessing, myself, and several minor members of the company had got hold of some Greek quotations and would slyly salute one another in the classic tongue when we met at the theater in the morning, always, however, when the manager's back was turned; for if in his presence we had dared talk Greek we should certainly have walked Spanish.

I was cast for one of the unhappy Chorus,— I think there were four of us,— and when the curtain rose a more wretched looking quartet was never seen. I think the costume we wore was unfortunate, and added neither to our comfort nor to our personal appearance. We were crowned with four evergreen laurel wreaths, which bloomed unsteadily upon our heads, and

were done up to the chin in white Grecian togas. Mr. and Mrs. James W. Wallack, Jr., were in the cast, and for their fine declamation and classic tableaux were much applauded; but when we as the Chorus attempted to explain what it all meant the effect upon the audience was dreadful.

The failure of this sublime tragedy caused Mr. Burton to be seriously out of pocket, as well as out of temper. He blamed first the public, then the unfortunate Chorus, and, finally, himself.

In domestic matters I had good opportunity of forming my judgment of Mr. Burton, as we were for some time quite intimate, and I often visited him at his house. The affection he lavished upon his children was almost feminine in its warmth and gentleness. He had three lovely little tyrants, who managed him quite as well as he managed his theater. They were extremely fond of their father, and he delighted to walk with his lovely daughters and show them off. I have often met the group strolling hand in hand in Franklin Square on a fine Sunday morning in the spring, the pretty little girls, tastefully dressed, tossing their heads and shaking their curls in childish vanity with their portly parent looking proudly down upon them.

The Arch, during the time I was under Mr. Burton's management, had met with many of those vicissitudes that were so prevalent in theatrical ventures when the production of the "Glance at New York" struck the popular taste of that curious and uncertain element known as the "public." The "public" means in reality nobody; it is an elastic term; we are indeed prone to call every one the public but ourselves. We wonder that the public can support this or that trashy entertainment, forgetting that we have been to see it once, and perhaps twice. "Life in London," upon which the "Glance at New York" was founded, ran for two seasons in London, when both lords and ladies went in crowds to witness the vulgarities of low life; the knocking down of watchmen, the upsetting of an old woman's apple stall, and the dancing of *Dusty Bob* and *African Sal* occupied the attention and delighted the audience of seventy years ago.

Years before, Monk Lewis's melodrama of "Castle Spectre," a ghostly and ghastly piece of business, drew crowds of people, to the exclusion of the works of Shakspeare, Sheridan, and Goldsmith. Nondescript actors, of the ranting and fantastic school, were in demand, while the Kembles and a host of great comedians were playing to empty benches. Likewise, we find Colley Cibber complaining that in his day the legitimate drama had fallen so low in the estimation of the public that he and his company of fine comedians were put aside and made sub-

servient to the Italian singers and French ballet dancers that then flooded England.

We must not always condemn the public of the present day for these curious characteristics which seem to have come to them by a legitimate inheritance. Besides, there may be a necessity for this seeming inconstancy, and it is quite possible that the mind requires now and then a change of diet as the stomach does; the palate being satiated with rich and delicate viands often craves a little coarser food, if only to assist digestion.

But to return to Mr. Burton and his new venture. The great success of the "Glance at New York" caused him to look in that direction himself. A full treasury had excited his ambition, so he proceeded to New York and purchased Palmo's Opera House for the purpose of opening it as a comedy theater. He was an early riser, very industrious, and extremely temperate. These qualities, combined with energy and an inordinate ambition to lead, made him a formidable adversary for Mr. Mitchell, who was then in the very height of prosperity at the Olympic. This latter gentleman, like Mr. Burton, was a comedian and a manager of rare ability; he had surrounded himself with an excellent company of actors and actresses, who were so quaint and so well chosen that the dramatic treats given at the "Little Olympic" became the rage and talk of the town. Mr. Burton saw this, and his desire for a dramatic battle urged him to oppose Mitchell, and this he did with much force and judgment, bringing to bear the heaviest theatrical artillery that New York had ever seen. When I say that these great guns consisted of William Rufus Blake, Henry Placide, W. E. Burton, John Brougham, Lester Wallack, Oliver Raymond, Lysander Thompson, and Charles Burke, I think that those who remember these extraordinary actors will fully agree with the statement. I do not think that Lysander Thompson and Charles Burke were with this company at this time, but they joined it afterwards. In the midst of this conflict between the managers Mr. Mitchell was stricken with paralysis; this rendered the contest still more unequal, and the "Little Olympic" surrendered.

To give some idea of the excellence with which Mr. Burton's plays were cast, I may mention that I saw Shakspeare's comedy of "Twelfth Night" produced at his theater with Blake as *Malvolio*, Placide as the *Fool*, Burton as *Sir Toby Belch*, Lester Wallack as *Sir Andrew Aguecheek*, and Miss Weston as *Viola*. I do not believe that this play has been acted with greater skill since Shakspeare wrote it, although there is no denying that, with regard to scenic effects, costumes, ingenious stage-man-

agement, and elaborate ornamentation, the Shakspearean productions of our own time far exceed those of the earlier revivals.

Burton's ambition to succeed in the various tasks he had set himself was strongly fortified by his quick apprehension and great versatility. He was at the same time managing the Arch street Theater in Philadelphia, the Chambers street Theater in New York, acting nightly, and studying new characters as fast as they came out. In addition to these professional duties, he was building a country residence at Glen Cove, writing stories for the magazines, and taking prizes at the horticultural shows for hot-house grapes and flowers. If his success and happiness were marred, it can only be attributed to his too great ambition; this trait led him to oppose everything that came within range, and at times he would even go out of his way to search for a new antagonist. In a fit of excitement, brought on by some domestic shock, he was suddenly stricken down, and never rose again. During his last hours he was lovingly attended by his daughters, who had grown up to womanhood, and I am told by one who was present that the parting with them touched the hearts of all who saw it.

CHARLES BURKE.

It was a rare treat to see Burton and Burke in the same play: they acted into each other's hands with the most perfect skill; there was no striving to outdo each other. If the scene required that for a time one should be prominent, the other would become the background of the picture, and so strengthen the general effect; by this method they produced a perfectly harmonious work. For instance, Burke would remain in repose, attentively listening while Burton was delivering some humorous speech. This would naturally act as a spell upon the audience, who became by this treatment absorbed in what Burton was saying, and having got the full force of the effect they would burst forth in laughter or applause; then, by one accord, they became silent, intently listening to Burke's reply, which Burton was now strengthening by the same repose and attention. I have never seen this element in acting carried so far, or accomplished with such admirable results, not even upon the French

stage, and I am convinced that the importance of it in reaching the best dramatic effects cannot be too highly estimated.

It was this characteristic feature of the acting of these two great artists that always set the audience wondering which was the better. The truth is there was no "better" about the matter. They were not horses running a race, but artists painting a picture; it was not in their minds which should win, but how they could, by their joint efforts, produce a perfect work. I profited very much by these early lessons.

Dying at the age of thirty-two, it is wonderful that Charles Burke left such an enduring reputation as an actor. I do not mean that his fame lives with the general public, but his professional brethren accorded to him the rarest histrionic genius. I have sometimes heard comparisons made between Burton and Burke, but they were so widely different in their natures and their artistic methods that no reasonable parallel could be drawn. Burton colored highly, and laid on the effects with a liberal brush, while Burke was subtle, incisive, and refined. Burton's features were strong and heavy, and his figure was portly and ungainly. Burke was lithe and graceful. His face was plain, but wonderfully expressive. The versatility of this rare actor was remarkable, his pathos being quite as striking a feature as his comedy. He had an eye and face that told their meaning before he spoke, a voice that seemed to come from the heart itself, penetrating, but melodious. He sang with great taste, and was a perfect musician. His dramatic effects sprung more from intuition than from study; and, as was said of Barton Booth, "the blind might have seen him in his voice, and the deaf have heard him in his visage."

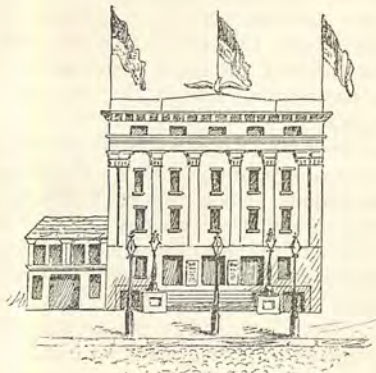
Although only a half-brother, he seemed like a father to me, and there was a deep and strange affection between us. As I look back I can recall many social and professional sacrifices that he made for me, and my love for him was so great that if we were absent from each other for any length of time my heart would beat with delight at his approach. It is scarcely fair to intrude upon the reader one's domestic affections, but I am irresistibly impelled to write these words. And so they must stand.

Joseph Jefferson.

(To be continued.)



THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JOSEPH JEFFERSON.¹



OLD CHATHAM STREET (NATIONAL) THEATER, NEW YORK.

FROM STOCK TO STAR.



HERE is nothing a young actor enjoys more than itinerant theatricals. It is so grand to break loose from a big tyrant manager in the city and become a small tyrant manager in the country.

I was one of those juvenile theatrical anarchists who, after having stirred up a rebellion in the greenroom, would shout to my comrades, "Let's all be equal, and I'll be king!" I had annual attacks of this revolutionary fever, and having saved up all my salary during the regular winter season would lose it patriotically in the summer. It was on the eve of one of these excursions that I received my first telegram. It came in the form of a despatch from my partner, who was in Baltimore, I being in Cumberland. I could not believe it, but there it was; a reply to my letter of the day previous, which he could have received only an hour before the message was delivered to me. I called at the office to inquire if it were really so: yes, there could be no doubt about it. A small group of people had collected about the operator, some having received messages of congratulations at the establishment of the line, others sending them away to the same effect, and all wearing a look of surprise and incredulity. We began showing one another our despatches, and, looking with respectful awe at the mysterious little machine that was ticking away as if worked by some invisible spirit of the other world, wondered what they would do next. The whole town

was up in arms about it. People were running to and fro with little messages in their hands, and stopping one another in the street to talk and wonder over the new event. If I were now to receive a message from the planet Mars offering me a star engagement, I could not be more astonished than I was on that day.

It is said that the man who invented spectacles was imprisoned for daring to improve on the eyesight that God had given us; and that these comforts of old age were called the "Devil's eyes." So, in the height of this telegraphic novelty, did many wise old Solons shake their solemn heads, declaring that the wrath of God would fall on those who dared to take a liberty with lightning. The people with universal consent made the occasion a holiday, and as this was our opening, in the evening the hall was full.

We should have considered it a good house if the receipts had reached forty dollars; but when I made up the account I found myself in possession of more than a hundred dollars, all in silver. Loaded down with this weighty fortune I started after the play for the hotel, being supported on either side by the walking gentleman and the property man, utilizing them as a body-guard lest I should be waylaid and robbed. In this flush of fortune, and as a requital for their valuable services, I stood treat to my escort and dismissed them for the night. My room was in the third story, so there was no fear of burglars from without; but as I fancied that every robber in town must by this time be in full possession of all the information concerning my late acquisition, I ascended the stairs with a solitary tallow candle and a nervous step. The long, dark entry seemed so very favorable for an attack that at each landing I imagined that I should be stabbed in the back. I thought it therefore just as well to hum a tune in a careless way, as though I was quite used to this sort of thing, and thoroughly prepared for any emergency. Sauntering slowly along to the tune of "My Pretty Jane," I reached the door of my room, which I entered as quickly as possible, locking it at once. The next thing was to dispose of my treasure, which I did by placing it between the mattresses of the bed. I spread it all out so as to make it look a good deal when my partner arrived. One always takes delight in showing his partner how well

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things have gone during his absence; it is so delightful to make him feel that he is not of half so much importance as he thinks he is. Having placed the chair under the knob of the door, I could see no chance for a successful burglary unless the operator came down the chimney. I confess this rather worried me, as I felt that in the event of his making a descent upon me by the flue I could not possibly keep him out with the blower. I went to bed with the idea that I should be found murdered in the morning, and dropped off to sleep dreaming of Jack Sheppard.

At daylight I was startled by a loud knock at the door. "Who's there?" I said, still somewhat alarmed. "Sefton," said the voice of my partner. "Are you sure?" said I. "Of course I am," he replied. I opened the door and admitted him. "How was the house?" was the first question. I made no reply, but turned down the mattress and displayed the full receipts to his astonished gaze.

Now our managerial labors began in earnest. The town did not contain more than five hundred playgoers, so that we were obliged to change the performance nearly every night. After the play we would go out and, taking our property man with us as an assistant, put up our own bills. This we continued to do until at last our financial condition enabled us to afford the luxury of a bill-poster.

No one who has not passed through the actual experience of country management, combined with acting, can imagine the really hard work and anxiety of it—daily rehearsals, constant change of performance, and the continual study of new parts; but, for all this, there was a fascination about the life so powerful that I have known but few that have ever abandoned it for any other. It had a roving, joyous, gipsy kind of attraction in it that was irresistible. Who would not rather play a good part to a bad house than a bad part to a good house?—ay, even if he were the manager! Then just think of the eagerly looked-for criticism in the morning papers, of no consequence to the world at large, but of much importance to the actor: how anxious I used to be in the morning to see what the critic said, quickly scanning the article and hurriedly skipping over the praise of the other actors, so as to get to what they said about me. Then after breakfast, sauntering down to the drug-store where the reserved seats were for sale: not to look at the diagram to see how the seats were selling—certainly not, that would appear undignified; but just to inquire if there were any letters. These were the delights that always sweetened the poverty that went hand in hand with country acting. In the present instance we were in possession of a gold mine. We had

captured the town, having been the first to attack it.

It is seldom that partners in theatrical management agree. Wood and Warren, of Philadelphia, were never on very friendly terms, and Ludlow and Smith were in partnership for many years without exchanging a word except on business. How they managed it, or rather mismanaged it, I can't tell. Sefton and I were but human beings, and this sudden success had the same demoralizing effect on my partner and myself. He was obstinate, and so was I.

Dogberry says, "An two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind." Now as neither of us would consent to take this undignified seat, I sold Sefton my share of the animal and retired; he vaulted into the vacant saddle and rode his charger to death. About three months afterward I received a letter from him—business had been bad, and he was in great distress—urging me to play a week with him. I did so, partly to help my old partner, and partly to see my name in large letters. This was the first time I had ever enjoyed that felicity, and it had a most soothing influence upon me. My hotel was just opposite the hall, and when I arose in the morning and looked across the street I gazed delightedly upon my name in bold "Roman caps," though I was much annoyed at seeing the citizens pass by this important announcement without taking any notice of it; and the conduct of two strangers who met precisely in front of the theater and began an earnest conversation, without deigning to bestow a glance at the bill-board, was positively insulting.

I had to contend on my opening night with a local favorite in the shape of a rival comedian. This was no easy matter, for not only was he a clever actor, but a feeling had been engendered among his many friends that I had entered into a dark conspiracy with the manager to dethrone him. I had acted here the season before and was something of a favorite, so my reception was very cordial; but as soon as it ceased I was greeted with a storm of hisses. This sudden and unlooked-for demonstration took the audience and myself by surprise, and of course checked the progress of the play. In the midst of this confusion my rival was loudly called for by his friends, at which the curtains of a private box were violently shaken, then jerked apart, and in their opening appeared the form of my rival. He stepped unsteadily upon the stage; one side of his trousers had crawled up his leg, revealing an untied shoe, the brim of his hat was slightly bent, and he swayed from side to side with folded arms and disheveled hair. There was a mingled air of defiance and melancholy in his looks, plainly

showing that he was not only persecuted but intoxicated. The wild encouragement from his friends clearly proved that they were in the same condition, indicating that the entire party had partaken freely of "Dutch courage" in order to stimulate them for the fray. After a maudlin speech, which first amused and then bored the audience, he was led from the stage and the play proceeded.

Actors in sickness or distress are proverbially kind to one another, but little professional misunderstandings will take place now and then. Some overzealous defenders of our art have asserted, I think erroneously, that no true artist is jealous of another. This is going a little too far, and giving us credit for more virtue than we possess. Jealousy is unfortunately an inborn quality, entirely independent of art. If a man has this unfortunate passion he feels it whether he is a true artist or not. In this instance my rival was a good actor, but not too good to be jealous of me, and if our positions had been reversed the chances are that I would have been jealous of him.

FROM STAR TO STOCK.

It was during this, my first star engagement, that I received a telegram announcing the sad intelligence of my mother's death. I started at once for Philadelphia, but by some accident was detained on the road for two days, arriving too late to look upon her face. My brother, my sister, and myself passed a week together after the burial of my mother, and then separated, they returning to New York, whence they had been summoned, and I remaining in the city to look after an engagement.

On the corner of Ninth and Chestnut streets stood the Amphitheater. At this establishment in the winter season the circus used to amalgamate with a dramatic company and make a joint appearance in equestrian spectacles, which were produced under the stage management of Mr. Joseph Foster. This gentleman had studied in the best school of the highly colored melodrama—Astley's, on the Surrey side of London. He came to America as property man with Cook's company somewhere about 1836; in this position he continued for some years, ultimately joining the Amphitheater in Philadelphia. His industry, backed up by long experience, made him so valuable that he soon became stage-manager, and was holding this position when I called on him to apply for a situation as comedian. He had been prepared for the visit, having heard something to my advantage as an actor, but he was undoubtedly disappointed with me at first sight. As I entered the managerial sanctum, he lowered his bushy eyebrows

and scowled at me with anything but an engaging expression of face.

"Humph!" was all I could catch of his first greeting. Then, after a slight pause, he said, "Oh, you are the new young comedian, eh?"

"Yes, sir," I replied. "There is no doubt about my being young; but how much of a comedian I am remains to be seen."

"Humph; quite modest too. Modesty is a good thing if it is not carried too far," he said. "Humph; where have you been acting lately?"

I told him that I had just finished a starring engagement in Cumberland.

"Starring, oh! Then you are not so modest after all," he replied. "I suppose you have heard that my present comedian is a failure?"

I told him that the welcome news had reached me, and as I had also been informed that in consequence of this the gentleman was about to retire from the Amphitheater, I made bold to apply for the vacancy.

"Well," said Mr. Foster, "my funny man is certainly the most dismal piece of humanity I have ever met with. I engaged him on his face. I never saw such a comical outside belonging to such a serious inside. The man's 'mug' is as funny as Liston's—whom he resembles, too, very much; large, round eyes, fat chops, and a turned-up nose. I thought when I first saw him that, like the milkmaid, his face was his fortune; but no, as soon as he opens his mouth all the humor seems to vanish. But now about yourself. I suppose you know that our plays, such as 'Mazeppa,' 'Dick Turpin,' 'Timour the Tartar,' 'The Terror of the Road,' are not celebrated for good low comedy parts; the actor has a great deal of hard work to do. It is what I call physical comedy; and you are too light for that kind of business, I fancy."

I told him that I regretted this, for if he engaged me by the pound, my salary would perhaps be as light as myself.

"But you do not look like a comedian," said he to me. "You have a serious, melancholy expression; you look more like an undertaker."

This last remark was rather crushing, so I endeavored to put on a jovial, quizzical expression, and failed. In a short time we arranged terms—twenty dollars a week, with a third-clear benefit. The engagement being settled, he gave me a part to study for the next play. I acted all this season at the Amphitheater, and a curious experience it was. The low comedian of a melodramatic theater is generally used as a stop-gap, and his artistic efforts are confined to going on in "front scenes" and amusing the audience, if he can, by speaking some long, dry speech, supposed to be full of humor,

while the carpenters are hammering away behind and noisily arranging an elaborate set. Under these conditions it is very difficult to gain the confidence of an audience, or to distract their attention away from the painful fact that there is a hitch in the scenery. They seem to know that something has gone wrong, and decline to be consoled by a feeble comic song.

Upon the initial performance of the nautical drama of "Captain Kidd," Mr. Foster had given me a long, dismal ditty to sing, in order that I might divert the audience in case of an accident. It was privately understood between us that as soon as the scene was ready he would wave his hat at me from the wing as a sign that everything was right; then I was to finish my song and make my exit. The much-dreaded accident occurred, and I was deputed to go on and distract the audience, which I certainly did. The lines of the song ran thus:

My name is Captain Kidd,
As I sailed, as I sailed,
And wickedly I did, as I sailed, etc.

There were just twenty-five of these verses, equally humorous and grammatical. The audience bore them patiently for the first time, but when I looked towards the wing for a comforting wave of Foster's hat, to my horror he was not there; so I began again. It is said that republics will endure tyranny with more fortitude than empires, but it is possible that I had gone too far even for the forbearance of our free institutions, for many voices in the audience cried out: "No more! We can't stand that again." Other remarks were made too numerous and uncomplimentary to mention. I still tried to get a hearing "as I sailed"; but, with the hammering behind the scenes and the hooting in front, my efforts failed to make any impression, so I retired amidst the confusion.

Of all theatrical entertainments, the equestrian drama is perhaps the most absurd. The actor and the horse refuse to unite; there is nothing of the centaur about them. I have seen the tyrant *Timour the Tartar* stride about the stage tempestuously, inspiring the audience with the idea that nothing could daunt the imperious spirit within him, but as soon as he espied the prancing steed that was to bear him to victory his passion cooled, and with a lamb-like submission he would allow himself to be boosted up into the saddle, where he would sit unsteadily, looking the picture of misery.

Foster was a short, stout man, but extremely active, and as alert as a lynx. Nothing escaped his quick eye. If the house was crowded and the drama going well, he was the personification of good-nature. At such times he would stand with his legs wide apart, his hands clasped

behind him, his face beaming with smiles and his eyes fairly glistening with delight; but if the slightest hitch took place in the performance, he knew it in an instant. He would then jump as if he were shot, rush to the wing, shake his fist at the delinquent, and taking his high, black-silk hat off his head would trample it under his feet in frenzy.

The grand spectacular drama of "Mazeppa" was announced for the Easter holidays, and was produced with great splendor. Charles Foster, a son of the manager, was cast for the hero. He was a handsome, dashing young fellow, possessed of considerable dramatic talent, and, added to this, was one of the finest riders I have ever seen: his graceful figure and youthful appearance fitted him perfectly for the romantic lover of the *Princess*. The announcement that this drama was to be produced caused a slight commotion in the theater, for there was attached to the company an old melodramatic actor by the name of Cartlidge; he had been a leading man of Astley's Amphitheater in London during the days of the famous Ducrow, and was now seventy years of age. I met him at the greenroom door just as he came in to look at the cast. "I hear they are going to play 'Mazeppa,'" he said, with some agitation. "Is this true?" "Yes," I said; "there is the cast." He went over to the cast-case and looked at it in mute bewilderment, and then, as if he could not believe his eyes, took out his spectacles, wiped the glasses, put them on, and stood for a long time gazing in blank amazement at the cast. As he turned around I saw tears in his eyes. He walked slowly out of the greenroom, and, going into a dark corner of the stage, sat down despondently. I knew pretty well what was the matter with him, so I thought I would go up and comfort the old man, for he was usually cheerful, and it was sad to see him so dejected.

I sat down beside him and asked him what was the matter. He took out a large handkerchief, and, burying his face in it, began to sob. After he had recovered himself he said, "Foster has cast me for the Khan." Then turning on me with his eyes full of tears and a retrospective look in his face, he continued: "Young man, I was the original *Mazeppa* fifty years ago, and now I am cast for *Mazeppa's* father. Why should I not play *Mazeppa* still? I may be a little too old for it, but—" Here he broke down again, and as he sat there with his eyes and his spectacles both full of tears he looked more like *Mazeppa's* grandfather than like *Mazeppa*. The fact is, if he had been cast for the part he would have realized that the time had gone by for him to look or act it, and he would have declined: the self-inflicted blow would have fallen lightly on him; but to receive the

stroke from another hand was more than he could bear. It made him feel that he had outlived his usefulness, and brought before his mind the glowing days of his youth when he had been the idol of Astley's. The painful truth that he was getting old and was no longer wanted came upon him.

It is natural that the world should smile at the old and senile as they are pushed aside, but no deposed emperor feels the force of compulsory abdication more than the stage king who has outlived the liking of the people.

"St. George and the Dragon" was the grand final production of the season. I was not in the play, so I saw the first performance from the front of the theater. The opening act ends where the seven champions of Christendom assemble to have a conference, pledging themselves to stand by one another in any emergency. The glittering armor of the knights, and the prancing of the fiery steeds as the grooms led them on, stirred the audience to enthusiasm.

Young Foster was a picture as the gallant St. George of England. His manly form was encased in a rather vulnerable armor of pure spangles, and he shone like a sheet of silver. At a given cue he vaults into the saddle, and waving his bright sword and throwing back his fine, classic head, he shouts, "Up, knights, and away!" Now St. Denis of France, St. Patrick of Ireland, St. David of Wales, St. Andrew of Scotland, and one or two other knights mount their chargers and gallop away, following their leader, the gallant St. George, as the curtain falls upon the animated scene. It so happened that St. Denis of France and St. Andrew of Scotland had been cast to two actors who were not what would be called daring horsemen. All of the knights with the exception of these two mounted their horses and galloped off in the interest of Christendom with unmistakable ardor. But the steeds of St. Denis and St. Andrew had but little faith in their knights, and the knights seemed to have no faith in themselves. This timidity communicated itself from one to the other, and as the riders hopped about on one leg trying to mount, the horses kept going slowly round to avoid any further intimacy. The audience was roaring with laughter, and I knew by this time that Foster was standing on his hat, if not on his head. At last the knights made a powerful effort to "bestride their foaming steeds." St. Denis, being very tall, scrambled up, but overshoot the mark. "He o'erleaped his saddle," so that his head hung on one side and his heels on the other, while the horse kept going round with him in this dreadful position. At this juncture the curtain came down, cutting off the other knight, St. Andrew, and shutting

him outside of it and close to the footlights. Unfortunately in the excitement of mounting this gentleman had got the wrong foot in the stirrup, so that the gallant Scotchman found himself in pursuit of glory with his face towards the horse's tail. Finding that he would make but little progress towards Christendom in this position, he slid gently off behind, still clinging to the bridle, while the horse dragged the unlucky warrior across the front of the stage. The audience shouted as the animal pulled his rider along. The horse now changed his tactics, and standing upon his hind legs came slowly but surely towards St. Andrew, who scrambled for protection into the nearest private box. The horse, still on his hind legs, looked down on the orchestra as if meditating a descent upon the musicians, at which the entire band fled "for safety and for succor," some of them retreating under the stage, while the majority scattered among the audience. The curtain had to be raised and a groom sent on to take the poor frenzied horse in. There was now some anxiety to know what had become of St. Andrew. That gallant Highlander, seeing that the coast was clear, jumped out of the private box where he had been concealed behind the curtains, and, half denuded of his armor, rushed frantically across the stage and darted behind the curtain amid the unqualified approbation of the audience.

I was not twenty-one at this time, but being an old young man, and looking upon life perhaps more seriously than one should at my age, I bethought me that it was time to marry and settle down in life. My brother strongly objected to this; he believed that I was too young, and I believed that he was jealous. The first serious words we ever had were in relation to my prospective marriage, he insisting that my wife and I had not known each other long enough to form any estimate as to the strength of our attachment; but I was obstinate, and the wedding came off.

I wished this marriage to take place privately, well knowing that otherwise my friends of the company, from the leading man down, would be at the wedding in full force, not so much out of compliment, perhaps, as for the purpose of indulging in that passion for quizzing which seems to be so deeply planted in the histrionic breast. My betrothed desired that the ceremony should be solemnized in church, fearing that ill-luck would follow if it came off at any other place. I consented to this. Now I hate to be quizzed, and I think most people do; particularly those who indulge in the habit of quizzing others. Revolving in my mind, therefore, the best method of avoiding ridicule, I boldly told the company that I was to be married at church



JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH AS "SIR GILES OVERREACH."

(FROM A WATER-COLOR BY W. HEATH.)

a hero, and a public benefactor. To be successful, he must combine force of character and self-control with artistic taste and executive talent. He stands between the public and the actor, the actor and the author; he must judge them all, and unite them harmoniously. To contemplate the amount of skill and industry that is lavished on the splendid dramatic productions of to-day is appalling to a man who wishes to enjoy a good night's rest. If you have a passion for the dog, the rod, the gun, the yacht, or the country, don't think of entering into theatrical management. The eye of the master is absolutely imperative in the conduct of a theater, and only those succeed who give it their undivided attention.

But to return to the managerial partnership between Mr. Ellsler and myself. The relations between us were very pleasant, for as our lines of business were quite distinct, there was no professional jealousy. Besides this, our duties in the management differed widely; consequently we never clashed. He had full control of the front of the house, while I managed behind the curtain, and I think we enjoyed the fullest confidence in each other.

Our season in Macon was quite good, but in Savannah our fortunes had a reverse. From some unknown cause the business here was very bad. I say "from some unknown cause," for it is characteristic of the members of the theatrical profession to attribute their failures to anything or everything else but themselves. It is so disheartening to feel that we are responsible for the disaster. In mercantile affairs, if losses are incurred, the loser can console himself with the fact that it is the merchandise that is worthless; if an artist's picture be refused admittance to the gallery, it is his work that is disregarded; but if an actor fails, it is himself who is neglected. The mortification of a personal and a public slight is so hard to bear that he casts about for any excuse rather than lay the blame upon himself. This is unfortunate, for if we only had the courage to acknowledge that the fault lies within ourselves, we could more speedily set it right; but to go groping on in the dark, with the blind consolation that others are to blame, only retards our advancement.

As I had been married a year, and our first child had just been born, I was naturally beginning to feel the weight of a new responsibility.

A WANDERING STAR.

It has always been my habit, when anything important was to be thought over, to get off alone somewhere in the woods, or to lock myself up in a room, where I can turn the matter over quietly. I had left the theater after re-

hearsal and was walking along in search of some solitary place where I could ruminate.

Savannah is a lovely city at all times, but in April it is like fairy-land. The beautiful Southern houses of semi-tropical architecture are surrounded with live-oak and magnolia shade-trees, and the gardens are laden with flowers. The city was peaceful and quiet — too much so for a manager in distress. The air was redolent of orange blossoms and bad business. I was looking down one of the long, solitary avenues of trees for which this city is famous, when in the distance I espied the tall figure of a man walking leisurely towards me. His height was so enormous that I thought some optical illusion caused by the long vista through which I was looking had elongated the gentleman beyond his natural proportions. No; as he came nearer he seemed to get taller and taller; he was at least six feet six inches in height. He sauntered leisurely along with an elegant carriage and an aristocratic bearing, not assumed, but perfectly natural. I had never seen this man until now, but I imagined that I knew who he was, for if I was not mistaken in his height and appearance I had already heard of him. As we approached nearer, his ease and confident manner were almost impertinent. He had one hand in his pocket, and with the other slowly twirled a long, gold-headed cane. As we met, there was on his handsome face a self-sufficient smile, and he turned his large eyes from one side of the street to the other, with the air of a man who owned half of Savannah, and was contemplating the possibility of getting a mortgage on it with the ultimate view of purchasing the rest of the city. After we had passed I turned to look back, and found that he had done the same. We were both caught dead: there was no disguising it, so we approached each other.

"Pardon me," said I, "if I am mistaken, but are you not Sir William Don?"

"Quite right, old chap. How are you?" he replied. We shook hands and there was a pause. He looked at me with a quizzical twinkle in his eye, and said: "Well, which is it — Jefferson or Ellsler? You can't be both, you know."

I laughed heartily at this: not so much at what he said, which was commonplace enough, but at the way in which he said it. I thought to myself, "This must be a great comedian." He saw he had made a hit, and laughed in the enjoyment of it.

"My name is Jefferson," said I. "Mr. Ellsler is my partner."

"Well, Jeff, old fellow" (as if he had known me all his life), "I'll be frank with you. Here I am, a star in search of a manager."

"Well," I said, "I will be equally frank

JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH AS "SIR GILES OVERREACH."¹

with you. I am a manager in search of a star."

"Capital!" said he. "Will I do?"

"Will you do? You are the very man," I replied.

"Hurrah! We will play 'Box and Cox' together." Then throwing his arms around me, he quoted from the farce, "'You are my long-lost brother!'"

"Sit down," said I, as we came to a bench, "and we will talk terms."

"What are you going to offer me? Don't be modest — put it high. 'Lay on, Macduff, and damned be him who first cries, Hold, enough!'"

In our present delightful frame of mind there was no difficulty in settling terms — we both would have agreed to anything. I told him I would give him one-third of the gross receipts, with a half-clear benefit at the end of the week.

"Quite right; anything you like. But will your partner ratify this?"

"Oh, yes," I said. "He attends to the finan-

cial part of the business, leaving all matters connected with the stage to me; though, of course, I must consult him before we consider the matter settled."

We walked to the theater and I introduced Ellsler to Don, telling my partner of the arrangement we had made. He acquiesced at once, and seemed quite as much pleased at the prospect of the baronet's engagement as I was.

"Stop," said Don; "I have just thought of it. My wardrobe is in Charleston. Can we get it here by Monday?"

"Yes; but we must send for it at once," said I.

"All right," he replied. "Just let me have fifty dollars, and I will telegraph. It's in pawn, you know."

"In pawn?" said I.

"Yes, I lost a hundred dollars at poker (queer kind of game, is n't it?) on the steamer coming from New York; so I was dead broke

¹ Unless otherwise stated, the pictures in this article are from the collection of Thomas J. McKee.

when I got to Charleston, and I left my traps at my 'uncle's' for money to pay my bill at the hotel, you know—the Charleston Hotel, is n't it? Large columns outside—tough steak inside."

Matters were all settled, and a bill for the first night was arranged—"Used Up" and "The Rough Diamond." Sir William told me that he had a number of letters to the first people in Savannah.

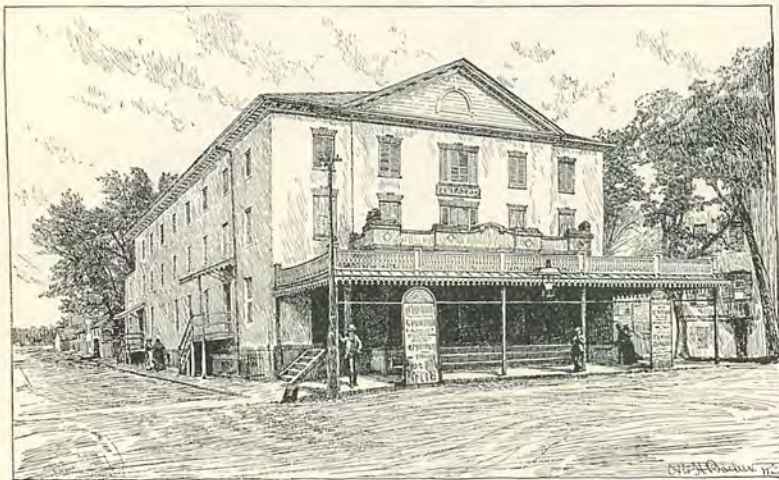
"Don't lose a moment," said I. "Deliver them at once. This will sound your arrival through the city."

"All right," said he; "I'm off. I wish you could go with me; I should like you to see how I cultivate a new acquaintance. No? Very well—by-by." And away he strode, taking such enormous strides that he looked like the Colossus of Rhodes at the commencement of a walking-match.

My partner and I, congratulating ourselves

The curtain rose, and the play proceeded quietly until at last some action revealed that the new star was about to shine. The audience leaned forward as the center doors opened and the baronet stalked upon the stage. As he appeared the applause broke forth; fans and handkerchiefs were waved at him from all directions, and kid gloves were ruined in frantic enthusiasm. The audience at last quieted down and the scene proceeded. The people in front seemed anxious and nervous: I was in the same condition, for I saw that Don, with all his assurance, was suffering from stage fright. His face was pale as death, and he cast his eyes down on the stage. I knew the latter was a bad symptom; he wanted encouragement. I was at the first wing, and catching his eye gave him an approving nod. He seemed to take courage, and, as the audience began to enjoy his acting, warmed up. He finished the great speech of the scene, ending with, "I have been

to the top of Vesuvius and looked down the crater; there is nothing in it." He did this admirably, receiving a tremendous round of approbation. As he sauntered up the stage he again caught my eye; and giving me a comical wink as the applause was continued, he said, so that I could hear him, though the audience could not: "It's all right, old chap. I've got 'em."



THE SAVANNAH THEATER PREVIOUS TO 1884. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH LENT BY J. D. JOHNSON.)

on this new treasure, began making preparations for the opening. As I had predicted, the quiet city began to stir with an undercurrent of aristocratic emotion. As the week wore on the tide swelled, and by Monday had reached the high-water mark of excitement.

The theater on Sir William Don's opening night presented a picture of beauty and refinement. Families that seldom visited the house, except on the conventional Friday night, crowded the auditorium; costly silks and laces fluttered in the dress circle, and old-fashioned rose and table-cut diamonds glittered in the private boxes. Elderly dames with their white hair dressed *à la pompadour*, and with long and brilliant pendants in their ears, nodded majestically to one another, and prim old gentlemen in stiffly starched cravats looked coldly on. A live baronet was on view!

His engagement proved a great financial success. I was disappointed in his acting: he was amusing and effective, but he was an amateur from head to foot, which in his case meant a good deal. I am of opinion that "once an amateur, always an amateur." There are many good actors that have this peculiar, raw quality who have been on the stage for years; and it is because they begin their careers by acting leading characters. Mrs. Mowatt and James H. Hackett were examples of many in our profession who have committed this fatal error. No matter how bold and dashing they may appear, there is a shyness and uncertainty about everything they do. It exhibits itself in the casting of the eyes down upon the stage in an embarrassed way just after they have made a point. This is very disastrous. When a strong effect is made, the eye, the

pose, the very feeling, should be, for an instant only, a picture, till the public digest it. If it is disturbed by some unmeaning movement the strength is lost, and the audience will at once discover that they are not looking at a master. This characteristic of the amateur may wear off in some instances, but I do not remember any.

Sir William went with us to Wilmington, North Carolina, where we opened with the stock, he appearing at the beginning of the second week. The audience here did not like his acting; they seemed to prefer our domestic goods to the imported article. He saw this, but did not seem to mind it, and so bowed to the situation. He became very much attached to the company and remained with us some time, joining in our fishing and boating parties. His animal spirits were contagious; and as we had no rehearsals, the mornings at least were devoted to amusement. We would do the most boyish and ridiculous things. Three or four of us, himself the central figure, would go through extravagant imitations of the circus and acrobatic feats that were then in vogue. "The Bounding Brothers of the Pyrenees" was a particular favorite with him. We would pretend to execute the most dangerous feats of strength — lifting imaginary weights, climbing on one another's shoulders and then falling down in grotesque and awkward attitudes, and suddenly straightening up and bowing with mock dignity to an imaginary audience. Once he did an act called the "Sprite of the Silver Shower," pretending to be a little girl, and tripping into the circus ring with a mincing step. Then, with a shy look, he would put his finger in his mouth, and mounting a table would go through a daring bareback feat. Nothing that I ever saw was more extravagant.

While in New York during the next summer, I got the following note from Don:

ST. NICHOLAS HOTEL, June 25, 1851.

MY DEAR JEFF: I have just arrived from Boston, where I have been playing a bad engagement. The modern Athens was not overwhelmed by my nobility. The critics went so far as to say that I was anything but a good actor. What execrable taste! Well, here I am at the St. Nicholas. Fine rooms, but abominable cooking; everything tastes alike. I am beginning to think that the Frenchman was right when he said that in America you had fifty religions but only one gravy. When shall I dine with you? Make it early. I will drop in just as one of the family — pot-luck, you know. Do not put yourself out for me; a pair of canvasback ducks and a bottle of Johannisberg, or two; am not particular.

Yours,
DON.

The day for the dinner was arranged — the Fourth of July; but as it would have needed a journey to the coast of Labrador to get a pair



SIR WILLIAM DON.

of canvasback ducks at that time of the year, I ordered roast beef and plum pudding instead. The occasion being a patriotic one, as far as the date was concerned, it struck me that an English dinner would be in good taste for Sir William. But we were doomed to disappointment, for at ten o'clock in the morning a strange man came to the door and gave me the following note from Don:

LUDLOW STREET JAIL, July 4, 1851.

MY DEAR JEFF: You will see by the heading of this that I have changed my hotel. Was it you or your father who wrote the Declaration of Independence? If it was your ancestor, you are not responsible, and I have nothing to say; but if "in the course of human events" it was yourself, never hope to be forgiven. See what that absurd and unimportant document has brought me to. If America were still one of her Majesty's colonies, an English nobleman would not be treated with this disrespect. Here I am languishing in prison because some old Jew says I borrowed one hundred dollars from him on false pretences. (He may think himself lucky that it was not a thousand.) I said that I would pay him out of the money I made in Boston. Well, I did not make any money in Boston, so I looked upon the matter as settled. Come and see me. If you have never been in this establishment it will be quite a treat for you. Yours,
DON.

Don was a singular character, at once generous and unjust, genial and slightly cruel. He would borrow from his friend for the purpose of lending to his enemy. His wit was charming and original, and he was quite unconscious of his own brilliancy, apparently

setting no value on it. He had that thorough contempt for tradesmen which stamps this type of English nobility, and he would walk ten miles to help an old woman or to escape from a tailor.

THE BALCONY SCENE.

THE love of management still clung to me, and my partner sharing my enthusiasm, we resolved to make another trial of our fortunes in the Southern circuit. Our limited means compelled us to adopt the most economical mode of transportation for the company. It was settled, therefore, as it was necessary, that we, the managers, should arrive at least a week in advance of the opening of the season: our passage must be made by rail, while the company were to proceed by sea.

There was in those days a line of schooners that plied between Wilmington, N. C., and New York. The articles of transportation from the South consisted mainly of yellow pine, tar, and resin, which cargo was denominated "marine stores." Feeling confident that we could procure cheap passages for our company by contracting with one of these vessels to take them to Wilmington, we determined to conclude a bargain with the owners.

The arrangement was made at a rate that suited all parties except, perhaps, the members of the company, who, I fear, had some slight misgivings that they were to be conveyed to their destination as a kind of ballast. The day was fixed for their departure, and Mr. Ellsler and myself went down to the wharf at Peck Slip to see them off. If we had felt any uneasiness before in the thoughts of sending our comrades off in this way, what was the depth of our remorse when we saw the dreadful old tub in which they were to depart. It was an ill-shapen hulk, with two great badly repaired sails flapping against her clumsy and foreboding masts. The deck and sides were besmeared with the sticky remnants of her last importation, so that when our leading actor, who had been seated on the taffrail, arose to greet his managers, he was unavoidably detained. The ladies and gentlemen of the company were uncomfortably disposed about the vessel, seated on their trunks and boxes that had not yet been stowed away. There were handsome John Crocker, our juvenile actor, leaning with folded arms and a rueful face against an adhesive mast; pretty Mrs. Allen, then only eighteen years old and just married, nestling upon the bosom of her husband, with her lovely dreaming eyes serenely wondering, not when they would start, but whether they ever would return; Mrs. Ray, the first old woman, with an umbrella in one hand and a late dramatic paper in the other, sitting on a coil of rope and unconsciously

ruining her best black dress. It was a doleful picture. The captain, too, was anything but a skipper to inspire confidence. He had a glazed and disheveled look that told of last night's booze. Our second comedian, who was the reverse of being droll on the stage, but who now and then ventured a grim joke off it with better success, told me in confidence that they all had been lamenting their ill-tarred fate. Ellsler and myself bid our company as cheerful an adieu as we well could, but there must have been a tinge of remorse in our farewell, for on talking the matter over as we watched the wretched old craft being towed away to sea, we concluded that we should not forgive ourselves if our comrades were never heard of again.

On our arrival in Wilmington the days were spent in preparing the dusty old rat-trap of a theater for the opening, and our nights in wondering if our party were safe. The uneasiness was not lessened, either, by the news that there had been bad weather off Cape Hatteras.

Within a week, however, they arrived, looking jaded and miserable. Another week for rest and rehearsal, and our labors began. It was customary in those days, particularly with provincial companies, to vary the dramatic bill of fare so as to suit the different tastes of the public. Comedy and tragedy were therefore dished up, and I may say hashed up, alternately, as for instance Monday: Colman's comedy of "The Poor Gentleman," fancy dances by the soubrette, comic songs by the second comedian, concluding with the farce of "The Spectre Bridegroom." The next evening we gave "Romeo and Juliet."

The name of this latter play calls to mind an anecdote connected with its performance in Wilmington that will not be amiss at this point. I have before said that a portion of my early theatrical education was drawn from hard work in the paint and property room of a theater, so that when I became a manager I delighted in the "get-up," as it was technically called, of plays, so far as our slender means would permit. To fashion and paint a rustic bridge, with a wide board behind it, set upon two shaky trestles, for *Rob Roy* to cross over, was a special privilege. A profile boat for the "Lady of the Lake" was another delight. This perfectly unsafe-looking skiff was always set on a trunk mounted upon four little wooden wheels that no amount of black-lead could induce to keep from squeaking. The rope must be steadily pulled — the slightest jerk and over goes her ladyship into the gauze waters. But let us return to the story.

"Romeo and Juliet" being announced, I felt that the balcony scene should have some attention, and I conceived a simple and eco-



JULIA DEAN. (AFTER A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRADLEY & RULOFSON.)

nomical idea that would enable me, at a day's notice, to produce the effect in a manner "hitherto unparalleled in the annals of the stage." Skirmishing about the wharves and the ship-chandlers', I chanced to light upon a job lot of empty candle-boxes. By taking a quantity the cardboard boxes were thrown in, and nothing makes a finer or more imposing but unsubstantial balustrade than cardboard. The boxes, placed one by one on top of each other and painted a neat stone color, formed a pleasing architectural pile. Before the play began I had cautioned *Juliet* that when "she leaned her cheek upon her hand" she should let her elbow rest gracefully but lightly on the frail structure that was to support it. *Romeo* also had to be cautioned, for as the house of Capulet was already about his ears, it was necessary that at least his shins should escape any contact with the foundation. The scene opened with a backing of something, supposed to represent the distant city of Verona, with my new balcony in the foreground. *Romeo* and *Juliet* were warm and energetic in their love passages,

but still acted with becoming care and gentle consideration for the balcony about which they fluttered. All seemed to be going well till presently there came the sound of half-suppressed laughter from the audience. "Crocker," said I from the wing, "are you shaking the balcony?" "No," he whispered; "I have n't touched it." "What are they laughing at, then?" "Can't imagine," said he. The laughter increased, and it was quite evident that something not announced in the bills had gradually attracted the attention of the audience till at last the whole house had discovered the mishap. *Juliet* retreated in amazement and *Romeo* rushed off in despair, and down came the curtain.

I rushed upon the stage to find out what had occurred, when to my horror I discovered that one of the boxes had been placed with the unpainted side out, on which was emblazoned a semicircular trade-mark, setting forth that the very corner-stone of *Juliet's* balcony contained twenty pounds of the best "short sixes."

JULIA DEAN.

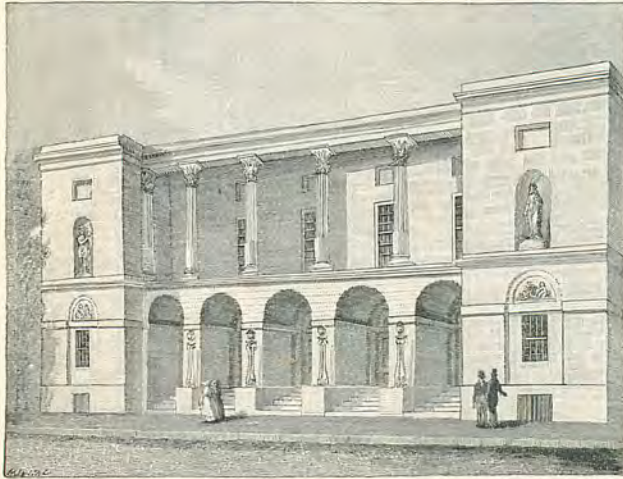
FROM Wilmington we journeyed to Charleston, South Carolina, where, after three weeks of stock and star, we were joined by Julia Dean.

Julia Dean and I had been in the utility ranks of the Mobile Theater during the management of Ludlow and Smith, and as this firm was noted for the economy of its organization, we were made good use of. In the various dramas produced during this season Julia and I had gone hand in hand, alternately espousing the cause of tyranny and virtue for the small sum of six dollars a week. For this reward we were content to change our politics and our costumes at the will of the stage-manager. As brigands, gentle shepherds, or com-

our dramatic corps, so that impromptu talent is a scarce commodity with us. Stanley suggests, "Perhaps Miss Dean can do it." "Oh, no, impossible!" replies the manager; and then a gentle but clear and steady voice says, "I think I can, sir." What, quiet, shy, and modest Julia! Whence comes the courage to avow all this? It does not spring from vanity—she has none; it is begot of that honest confidence which often underlies ability; it wins the manager, who in his dilemma clutches at a straw. While the sweet volunteer is robing herself in the dress of *Lady Priory*, left by the invalid, a friend reads the lines of the first scene to Julia, who drinks them in with eagerness; and the audience are told that they must be charitable to the young novice.

The play proceeds and *Lady Priory* enters; we, her comrades, are standing at the wing. Take courage, girl! There beats not here one heart that envies you. The gentle eyes are raised, so full of innocence and truth, and now she speaks. Who ever thought that Julia harbored such a voice—so low, so sweet, and yet so audible! It sinks deep into the hearts of all who listen. They are spellbound by her beauty, and as she gives the lines with warm and honest power a murmur of delight runs through the house, and from that moment our lovely friend is famous.

Just seven years after this I found myself manager in Charleston, and Julia Dean, then the leading juvenile actress of America, engaged to play a star en-



CHESTNUT STREET THEATER, PHILADELPHIA.
(FROM A PRINT PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM BIRCH IN 1823.)

munists we gained our daily bread together. We changed our religion without the slightest compunction; as Catholics we massaced the Huguenots, while as Pilgrims we bade a sad adieu to our native land, from which we had been driven by religious persecution. Lay or secular, it mattered not to us. So we trudged on, with perhaps a lurking thought that some day we might lead to victory as we were then following to the death. Straightway comes a change; not for me, but for my gentle comrade. Let me recall the scene. The greenroom is in a high state of excitement; a lady has fainted and is borne to her dressing-room "insensible"; the prompter, George Stanley, brings intelligence to the stage-manager that she is too ill to act. The play to be given is "Wives as They Were and Maids as They Are." The audience must be dismissed unless some one can be found to read the part. The economy before referred to has permitted no overflow of genius to glut

agement in my theater. I was rather proud to feel that while my young friend had in the meantime risen to be a brilliant star I was at least a manager, if not a successful one. On the morning of her arrival in Charleston I called at the hotel to pay my respects. I sent up my card. I knew she would smile at the very idea of my having a card; so I wrote in pencil under my name, "All the utility people wanted at ten for the country dance." As the door opened I entered her drawing-room. She burst out laughing, and, giving me both hands in the frankest way, said, "So here we are again." The tall lanky figure of a girl of sixteen, with deep blue eyes and golden hair, had rounded into the graceful figure of a charming woman.

Mr. Ellsler and myself had been struggling along in the old up-and-down way, but were looking forward to an improvement in business as soon as our new star should shine—

JOHN GILBERT AS "SIR PETER TEAZLE."¹

and shine she did. The town fairly went wild with enthusiasm. The star was fêted and entertained by those to whom she would vouchsafe her presence. All vied in paying homage to her beauty and her virtue. She received these attentions with simple dignity and grace unspoiled by flattery or success, and in those days of her artistic splendor she would delight to laugh and chat over the olden time when we marched together in the glorious preparatory ranks. The success of this engagement was quite an event in the annals of Charleston theatricals. At the end of the first week we shared \$900 each—think of it, \$900! My partner was more sedate than I, and I fancy took his good fortune with a quiet, philosophic air. But for me, I was in the clouds, a plutocratic comedian! During the whole week I had been covetously eying two watches in the jeweler's window of Hayden & Greg—one a small, blue enameled one, having a real diamond in the center, with which I intended to, and did, surprise my wife; the other a patent eighteen-carat lever, with which I was bent upon aston-

ishing myself. These purchases were eventually made, absorbing a large portion of our profits.

I had my watch for many years. It was a true and valuable friend. I will not say that we never parted; there were moments of embarrassment when a temporary separation was imperative.

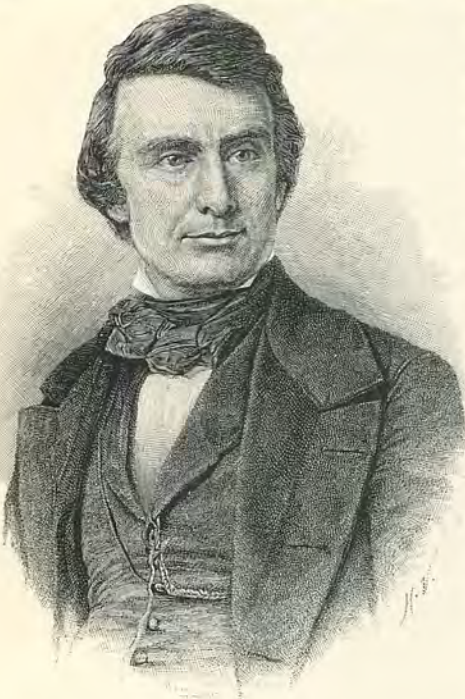
LEGITIMATE COMEDY.

THE following season I was engaged to act the "first comedy" under the stage-management of Mr. John Gilbert, at the Chestnut street Theater. This being a period when stars were rare and combinations unknown, the regular companies were fully commissioned, and generally supplied with excellent actors.

At the Arch, Wheatley and Drew had a most popular stock company, and the ladies and gentlemen attached to it were undoubtedly the dramatic heroes of the city.

Our company at the Chestnut street was not quite so capable, but we produced the stand-

¹ Reprinted from an article by J. Ranken Towse in this magazine for January, 1888.



JAMES E. MURDOCH.

ard plays with considerable effect, and were thought, by ourselves at least, to be formidable rivals of the other actors. I had played *Dr. Ollapod* and *Bob Acres* before, so that in these characters I was comparatively at home; but when the cast of the "Heir-at-Law" appeared in the greenroom I felt rather nervous, though, of course, I was delighted at the prospect of acting the important part of *Dr. Pangloss*. But now there came upon me a dreadful mortification. The speeches of the erudite doctor are filled with classical quotations, and as I knew but little of Latin and nothing of Greek there was only this course left me, I must go to Mr. Gilbert and confess my ignorance. That gentleman kindly offered to assist me in mastering the classics, at least so far as the learned doctor was concerned.

The first thing to be accomplished was to get at the exact meaning of the quotations, that they might be delivered with intelligence. And the next and really most important point was to familiarize myself with the correct pronunciation of them. In two or three days we accomplished this to our mutual satisfaction, and when acting the part I gave out the quotations with such gusto and confidence that I am quite sure the audience was convinced that it was listening to a very learned fellow. I do not feel any remorse, however, at the imposition, for I have no doubt that two-thirds of the spectators who applauded my pronun-

ciation of Greek and Latin knew as little about the matter as I did.

In 1853 I became stage-manager at the Baltimore Museum for Henry C. Jarrett. He was known as the railroad manager, from a habit he had contracted of getting up excursions between Washington and Baltimore. These flying trips were both startling and inconvenient for nervous actors, as he would frequently arrange for one of his stars to play a short piece for the opening performance in Baltimore, and then hasten him, on a mile-a-minute trip, to Washington, in a special train, terminating the entertainment in the latter city with the same attraction.

On one occasion he produced the "School for Scandal" at the capital with a cast so strong, including as it did the first comedians of the day, that some account of it here may be interesting. The characters were distributed as follows:

<i>Sir Peter Teazle</i>	MR. HENRY PLACIDE.
<i>Charles Surface</i>	MR. J. E. MURDOCH.
<i>Joseph Surface</i>	MR. J. W. WALLACK.
<i>Sir Benjamin Backbite</i>	MR. A. H. DAVENPORT.
<i>Crabtree</i>	MR. THOMAS PLACIDE.
<i>Sir Oliver Surface</i>	MR. GEORGE ANDREWS.
<i>Moses</i>	MR. JOSEPH JEFFERSON.
<i>Snake</i>	MR. EDWIN ADAMS.
<i>Lady Teazle</i>	MISS LIZZIE WESTON.
<i>Mrs. Candor</i>	MISS KATE HORN.
<i>Maria</i>	MISS MARY DEVLIN.
<i>Lady Sneerwell</i>	MRS. JANE GERMON.

Being stage-manager, of course I was delighted to have this vast array of talent under my direction. Naturally my position on this occasion was a sinecure, as there was but little to do in the way of management. These great lights had been accustomed to manage themselves, and were not likely to expect advice or to brook it from a youngster like myself; so I was contented to get the credit of arranging the whole affair, which had really cost me but little thought or labor. I fancy though, from what I remember of myself about that time, that I went about with a wise and profound look, as though the destiny of nations rested on my head. I have since seen older men than I was assume this importance.

JAMES E. MURDOCH AND HENRY PLACIDE.

THE undoubted hero of this occasion was Murdoch in the character of *Charles Surface*.

James E. Murdoch, as an actor, was not only extremely versatile, but entirely original. Neither the popularity of Forrest nor the fame of Booth could tempt him to an imitation of either of these tragedians, and his comedy was equally free from resembling the style of the Wallacks or that of Charles Kemble—for the school of the latter was still lingering upon the stage. I do not mean to say that the traditions of these great actors were not worth preserving.

On the contrary, they possessed, from all accounts, a dignity and finish that would be welcome at any time. I cite the fact to show that Mr. Murdoch,—though I feel sure that he admired the great ones that had gone before and were surrounding him,—while he strove to emulate, disdained to imitate them. He stood alone, and I do not remember any actor who excelled him in those parts that he seemed to make especially his own. He was one of the few artists that I can call to mind who were both professed elocutionists and fine actors.

There was a manliness about his light comedy that gave it more dignity than the flippant style in which it was usually played. This method elevated the characters exceedingly. *Charles Surface*, *Major Oakly*, and young *Mirabel* cannot be acted with the same free and easy manner that might be thrown into *Richard Dazzle*, *Littleton Coke*, or *Mr. Golightly*. I do not say this in contempt of these latter characters; they are natural pictures of modern men, but they are eccentric rather than elegant. I saw Charles Mathews in the part of *Charles Surface*, and it was a failure. He had been for years acting the London man-about-town style of character, and the modern air and rather trifling manners, which were admirable when introduced into those parts, were entirely out of place in old English comedy. The quaintness of the language and the fashion of the costume seem to demand a courtly carriage, which a modern swagger, with one's hands thrust into one's breeches pockets, will fail to give. It was the finish and picturesque style of Murdoch's acting that agreeably surprised the audience of the Haymarket Theater when this actor played there some forty years ago. The public was unprepared to see comely old English manners so conspicuous in an American actor, and he gained its sympathy at once. The modern light comedians, with a few exceptions, seem to have discarded the quaint manners of the stage, thinking them antiquated and pedantic. And so they were, for modern plays; but it is dangerous to engraft new fashions upon old forms. I should as soon expect to see *Mercutio* smoke a cigarette as to find him ambling about the stage with the mincing manners of a dude.

And speaking of this very character, Charles Mathews told me that, during Macready's Shakspearean revivals at Drury Lane Theater, he was engaged to play *Roderigo*, in which light and frivolous part he made such a hit that Macready tried to persuade him to act *Mercutio*. He was delighted with the idea at first, but upon reading and pondering over the part he felt convinced that it was beyond him. Macready urged, but Mathews would not undertake the responsibility. Some years afterward Charles Kemble returned to the stage for

a short farewell engagement and acted *Mercutio*. "Oh," said Mathews, "when I saw this elegant and manly actor dash across the stage with the confident carriage of a prince, and heard him read the lines of Shakspeare as though they had been written for him, I felt that I had made a fortunate escape in dodging this first gentleman of Verona."



HENRY PLACIDE.
(FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY FREDERICKS.)

The next important figure to James E. Murdoch, in the powerful cast of the "School for Scandal" just referred to, was the *Sir Peter Teazle* of Henry Placide. It was one of this actor's most striking characters. His style, during the latter part of his career, was said to have been founded on that of William Farren, the great English actor. If so, from all the accounts we get of Mr. Farren, the model was superb. Henry Placide was considered a finished artist, but somewhat cold and hard in his manner. These features, however, though they mar the more delicate points in acting, would be less objectionable in *Sir Peter* than in most of the old men in English comedy. Except in the scene where he speaks feelingly of his wife to *Joseph Surface*, the part is stiff, testy, and formal; the humor is dry rather than unctuous. The career of Henry Placide was long and brilliant. He was a strong feature of the old Park Theater for many seasons, and starred in the principal cities of America with success. He was an acknowledged favorite, whose talents as an actor made him a valued member of the theatrical profession.

A PLAY IS AN ANIMATED PICTURE.

I REMEMBER that during the rehearsal of the "School for Scandal" I was impressed with the

idea that the performance would not go well. It is always a difficult matter to bring a company of great artists together for a night and have them act in unison with each other; not from any ill-feeling, but from the fact that they are not accustomed to play together. In a fine, mechanical contrivance, the ease and perfection with which it works often depend upon the fact that the cog-wheels have their different proportions. On this occasion they were all identical in size, highly polished, and well made, but not adapted to the same machinery. Seeing a hitch during the rehearsal in one of the important scenes, I ventured, in my official capacity, to make a suggestion to one of the old actors. He regarded me with a cold, stony gaze, as though I had been at a great distance,— which I was, both in age and inexperience,— and gave me to understand that there was but one way to settle the matter, and that that was his way. Of course, as the company did not comprise the one regularly under my management, I felt that it would be becoming in me to yield; which I did, not, however, without protesting that the position I took was the proper and only one, under the circum-

stances; and when I saw the scene fail and virtually go to pieces at night, I confess that I felt some satisfaction in the knowledge that my judgment had been correct. In fact the whole entertainment, while it had been a financial success, was an artistic failure. People wondered how so many great actors could make a performance go off so tamely.

Harmony is the most important element in a work of art. In this instance each piece of mosaic was perfect in form and beautiful in color, but when fitted together they matched badly and the effect was crude. An actor who has been for years the main attraction in his plays, and on all occasions the central and conspicuous figure of the entertainment, can scarcely be expected to adapt himself at once to being grouped with others in one picture: having so long performed the solo, it is difficult to accompany the air. A play is like a picture: the actors are the colors, and they must blend with one another if a perfect work is to be produced. Should they fail to agree as to the value and distribution of their talents, then, though they be ever so great, they must submit their case to the care and guidance of a master hand.

(To be continued.)

Joseph Jefferson.



A DAMASCUS GARDEN.

AMID the jostling crowd, she dwells apart,
 Girt by it, but not of it. To and fro
 She watches the world's commerce come and go,
 With laden caravans for every mart
 That craves such traffic. Hers the mystic art
 To keep unparched by desert winds that blow,—
 By skies that burn, and sands that scorch below,
 All the lush freshness of her tropic heart.

Find but the gate of entrance: turn the key,
 And gaze within. What fountains leaping bright!—
 What palm-like aspirations, rich with bloom
 Of lofty passion! What a mystery
 Of pure emotion hidden in fragrant gloom!
 What a Damascus garden of delight!

Margaret J. Presion.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JOSEPH JEFFERSON.¹



DRAWN BY S. LAWRENCE.

LITHOGRAPHED BY E. MORTON.

EDWIN FORREST ABOUT 1835.²

EDWIN FORREST.



IN the year 1854 I became manager for John T. Ford of the theater in Richmond, Virginia. The romantic drama of "The Sea of Ice" was produced with splendid success, and was followed by "The Naiad Queen," which enjoyed equal popularity. The season was altogether quite a brilliant one, and included among its attractions some of the first stars of the country. Miss Agnes Robertson, known as the "Fairy Star," accompanied by her husband, Mr. Dion Boucicault, headed the list, which terminated with Edwin Forrest. This popular tragedian was then in his prime, and what a handsome fellow he was! The form of an Apollo, with the strength of a Hercules: his deep, musical voice was under perfect control, and in the pathetic scenes of *Cade* and *Virginius* full of tears. As a melodramatic actor he stood

² The pictures in this article are from the collection of Thomas J. McKee.

ahead of all his competitors. In Shaksperian characters he was considered too robust and extravagant. So far as matters relating to his own profession were concerned, he was undoubtedly a student, his readings being faultless, and full of feeling. In private he could be very agreeable; his conversation was both humorous and witty, and his anecdotes were told with excellent effect. During my long professional life I met him frequently, and I should say that much of his unhappiness—for he was a very unhappy man—came from an irritable temper, under little control. His nature, unfortunately, was not softened by that sweet and gradual ascent to good fortune that is so humanizing. Happy are those who in the race for fame advance steadily and by degrees, making no hurried strides, but losing no ground; shaking hands with their competitors as they go by them, and making honest room for them to pass should they come up again. Forrest with one leap bounded to the front. No new triumphs awaited him, and as old age came on he could only witness younger and fleetier metal pass him by. During those fits of anger which came upon him from the inefficiency of his dramatic support he was childish and unreasonable—having no power of recognizing the distinction between a man who tries his best and fails, and he who fails because he does not try at all.

During the engagement of which I am about to speak, and on one occasion while we were rehearsing "Damon and Pythias," Edwin Adams, who was cast for *Pythias*, was going through the exciting scene in which that character parts with *Calanthe*. Forrest took exception to the business arrangements of the stage; but as this was one of his quiet, dignified mornings, he made his objections with respectful deference, saying that if Mr. Adams would allow him he would suggest some new business that might improve the scene. Adams expressed himself as quite willing to receive any instruction; so Forrest went through the parting with *Calanthe*, giving some new and very good suggestions. Adams tried but failed to catch Forrest's idea. It was tried over and over till finally Forrest became impatient. Again taking Adams's place, he rushed towards the fainting form of *Calanthe*, and as he dropped

¹ Copyright, 1889, by JOSEPH JEFFERSON. All rights reserved.

upon his knee, throwing his head tragically forward, his hat fell off. Now it is always a comical thing to see a man's high black-silk hat tumble from his head, but especially when he is going through a tragic scene. Forrest for a moment hesitated whether he should pause and pick up the hat or not; at last he made a savage grab for it, but it eluded his grasp, and, slipping through his fingers, rolled round the stage, he pursuing it with tragic passion. The company, one by one, turned their heads away, quietly enjoying his discomfiture. At last he secured it, and fixing it firmly on his head, he proceeded with the action of the scene. He felt we had been laughing at him, and became furious. Rushing upon *Calanthe*, he embraced her again and again. "Farewell, my love," cried he in dire woe. He then tore himself from her embrace, and madly careering up the stage ran head first into a scene that the carpenters were moving across the stage, mashing the unlucky hat over his eyes. He struggled manfully to get it off, but with no effect till Adams and myself came to the rescue. We were now all in a roar of laughter. For a moment he looked bewildered and even angry, but as the absurdity of the scene dawned upon him he joined in the merriment, and said it was the most ridiculous thing that had ever occurred.

At the conclusion of the Richmond engagement the company journeyed to Washington, where we were to open with Forrest as *Metamora*—a character that he detested, and one that the public admired. Forrest was always in a state of intense irritation during the rehearsal and performance of this drama. Irregularities that he would have overlooked under ordinary circumstances were now magnified to an enormous size, so that when he donned the buckskin shirt, and stuck the hunting-knife of the American savage in his wampum belt, he was ready to scalp any offending actor who dared to cross his path. The copper-colored liquid with which he stained his cheeks might literally have been called "war paint."

At the rehearsal the poor property man, old Jake Search, got in a dreadful state of nervousness, and everything went wrong. The tragedian naturally held me, as stage-manager, responsible for these accidents, particularly as the unlucky Jake would conceal himself behind set pieces, or mysteriously disappear through traps as each mishap occurred. In the midst of this dreadful confusion, principally brought about by his own ill-humor, Forrest turned on me, saying he would not act that night, and strode out of the theater. I hurried through the front of the house, and heading him off in the alley addressed him, as nearly as I can remember, in the following words:

"Mr. Forrest, before you decide upon this step let me state an important fact, that perhaps has not crossed your mind." He saw I was in earnest, and stopped short to listen, as I resumed: "Mr. Ford, the manager, is absent, so I must take his responsibility to the public on myself. The blunders on the stage this morning have been unfortunate, perhaps culpable, but you must pardon me for saying that your excited manner and somewhat unreasonable demands have contributed not a little to confuse the company and bring about this disorder. But be that as it may, there is another and still more important matter to consider. Every seat in the theater is taken for to-night; the audience will crowd the house in expectation of a great dramatic treat, to which they have been looking forward for some time. If you decline to act, and so break your contract with the public, what course is left for me? Why, only this: I must wait for the vast concourse of people to assemble, and then go before them and explain the reason of your non-appearance. I shall have to make a clear statement of the case, and say that you have refused to act because there were some slight discrepancies and irregularities in the rehearsal. The public are, you know, quite unreasonable when their diversion is checked, and it is likely that they will be indignant at the disappointment, failing to see the reason as clearly as you may have done. Now consider for a moment: under these circumstances will it not be more magnanimous in you to overlook the shortcomings and go on with the rehearsal?"

He paused for a moment and said: "I will not go back to the rehearsal. I am too much excited, and my presence on the stage now will only make matters worse; but if you will see that details are attended to, I will act to-night."

I promised to do so, and we parted. I was only too glad to get rid of him on those terms, in his then intemperate state of mind. I went back to the stage and dismissed the rehearsal, cautioning the actors to do what they could to render the night's performance creditable. I now began to hunt up the delinquent and frightened property man, Jake Search,—an appropriate name for a fellow who needed so much looking after,—and discovered him hiding under a pile of old scenery. "Is he gone?" said Search. "Yes," I answered, "but he will return to-night; so see that your properties are in good condition, or he will be the death of you."

The night came and matters progressed favorably until the council scene. One of the characters here, being overcome with nervousness, reversed his questions to *Metamora*,



PHOTOGRAPHED BY GUTEKUNST.

ENGRAVED BY T. JOHNSON.

Edwin Forrest,

giving the wrong lines, and of course receiving an absurd answer. The audience, recognizing the confusion of the dialogue, began to laugh, and of course this made matters worse. The act terminates with the Indian's great speech, "From the east to the west, from the north to the south, the loud cry of vengeance shall be heard," and here he hurls his knife into the center of the stage, where it quivers a defiance as the curtain falls. In his anger and excitement the blade failed to stick in the stage and bounded into the orchestra, the handle hitting the double-bass player on the top of his head, which was as innocent of hair as a billiard-ball, so as the curtain came down the old fellow was stamping about and rubbing his bald pate to the delight of the audience.

I realized now that the storm had burst in earnest and that a total wreck would soon follow. Knowing that I could not avert the catastrophe, and having no desire to face the tragedian's wrath, like a politic but disloyal captain I deserted the ship and went in front to see it go down. Byron says of a battle, "Oh, what a sight to him who has no friend or brother there!" to which Prentice adds, "and is not there himself." The latter was now my case. I was not there myself, and I did not intend to be, so from the secure corner of an upper private box I watched the progress of the most disastrous performance I had ever seen.

As the curtain rises on the last act the tribe of *Metamora* should rush through the woods as their leader calls them; but by this time the braves were so frightened that they had become demoralized, and as the foremost rushed through the opening in the woods his long bow got crosswise between two trees. This not only precipitated the redskin over it, but the entire tribe followed, tumbling head over heels into the middle of the stage. I trembled now lest the "big Injun" would refuse to put in an appearance. At last, to my relief, the audience quieted down and Forrest strode upon the stage. If I remember the story, at this point *Metamora's* wife and children had been stolen away and murdered. His pathos was fine, and by his magnificent acting he reduced his audience to attention and enthusiasm. All was now going well, and I looked forward to a happy termination of the play, which I was thankful to know had nearly reached its climax.

A funeral pile of burning fagots was then brought on, at which some pale-face was to be sacrificed. The two Indians in charge of this mysterious-looking article set it down so unsteadily that a large sponge, saturated with flaming alcohol, tumbled off and rolled down the stage, leaving a track of fire in its wake.

"Put it out!" said Forrest, "put it out!" whereupon the two Indians went down on their knees and began to blow alternately in a seesaw way, singeing each other's eyebrows at every puff. The audience could not stand this comical picture, and began to break forth in laughter. "Let the theater burn!" roared Forrest. At last one tall Indian, supposed to be second in command, majestically waved off the two who were blowing, and stamped his foot with force and dignity upon the flaming sponge, at which a perfect fountain of burning alcohol spouted up his leather legs. He caught fire, tried to put himself out, rubbing and jumping about frantically, and at last danced off the stage in the most comical agony. Forrest made a furious exit; the curtain was dropped, and the public, in perfect good nature, dispersed. I mingled with the crowd as it went forth, and I never saw an audience, at the end of a five-act comedy, wreathed in such smiles.

Forrest's first dramatic career in London was undoubtedly a success, though "The Gladiator" was an unwise selection for the opening night. It is a bloody piece of business altogether, and it is a play that could not fail to disgust the sensibilities of a select audience. An actor visiting England, as Forrest did, not only with a great reputation, but as unquestionably at that time the representative tragedian of America, naturally drew the first people of the land to meet him. It must be borne in mind that a first night's audience never represents the general public, particularly on an occasion of this kind. The event was an international one. It was the first dramatic challenge that America had ever given to England. The theater was filled with a critical audience. Statesmen and authors, with the nobility and gentry of the land, were assembled at Drury Lane to witness the début.

Upon an audience like this the most delicate coloring would have had its effect. An artist could scarcely be too subtle before an array of such nice discrimination. When the American actor came upon the stage the symmetry of his form, his manly bearing, and the deep music of his voice produced a strong impression upon the house; but as the play progressed, revealing only the tumult of brutal passions, disappointment fell upon the house. This crude and extravagant drama ends with the central figure bathed in blood, biting the dust, and writhing in the agonies of death. Nothing but the fine acting of Forrest could have sustained this drama before such an audience.

As an actor he was a success, and the play, that caught the public taste, if it failed to please the judicious, was acted for several nights. There can be no doubt that if he had played *Lear* or *Othello* before the rare audience that



PHOTOGRAPHED BY BRADY.

FORREST AS "METAMORA."

ENGRAVED BY T. JOHNSON.

came to witness his *début*, and which he could not hope again to assemble in such force, his success as a Shakspearean tragedian would have been pronounced.

Forrest's second visit was full of tumult. William Macready, then the reigning favorite as a Shakspearean actor in England, was an intimate friend of Mr. Forster, the dramatic critic; and Forrest publicly declared that it was in consequence of this intimacy that he had been abused in the papers, and more than hinted that Macready was in a conspiracy with Forster to malign him. History will never join with Forrest in this belief. Macready's position was so well assured in London that he could not possibly fear a rival. And the life-long record of Macready clearly shows that he was too honorable a man meanly to connive at another's downfall.

After his engagement was over Forrest went to see his rival act, and because the latter introduced some business that Forrest disapproved of he hissed Macready from the front of the house. To say that this was in bad taste is to put too mild a disapproval upon such a rude and unprofessional act. It was the culmination of Forrest's waywardness and ill temper. But the unfavorable notices in London had stung him to the quick. The virus of adverse criticism rankled in his veins. The eagle of the American stage was in a frenzy; his plumage had been ruffled by the British lion. So giving that intolerant animal one tremendous peck, he spread his wings and sailed away.

I have no doubt that he had often acted *Othello*, *Lear*, and perhaps *Hamlet* with all that care and study could compass, but the audience refused to respond; and knowing that there was a "lurking devil" in him, they sat dumb and sullen until it was let loose.

A dramatic critic told me that he was paid a stated sum of money to go to the theater regularly every night during Forrest's engagements at the Broadway Theater in 1856, for the purpose of writing him down. This gentleman (?) had lately come from England, and until this time had scarcely seen a Shakspearean play. He was a fluent writer, but had not the remotest idea of the thought and philosophy contained in the plays of which he was to write. He said he would get a book of the tragedy that was to be acted at night, read it up, then form his own conception of how the character should be acted, and if Forrest did not render it to his way of thinking,—which fortunately for the public he never did,—he, as the critic, would cut the actor all to pieces. These criticisms did more good to the actor than harm. Unjust abuse generally has this effect. Feeling that these articles were actuated only by malice, the public came in crowds to indorse the actor.

Unfortunately the tragedian lost his temper and addressed the audience from the stage, pleading his own case and hurling anathemas at "the irresponsible assassins of the pen." There was no necessity for this. His friends had already taken up cudgels for him and rallied to his support. It was like a successful candidate asking his constituents, after they have elected him, to add to the obligation by throwing his unsuccessful rival out of the window.

Edwin Forrest, with all his faults, had warm and generous impulses. I know of one instance where a poor, old actress went to him in distress. In former years he had known her father and respected him. Touched by her appeal for assistance, he lent her a large sum of money, with the almost certain knowledge that he would never get it back again. It was never made public; no one knew of it but the receiver and myself. The Forrest Home has done much good, and is likely to do more; and those actors who either by age or by infirmities have been debarred the privilege of following their profession will naturally be grateful for this rich legacy.

Even in the days of his theatrical fame and prosperity Forrest was an austere man, and as he grew older he became morbidly misanthropical, holding himself aloof from all but his most intimate friends. The latter part of his life was embittered, too, by illness and the loss of public favor. Until the closing years of his career he had been blessed with perfect health; this became suddenly shattered, and the unexpected attack wrecked his dramatic power. He might have borne the stroke of illness, but to one whose imperious nature could not brook the faintest slight the loss of public admiration was a heavy blow; one, too, that would have shocked a wiser and more even-tempered man than Edwin Forrest. Still he toiled on, and was unjustly censured for acting past his powers. But what was he to do? His physicians told him that he must act if he would live; the wheel must be kept in motion or it would fall. His performances in the larger cities were given to empty houses, while bright and youthful aspirants were drawing from him all his old adherents. His former friends forsook him, and naturally, too; they could not bear the pain of witnessing their favorite of other days declining night by night. No actor can hope to hold an interest in his audience merely by what he has done in years gone by; in acting it is the present that the public have to deal with, not the past. To witness age and decrepitude struggling to conceal their weakness in the mimic scene is too painful. The greater our affection for the artist the less can we bear to see him suffer and go down.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY BRADY.

FORREST AS "KING LEAR."

ENGRAVED BY T. JOHNSON.

In the vain hope of struggling on, the old tragedian sought "the provinces." Here the people flocked in crowds to see the great actor that they had heard of from their childhood; not with the faintest hope that they would find the grandeur of the past, but from the curious desire to see a ruined tower just before it falls.

FROM LONDON TO PARIS.

I SAILED for England in the clipper ship *Neptune*, in June, 1856. This was my first visit to Europe, and London was a rare treat to me. It was rich in comedians and poor in tragedians. Robson and Wright were especially fine; Compton was quaint and legitimate, and Buckstone funny. Mr. Phelps was an actor of such versatility that he could scarcely be called a tragedian. His range was wider than that of any other actor in England. *Macbeth*, *Sir Pertinax McSycophant*, *Malvolio*, *King Lear*, *Sir Anthony Absolute*, and *Bottom* take in the vast area of the legitimate drama. I saw him in two of these characters only, but it is generally conceded that he was equally fine in all of them.

From London I went to France. My mother's parents were from this lovely country, and I longed to see it. We arrived quite early in the afternoon, and then I looked for the first time on the picturesque city of Dieppe. What a transformation had taken place in a few short hours from London! Why, if a hole could have been bored at Waterloo Bridge and I had dropped through the earth, coming out at China, the contrast would not have been greater. Climate, costume, architecture, and language—the change was complete: eight-storied picturesque houses, with three-storied roofs, each story projecting a little beyond the other till at the top they almost meet, making it quite convenient for the occupants in the garret windows to shake hands with one another across the street; all the windows filled with the excited inhabitants chatting to one another and violently gesticulating. The streets were thronged with people: women in wooden shoes, blue petticoats, and high, stiff, white caps, carrying baskets and generally doing all the work; lazy men in blue blouses, quietly submitting to it without a murmur; they were lolling on the piers, slyly laughing and winking at one another as they geyed the cockney and Yankee tourists. A swell table d'hôte dinner, for swell tourists, was carefully avoided by myself and companion; so we slipped around the corner and got a cheap repast, consoling ourselves that by traveling economically you always have a better chance to study character. With this object partly in view, and with knowledge of our slender

purse, we purchased second-class tickets on the train for Paris. It was midsummer, and as we started at 6 p. m. there were still three or four hours of golden twilight for us. What a panorama of beauty! We saw the quaint French farms and picturesque châteaux as we skirted along the lovely banks of the Seine; there Rouen with its majestic cathedral loomed up as the moon rose over the river.

At eleven o'clock we arrived in Paris. I drove to Hôtel Byron in Rue Richelieu, and after supper determined to get a view that night of the church of Notre Dame. Past twelve o'clock and the full moon high in the heavens; it was just the time to see it. A cab had us there in twenty minutes. How grandly it stood out against the dark blue sky! We recrossed the Seine, and I stopped the cab to get out on the bridge. Straight before me were the gloomy towers in which Marie Antoinette was confined during the Reign of Terror. I almost fancied that I could see the pale face of the murdered queen gazing with anguish through the iron-grated windows. The French cabman did not quite get into his head what was the matter with me. I think my gloomy looks made him suspicious that I was contemplating suicide and had brought him there as an accessory; for he got quite close to me, evidently intending to grab me by the collar and force me into the cab at the first hint of a plunge. He heaved a sigh of relief as I got into the cab, and drove away from the bridge much faster than he came to it.

AN EARLY COMEDY.

HÔTEL BYRON was in the busy part of the city, so I was awakened at sunrise by a hum of voices and the rattle of cabs: bakers, milkmen, and venders of fruit and vegetables were trying to drown one another with their various cries. Perhaps a week later than this it would have been annoying, but now the sounds were so strange to my ears that I was only too delighted to be awakened by them. I had just finished dressing when I heard a fearful quarrel in the courtyard: looking out of the window I saw a most curious group of people. There was a fat man, in a white apron and cap (the cook), armed with a large wooden spoon, and a thin baker, with a long loaf of bread, measuring at least four feet, beating each other over the head and shoulders with these deadly weapons. The landlord had embraced the baker and was trying to tug him away; the landlady was endeavoring to do the same with the fat cook, but his dimensions defied her; a kindly milkman and two waiters got in between the belligerents, and in so doing received most of the punishment. Nothing

could be more comical than to watch this exciting but bloodless encounter—the frantic yells of the landlord, the screams of the landlady, the milkman and the two waiters rubbing themselves as the spoon of the infuriated cook and the long loaf of the angry baker descended upon their heads. In the midst of the encounter and the thickest of the fight a huge milk-can was kicked over, and a foaming white flood deluged the middle of the yard. This dreadful accident stopped the fray at once—oil poured upon troubled water could not have been more effectual; economy is a passion with the people of Paris. There was a groan of horror from the milkman, who stood with his shoulders shrugged up to his eyes, his arms stiffened, his hands spread out, and his legs wide apart, surveying the disaster; his stock in trade, once pure and white as the driven snow, was slowly flowing down the middle of the yard, and as it “mixed with the baser matter” became a pearly gray, and so deepened into an inky hue as it reached the gutter of the street. The poor fellow was now the center of attraction. The belligerents crowded around him offering their sympathy; if they could not restore his merchandise, they could at least smother him with the milk of human kindness. The cook and the baker looked on in self-reproaching silence, the waiters assisted the unfortunate man to a chair, and the landlady soothed him with a glass of claret. Now a reaction set in. A faint smile mantled the milkman’s face, then they all broke out into a roar of laughter as the comical side of the picture presented itself; the waiters fairly danced with merriment, the cook embraced the baker, who punched him in the stomach with delight, and so ended the first and only fight I ever saw in Paris.

After breakfast I consulted my memorandum and guide-book. What a list of things to see! How could I get through it in the time? Where should I go first? I have since seen my children in this uncertain condition in a toy-shop, and have always felt for them as I remembered this eventful time; for we are only children of a larger growth, and must have all felt this delightful torture. My guide was now engaged; his name was François. He was a capital hand at business, so far as industry was concerned; his vitality, too, was wonderful. Quick, agile, witty, and vivacious, nothing was a trouble to him so long as it was to his taste; but if I suggested some place to visit that he in his vocation was tired of, the humbug of his nature came into full play, and he would disparage the proposal with the true tact of a Frenchman. Not that he was dishonest; on the contrary, where money was concerned he was scrupulously particular, but the

artistic side of his nature delighted to assert itself.

On my second visit to Paris, twenty years after, I was struck with some curious incidents that illustrate the devotion of the French to art and their uncertain loyalty to the reigning government. Over their doors and on the cornices of their public buildings the Republican motto “Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity” was painted; but the prices of admission to the Grand Opera were carved in the stone, as though they plainly said: “We only paint our patriotism on the walls, so if we desire a change in the government we can wash it out; but the price of admission to the grand opera can never be changed—*jamais!*” Again: when the revolution was over, the names of many streets and buildings were changed, all reference to royalty or the empire was swept away, till they came to the Palais Royal; this sacred title was not disturbed, as it was the name of the theater within its walls.

How grand I felt on my first visit, to think that I was in Paris; not the Paris of to-day, with its gilded domes and modern grandeur, but the old, quaint, dirty, gay, strange city in the early days of the Second Empire, with its high, toppling buildings, narrow streets, and lively people. What pride I should take, when I got back to America, in talking familiarly of well-known localities, and getting the French pronunciation pat and glib—rattling off the names with an easy air as if I had lived there for years. What boyish delight I felt in walking through the streets and looking in at the shop windows. Socrates, I think it was, who said, as he walked through Athens, “How happy I am that there are so many things here I do not want.” If his philosophy was correct—and I have no doubt it was—I must have been very unhappy and very unlike Socrates, for there were so many things that I did want. Of course I could not get them, but could price and admire them. Now I must be careful; the money had to be recounted, and there should be enough kept to get back with. I had been saving up two years’ salary for this trip, so there must be no undue extravagance. This matter settled, I filled my purse with gold, hired a cab, and sallied forth with my guide to visit the theatrical wardrobe shops in the Temple. I shall never forget this lovely day, wandering into the little dens, sometimes in the cellars, sometimes in the garrets of the queer old places, rummaging over quaint hats, square-toed shoes, character wigs, embroidered court suits, charming long silk stockings in all the magic colors of the rainbow, high boots, lovely gaiters, striped vests, and groves of old-fashioned liveries—it was a dramatic fairy-land.

IN THE SECOND-HAND SHOPS.

THE second-hand shops of Paris are very different from those of Chatham Street and Petticoat Lane. In London and with us they are presided over by thrifty Jews, who glare at you with glittering black eyes and thrust their eager noses in your face, almost imploring you to buy. Not so in France: quiet old women sit in the doorways of their shops, or just outside, sewing or knitting; no time is wasted by the women of France. They smile and nod as you pass by, but no rudeness, no urging you to buy; in fact, they seem so perfectly self-satisfied that at times it is quite provoking to the would-be purchaser. I was all eyes, and longing eyes at that. Now and then François would give me a gentle nudge and admonish me not to appear so anxious. At these times I would assume a careless manner as if such scenes were quite usual to me. At last François stopped in front of one of these shops: taking a survey with the air of a connoisseur, and nodding a cold approval of its contents, he invited me to enter. An old woman,—knitting, of course,—the exact counterpart of at least twenty we had already passed, followed us in. Here everything was in picturesque and artistic confusion—piles of curious costumes on the shelves, flowing scarfs, broad felt hats with ostrich feathers, russet boots, and big hilted swords and rapiers arranged in a half-careless, half-methodical way. There was an interior room from which issued sounds of merriment and laughter. I hesitated to pass through, but the old woman smiled and bade us enter, shrugging her shoulders and expressing in her way, "Only young people; they will have their sport." And so it was. Here were two sprightly young Frenchmen, evidently actors, and a pretty coquette of a girl—the daughter of madame—having a royal time at flirting and acting. For a moment our entrance damped their ardor and the "sport," whatever it was, came to a standstill. Then came some pantomime from my guide, who introduced me to the trio as an actor from America, at which they assumed an extravagant air of wonder and amazement, evidently guying me. So feeling themselves quite at ease, the merriment again proceeded. It was quite evident to me that there was a love affair between the pretty girl and the handsomer of the young actors. He was a graceful young fellow, with blonde, curly hair and blue eyes, and I presumed he was the rising young lover of some small theater in the neighborhood. The other actor was undoubtedly a low comedian of the same establishment. He was the reverse of the blonde lover, hideously ugly, with a turned-up nose, and a wide gash in the middle of his face for a mouth. He looked like a

monkey and was quite as full of tricks. Assuming a grotesquely tragic air, he grasped me by the hand as if I were his long-lost brother, then, pointing despairingly at the lovers, gave me to understand in pantomime that his life was blasted by unrequited affection. Then he fell upon his knees to the girl and implored her love; she laughed, of course. This started him to his feet, and with a sudden spring he picked up a Roman helmet, cocked it sideways on his head, seized a poker, and rushed upon his rival. Then he paused, and, bursting into tears, relented. Now taking the lovers' hands he joined them in wedlock, invoked a blessing on them from Heaven, stabbed himself with a poker, and rushed out into the front shop amidst the laughter and merriment of his audience. To me this seemed a very happy party, and though I understood very little of what they were saying, it was quite enough to convince me that some of their fun was at my expense. The old woman now led the way up a dark, narrow staircase to a room of wonders above. The walls were hung with fantastic dresses, spears, shields, and masks with decidedly French expressions of countenance. She pointed quietly to all these things, but rather disparaged them.

Now she came to a high, black leather trunk with a round top and clamped all over with iron bands and hinges. This contained glittering suits of Roman armor. A shining breastplate was displayed to tempt me. I explained that that style of thing was not in my line. So with a sweet smile, somewhat tinged with pity, I think, she shrugged her shoulders and passed on to a large, flat, wooden box like a monster sea-chest with an old-fashioned padlock on it, big enough for the Bank of England. She pointed to the box with admiration, as though she would say, "Ah, you don't know what lovely things are stored there, and so cheap." She first displayed a black court suit with polished steel buttons, very fine, but too large and too somber. Next came a royal purple silk velvet one, embroidered with gold and foil-stones. I lost my heart to this at once, and the sly old woman knew it. I tried to look as if I did n't care for it, but failed. It would n't do with her. She saw through me, and began to fold it up with a loving hand, as though she could n't part with it for the world. She spoke no English; and as I was equally skilled in French, we talked through my guide. He, of course, professed to be on my side, but, from certain suspicious intonations, I fancy he slightly favored the old woman.

"Well, what is the price?"

"Five hundred francs." She said this with an injured air, as if she hoped I would n't give it, but of course I did give it.

One article after another was tried on; some reluctantly cast aside, others eagerly purchased. As each new treasure came into my possession it was placed in the cab by my guide. I did not want them sent home—no, I would take them myself; then I had misgivings that the cabman might drive off with my booty. I must have made François take his number three times at least, and put it in my different pockets, fearing I should lose it. At last I had gone through all the shops in the

Temple. The longing eyes of the old French woman followed me from door to door, the cab was full, the purse was empty, and now I had a feverish anxiety to get away. I was convinced I had bought these wonders at half their value, and I feared that the venders would regret having sold them, and before I could depart demand them back. So we jumped into the cab, gave the word, and drove to the hotel.

Three lovely weeks in Paris; it seemed like a dream. Then I awakened and sailed for home.

(To be continued.)

Joseph Jefferson.

WASHINGTON AND MONTANA.

HAVE THEY MADE A MISTAKE IN THEIR CONSTITUTIONS?



THE act of Congress providing for the division of Dakota into two States, and to enable the people of North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Washington to form constitutions and State governments and to be admitted into the Union on an equal footing with the original States, was approved February 22, 1889. On May 14, the electors in these Territories chose delegates to constitutional conventions which assembled on the Fourth of July following—the Montana convention in Helena, and the Washington convention in Olympia. For the first time was afforded the spectacle of four territorial conventions assembled on the same day to enter upon the labor of framing the fundamental law of State government. The Washington constitution of 1878 and the Montana constitution of 1884 were not sufficient to stem the adverse current of party politics in Congress.

In a peculiar sense the constitutional convention is an American production, and is composed usually of typical representatives of the interests of the people. Among the members of the Olympia convention were twenty-one lawyers, thirteen farmers, six merchants, six physicians, five bankers, four stockmen, three teachers, two real-estate dealers, two editors, two hop-growers, two loggers, two lumbermen, one preacher, one surveyor, one fisherman, and one mining engineer. Ten members were veterans of the civil war. The average age of the delegates was forty-five years, and the places of their birth were more than twenty-five in number. Ten were born in Missouri, eight in Ohio, seven in New York, seven in Illinois, five in Scotland, four in Pennsylvania, four

in Kentucky, three in Indiana, three in Germany, two in Tennessee, two in Ireland, and the remainder in Maine, North Carolina, New Brunswick, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Ontario, Connecticut, Iowa, New Hampshire, Wales, Nebraska, California, and Washington Territory. The convention was composed of forty-three Republicans, twenty-nine Democrats, and three Independents.

There are men and women yet living who were a part of that company of a thousand souls who in June of 1843 gathered in the frontier village of Westport, Missouri, to set forth upon the weary journey of more than two thousand miles overland to an unknown country, Oregon. Its boundaries were still in dispute, its rivers still unexplored. Ten years passed and Washington Territory was formed from Oregon. In the next year Montana was given its present boundaries. The newness of the northwesternmost State of the Union is illustrated in the *personnel* of its constitutional convention: only one member of that convention was born in Washington Territory. That convention was in session fifty days; the Montana convention, forty-five days. On the first day of October following, the electors in each Territory ratified the work of their convention, and elected officers under the constitution and also representatives to Congress. By proclamation of the President, Montana was admitted into the Union on the 8th, Washington on the 11th, of November.

The first noticeable characteristic of these new constitutions is their great length. The constitution of Washington consists of 27 articles, subdivided into 245 sections; the constitution of Montana has 20 articles, subdivided into 268 sections. Each constitution contains above 30,000 words. Each of the successive State



ENGRAVED BY R. G. TIETZE.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY FALK.

"DOCTOR PANGLOSS, THE PHILOSOPHER, TEACH DANCING!"

JOSEPH JEFFERSON AS "DR. PANGLOSS, LL. D., A. S. S.," IN "THE HEIR AT LAW."

THE CENTURY MAGAZINE.

VOL. XXXIX.

MARCH, 1890.

No. 5.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JOSEPH JEFFERSON.

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WITH LAURA KEENE.



THE opening of Laura Keene's theater, in September, 1857, was an important event to me. I had been engaged for the leading comedy, and it was my first appearance on the western side of the city. Miss Keene had never seen me, either on or off the stage. It was looked upon as a kind of presumption in those days for an American actor to intrude himself into a Broadway theater: the domestic article seldom aspired to anything higher than the Bowery; consequently I was regarded as something of an interloper. I am afraid I rather gloried in this, for in my youth I was confident and self-asserting; besides, there was a strong feeling among my artistic countrymen that the English managers had dealt unjustly with us, and I naturally shared in this feeling. I have since come to the conclusion that the managers do not open theaters for the purpose of injuring any one.

At all events, I was installed as the comedian at Laura Keene's theater, and opened in Colman's comedy of "The Heir at Law." One of the leading papers, in alluding to my performance, mentioned the fact that "a nervous, fidgety young man, by the name of Jefferson, appeared as *Dr. Pangloss*, into which character he infused a number of curious interpolations, occasionally using the text prepared by the author."

The critic struck the keynote of a popular dramatic error that has existed through all time, and I shall make bold just here to call attention to it. Old plays, and particularly old comedies, are filled with traditional introductions, good and bad. If an actor, in exercising his taste and judgment, presumes to leave out any of these respectable antiquities, he is,

by the conventional critic, considered sacrilegious in ignoring them. And on the other hand, if in amplifying the traditional business he introduces new material, he is thought to be equally impertinent; whereas the question as to the introduction should be whether it is good or bad, not whether it is old or new. If there is any preference it should be given to the new, which must necessarily be fresh and original, while the old is only a copy.

Laura Keene's judgment in selecting plays was singularly bad; she invariably allowed herself to be too much influenced by their literary merit or the delicacy of their treatment. If these features were prominent in any of the plays she read, her naturally refined taste would cling to them with such tenacity that no argument but the potent one of public neglect could convince her that she had been misled in producing them. I do not say that polished dialogue or delicately drawn characters are detrimental to a play—on the contrary, they assist it; but if these qualities are not coupled with a sympathetic story, containing human interest, and told in action rather than words, they seldom reach beyond the footlights.

DRAMATIC ACTION.

PERHAPS it is well to define here, to the non-professional reader, what is meant by dramatic action, as sometimes this term is mistaken for pantomime. Pantomime is action, certainly; but not necessarily dramatic action, which is the most essential element in the construction of a play. A drama will often give one no idea of its strength in the reading of it; even in rehearsal it will sometimes fail to reveal its power. I have on several occasions seen even the author of a play surprised at the exhibition of it on its first representation before an audience, he himself not being aware that his work

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contained the hidden treasure, until the sympathy of the public revealed it. Sometimes the point of unexpected interest consists in the relationship between two characters, or the peculiar emphasis laid upon a single word that has been spoken in a previous act. But to illustrate more fully what I desire to explain I will take two dramatic actions, one from comedy and the other from tragedy, to set forth the subject clearly.

In one of Victorien Sardou's plays—and this gentleman is perhaps the most ingenious playwright of our time—the following incident occurs. The audience are first made fully aware that a lady in the play uses a certain kind of perfume. This is done casually, so that they do not suspect that the matter will again be brought to their notice. She abstracts some valuable papers from a cabinet, and when they are missed no one can tell who has taken them. The mystery is inexplicable. Suspicion falls upon an innocent person. The audience, who well know how the matter stands, are on tenter-hooks of anxiety, fearing that the real culprit will not be detected. When this feeling is at white heat one of the characters finds a piece of paper in the desk and is attracted to it by the perfume. He puts it to his nose, sniffs it, and as a smile of triumph steals over his face the audience, without a word being spoken, realize that the thief is detected. Observe here, too, the ingenuity of the dramatist: the audience are in the secret with him; they have seen the papers stolen; it is no news to them; but when the characters in whom they are interested become as much enlightened as they are the climax is complete.

For an illustration of this point, as applied to tragedy. After the murder of *Duncan, Macbeth*, standing with his wife in a dark and gloomy hall, looks at his bloody hands and apostrophizes them in these terrible words:

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

Now there is a silence, and when he is alone there echoes through the castle a knocking at the gate. The friends of the murdered guest have come for him; and they thunder at the portals, while the blood-stained host stands as if stricken down with terror and remorse. It is not the dialogue, as powerful as it is, which strikes the audience with awe; it is simply a stage direction of the great dramatic master—a "knocking at the gate." It will, I think, be seen by these two illustrations that a fluent and imaginative writer may construct plots, create characters, and compose exquisite verse, and yet not succeed as a playwright unless he

possesses the art or gift of creating dramatic action.

As an actress and manager Laura Keene was both industrious and talented. If she could have afforded it, no expense would have been spared in the production of her plays; but theatrical matters were at a low ebb during the early part of her career, and the panic of 1857 was almost fatal to her. In the midst of financial difficulties she displayed great taste and judgment in making cheap articles look like expensive ones, and both in her stage setting and costumes exhibited the most skillful and effective economy. She was a high-mettled lady, and could be alarmingly imperious to her subjects with but little trouble.

"OUR AMERICAN COUSIN."

DURING the season of 1858-59 Miss Keene produced Tom Taylor's play of "Our American Cousin," and as its success was remarkable and some noteworthy occurrences took place in connection with it, a record of its career will perhaps be interesting. The play had been submitted by Mr. Taylor's agent to another theater, but the management failing to see anything striking in it, an adverse judgment was passed and the comedy rejected. It was next offered to Laura Keene, who also thought but little of the play, which remained neglected upon her desk for some time; but it so chanced that the business manager of the theater, Mr. John Lutz, in turning over the leaves fancied that he detected something in the play of a novel character. Here was a rough man, having no dramatic experience, but gifted with keen, practical sense, who discovered at a glance an effective play, the merits of which had escaped the vigilance of older and, one would have supposed, better judges. He gave me the play to read. While it possessed but little literary merit, there was a fresh, breezy atmosphere about the characters and the story that attracted me very much. I saw, too, the chance of making a strong character of the leading part, and so I was quite selfish enough to recommend the play for production.

The reading took place in the greenroom, at which the ladies and gentlemen of the company were assembled, and many furtive glances were cast at Mr. Couldock and myself as the strength of *Abel Murcott* and *Asa Trenchard* were revealed. Poor Sothern sat in the corner, looking quite disconsolate, fearing that there was nothing in the play that would suit him; and as the dismal lines of *Dundreary* were read he glanced over at me with a forlorn expression, as much as to say, "I am cast for that dreadful part," little dreaming that the character of the imbecile lord would turn out to be the stepping-

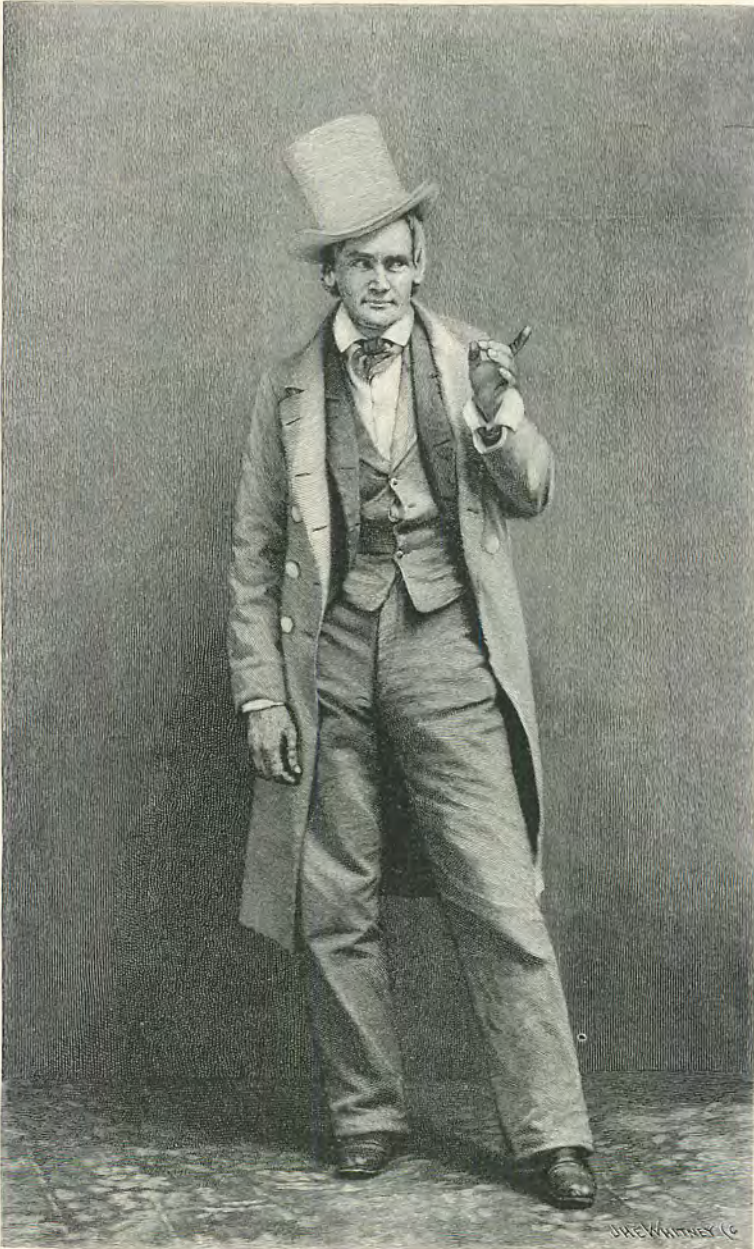


ENGRAVED BY CHARLES STATE.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY FALK.

"PUT ALL THE HONORABLE MR. DOWLAS'S CLOTHES AND LINEN INTO HIS FATHER'S CHARIOT."

JOSEPH JEFFERSON AS "DR. PANGLOSS."



"WAIT, I AIN'T THROUGH YET."
 JOSEPH JEFFERSON AS "ASA TRENCHARD" IN "OUR AMERICAN COUSIN."
 (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN 1858 BY MEADE BROTHERS.)

stone of his fortune. The success of the play proved the turning-point in the career of three persons—Laura Keene, Sothorn, and myself.

As the treasury began to fill, Miss Keene began to twinkle with little brilliants; gradually her splendor increased, until at the end of three months she was ablaze with diamonds. Whether these were new additions to her impoverished stock of jewelry, or the return of old friends that

had been parted with in adversity,— old friends generally leave us under these circumstances,— I cannot say, but possibly the latter.

The dramatic situation that struck me as the most important one in this play was the love scene in the opening of the last act. It was altogether fresh, original, and perfectly natural, and I notice that in this important phase of dramatic composition authors are conspicuously weak.



E. A. SOTHERN AS "LORD DUNDREARY" IN "OUR AMERICAN COUSIN." (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY SARONY.)

The love scenes in most all of our modern plays are badly constructed. In the English dramas they are sentimental and insipid, being filled with either flowery nonsense or an extravagance bordering upon burlesque; while the love scenes in the French plays are coarse and disgusting. Sardou has written but few female characters for whom one can feel the slightest respect. For instance, which one would a man select to be his mother were he compelled to make a choice? I think it would puz-

zle him. The love scenes between *Alfred Evelyn* and *Clara Douglas*, in Bulwer's play of "Money," are stilted, unnatural, and cold. The passages intended to display affection in the "Lady of Lyons" are still further from "imitating humanity," and the speech of *Claude* to *Pauline*, beginning with

A deep vale shut out by alpine hills,

is so glaringly absurd that the audience invariably smile at the delivery of this soft extrava-

gance. The greatest love scene that ever was or ever will be written is known as the balcony scene in "Romeo and Juliet." This is a perfect model, being full of the most exquisite humor.

Natural love off the stage is almost invariably humorous, even comic—not to the lovers' minds; oh, no! 'T is serious business to them, and that is just what makes it so delightful to look at. The third party, when there is one, enjoys it highly. The principals do the most foolish things: the gentleman cannot make up his mind what to do with his hat or with his hands, the lady is awkward and shy, and the more they love each other the more comical they are. They say stupid things, and agree with each other before they have half done expressing an opinion.

It was the opportunity of developing this attitude of early love, particularly love at first sight, that attracted me to the "Cousin." Simple and trifling as it looks, Mr. Tom Taylor never drew a finer dramatic picture. The relation between the two characters was perfectly original. A shrewd, keen Yankee boy of twenty-five falls in love at first sight with a simple, loving, English dairymaid of eighteen. She innocently sits on the bench, close beside him; he is fascinated and draws closer to her; she raises her eyes in innocent wonder at this, and he glides gently to the farthest end of the bench. He never tells her of his love, nor does she in the faintest manner suggest her affection for him; and though they persistently talk of other things, you see plainly how deeply they are in love. He relates the story of his uncle's death in America, and during this recital asks her permission to smoke a cigar. With apparent carelessness he takes out a paper, a will made in his favor by the old man, which document disinherits the girl; with this he lights his cigar, thereby destroying his rights and resigning them to her. The situation is strained, certainly, but it is very effective, and an audience will always pardon a slight extravagance if it charms while it surprises them. The cast was an exceedingly strong one—Laura Keene as the refined, rural belle, and Sara Stevens as the modest, loving, English dairymaid. Both looked and acted the parts perfectly. The *Abel Murcott* of Mr. Couldock was a gem, and the extravagant force and humor of Mr. Sothorn's *Dundreary*, the fame of which afterwards resounded all over the English-speaking world, is too well known to need any comment, except perhaps to mention one or two matters connected with it of a curious nature.

As I have before said, Sothorn was much dejected at being compelled to play the part. He said he could do nothing with it, and certainly for the first two weeks it was a dull effort, and produced but little effect. So in despair he began

to introduce extravagant business into his character, skipping about the stage, stammering and sneezing, and, in short, doing all he could to attract and distract the attention of the audience. To the surprise of every one, himself included, these antics, intended by him to injure the character, were received by the audience with delight. He was a shrewd man as well as an effective actor, and he saw at a glance that accident had revealed to him a golden opportunity. He took advantage of it, and with cautious steps increased his speed, feeling the ground well under him as he proceeded. Before the first month was over he stood side by side with any other character in the play; and at the end of the run he was, in my opinion, considerably in advance of us all. And his success in London, in the same character, fully attests, whatever may be said to the contrary, that as an extravagant, eccentric comedian in the modern range of comedy he was quite without a rival. His performance of *Sam* which I saw at the Haymarket Theater, in London, was a still finer piece of acting than his *Dundreary*. It was equally strong, and had the advantage of the other in not being overdrawn or extravagant.

A THEATRICAL QUARREL.

MISS KEENE was undoubtedly delighted at Sothorn's rising fame. I think she found that I was becoming too strong to manage, and naturally felt that his success in rivaling mine would answer as a curb, and so enable her to drive me with more ease and a tighter rein. I don't blame her for this: as an actor has a right to protect himself against the tyranny of a manager, the manager has an equal right to guard the discipline of the theater; and I have no doubt that I perhaps unconsciously exhibited a confidence in my growing strength that made her a little apprehensive lest I should try to manage her. In this she did me an injustice, which I am happy to say in after years the lady acknowledged. The first rupture between us came about somewhat in this way: The Duchess—as she was familiarly called by the actors, on the sly—had arranged some new business with Mr. Sothorn, neglecting to inform me of it. I got the regular cue for entering, and as I came upon the stage I naturally, but unintentionally, interrupted their preconceived arrangements. This threw matters into a confusion which was quite apparent to the audience. Miss Keene, not stopping to consider that I had been kept in ignorance of her plan and that the fault was hers and not mine, turned suddenly on me, and speaking out so loudly and plainly that most of the audience could hear her, said, "Go off the stage, sir, till you get your cue for entering."



DRAWN FROM A LITHOGRAPH LENT BY THOMAS J. M'KEE.

Laura Keane

I was thunderstruck. There was a dead silence for a moment, and in the same tone and with the same manner she had spoken to me, I replied:

"It has been given, and I will not retire."

We were both wrong. No actor has a right to show up to the audience an accident or a fault committed on the stage, or intrude upon them one's personal misunderstandings. As two wrongs cannot make a right, it was clearly my duty to pass this by, so far as any public display of my temper was concerned, and then

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demand an explanation and an apology from her when the play was over. But

Who can be wise, amazed, temperate and furious, Loyal and neutral, in a moment?

Besides, I felt that no explanation of hers could set me right with the audience, and I was smarting under the injustice of her making me appear responsible for her own fault.

When the curtain fell she was furious, and turning on me with flashing eyes and an imperious air discharged me then and there. I

might leave now if I liked, and she would dismiss the audience rather than submit to such a public insult. I told her that if she considered my conduct an insult to her, that it was a confession that she had insulted me first, as my words and manner were but a reflection of her own. This sort of logic only made matters worse. So I informed her that I could not take a discharge given in the heat of temper, and would remain. The play proceeded, but she was singularly adroit, and by her manner in turning her back on me through an entire scene, and assuming an air of injured innocence, undoubtedly made the audience believe that I was a cruel wretch to insult her in so public a way. She had the advantage of me all through, for when her temper was shown to me the play was proceeding, and I dare say that in the bustle and confusion of the scene very few of the audience could understand what she had done; whereas when I retaliated there had been a pause, and they got the full force of what I said.

When an actor shows his temper upon the stage the audience feel insulted that they should be called upon to sympathize with his private quarrels. The actor is the loser, depend upon it.

CHANGES IN OLD PLAYS.

MR. RUFUS BLAKE was attached to our company during this season, but in consequence of the great success of "Our American Cousin," in which he was not cast, he had acted but little. He was a superior actor, with the disadvantage of small eyes, a fat, inexpressive face, and a heavy and unwieldy figure. There must be something in the spirit of an actor that is extremely powerful to delight an audience when he is hampered like this. Without seeming to change his face or alter the stolid look from his eyes, Mr. Blake conveyed his meaning with the most perfect effect. He was delicate and minute in his manner, which contrasted oddly enough with his ponderous form. We acted this one season together and were very good friends. On one occasion only was this harmony marred. He rated me for curtailing some of the speeches of a part in one of the old comedies. I told him that I had my own ideas in these matters, one of which was that the plays were written for a past age, that society had changed, and that it seemed to me good taste to alter the text, when it could be done without detriment, to suit the audience of the present day; particularly when the lines were coarse, and unfit for ladies and gentlemen to speak or listen to. He gave me to understand that he considered it a liberty in any young man to set himself up as an authority in such matters, and that my course was a tacit reproach to older and

better judges, and even hinted that some people did that sort of thing to make professional capital out of it. I thought this was going a little too far for friendship. I therefore told him, with little reserve, that as he had taken the liberty to censure my course, I would make bold equally, and advise him, for his own sake, to follow my example.

"THE DUCHESS."

As Laura Keene's season drew to a close she and I had buried our differences and were comparatively good friends again; so the lady was somewhat surprised to learn that I was not going to remain with her during the following season, and seemed to consider it unkind of me to withdraw from the theater after she had done so much to advance my position. This is the somewhat unjust ground that managers often take when an actor desires to go to another house. This is unreasonable, for there must come a time when it will be for the interest of one or both parties that they should part; and it would be just as wrong at one time as at another. If an actor, when the season is concluded and his obligations are at an end, sees an opportunity of increasing his salary or bettering his position by going to another establishment, it would be an injustice to himself and to those who depend upon him not to do so. And by the same reasoning, if a manager can secure better talent, at a more reasonable price, he has a perfect right to replace one actor by another, having fulfilled his engagement. I have never known any manager to hesitate in pursuing this course, unless he retained the actor as an act of charity, and then, of course, the matter is a purely personal one.

Miss Keene, taking the unfair view I have alluded to, was highly incensed at my proposed departure. She considered that, having been the first to bring me to New York, to her my loyalty was due, and in common gratitude I was bound not to desert the theater for the purpose, as she supposed, of joining the opposition forces. I replied that, so far as my ingratitude was concerned, I failed to see in what way she had placed me under obligations; that I presumed when she engaged me for her theater it was from a motive of professional interest, and I could scarcely think it was from any affection for me, as we had never met until the engagement was made. This kind of logic had anything but a conciliating effect. So I concluded by saying that I had no idea of casting my lot with the opposition, but that it was my intention to star. "Star! Oh, dear! Bless me! Indeed!" She did not say this, but she certainly looked it; and as she turned her eyes heavenward there was a slight elevation



W. R. BLAKE. (FROM AN ETCHING BY H. B. HALL, LENT BY THOMAS J. MCKEE.)

in the tip of her beautiful nose that gave me no encouragement of an offer from her under these circumstances. With a slight tinge of contempt she asked me with what I intended to star. I answered that, with her permission, I proposed to act "Our American Cousin." "Which I decline to give. The play is my property, and you shall not act it outside of this theater." And she swept from the greenroom with anything but the air of a *comédienne*.

The houses were still overflowing, and there was every prospect that "Our American Cousin" would run through the season; but Miss Keene was tired of acting her part in the comedy, and was determined to take the play off and produce "A Midsummer Night's Dream," which had been in preparation for some time, and in fact was now in readiness. The management was anxious that Mr. Blake, who had been idle for some four months, should be in the cast, so that the play might contain the full strength of its expensive company.

The Duchess, being in high dudgeon with me, deputed her business manager, Mr. Lutz, to approach me on the subject of the cast, proposing that I should resign the part of *Bottom* to Mr. Blake, and at the same time requesting me to play *Puck*. This I positively refused to do. I told him plainly that Miss Keene had taken an antagonistic stand towards me, and that I felt that she would not appreciate a favor even if I might feel disposed to grant it, and would treat any concession that I should make as weakness. He said that Miss Keene had begged him to urge the mat-

ter, as she did not know how else to get Mr. Blake and myself into the cast. "Very well," said I; "if that is all, tell her I will play *Bottom*, and let Mr. Blake play *Puck*." And so we parted. Of course I did not suppose that he would carry this absurd message, as Mr. Blake would have turned the scale at two hundred and fifty pounds, and looked about as much like *Puck* as he resembled a fairy queen. But, not being familiar with Shakspeare, and having no idea what the characters were like, he gave her my suggestion word for word. This put the fair lady in a high temper, and she did not speak to me for a week. But I stood on my rights and was cast for *Bottom*, Miss Keene essaying the

part of *Puck* herself. After three or four rehearsals I discovered I should fail in the part of *Bottom*, and therefore deemed it wise to make "discretion the better part of valor," and resign the character, which I did upon the condition that I might take the play of "Our American Cousin" upon a starring tour, and give the management one-half of the profits for the use of the play.

I have thought that perhaps it is scarcely in good taste that I should touch upon the little misunderstandings between myself and Miss Keene; but as these quarrels were not of a domestic or private nature, and as the public were made fully aware of them at the time, there is nothing sacred about them, and they may serve as lessons in the future to younger and as yet inexperienced actors. And then, too, Miss Keene and I were friends in after years; we had long since shaken hands and buried the hatchet—had talked and laughed over our rows and reconciliations, and had continued to get as much amusement out of the recollections as we had created trouble out of the realities.

When I returned from Australia we met again. She had lost her theater, and was traveling and starring with only partial success. Her early popularity had waned, but she battled against adversity with great courage. At last her health gave way, and she retired, but still with the clinging hope of returning to the stage again. She never did. The last letter she wrote was penned upon her death-bed and was addressed to me. She sent me an ivory

miniature of Madame Vestris, and a water-color drawing, by Hardy, of Edmund Kean as *Richard III.* Her letter was cheerful and full of hope; she spoke of feeling better, and seemed confident that in a few months she would be in harness again. She died the day after this was written.

She was esteemed a great beauty in her youth; and even afterwards her rich and luxuriant auburn hair, clear complexion, and deep chestnut eyes, full of expression, were greatly praised; but to me it was her style and carriage that commanded admiration, and it was this quality that won her audience. She had, too, the rare power of varying her manner, assuming the rustic walk of a milkmaid or the dignified grace of a queen. In the drama of "The Sea of Ice" she displayed this versatile quality to its fullest extent. In the prologue she played the mother, in which her quiet and refined bearing told of a sad life; in the next act, the daughter, a girl who had been brought up by savages, and who came bounding upon the stage with the wild grace of a startled doe. In the last act she is supposed to have been sent to Paris and there educated. In this phase of the character she exhibited the wonderful art of showing the fire of the wild Indian girl through the culture of the French lady. I have never seen this transparency more perfectly acted.

Laura Keene was in private life high tempered and imperious, but she had a good heart and was very charitable. I never heard her speak ill of any one but herself; and this she would sometimes do with a grim humor that was very entertaining.

THE WINTER GARDEN, "CALEB PLUMMER,"
ETC.

My starring venture was attended with what is termed questionable success, though not with what could be boldly called a failure; still I felt that the time had not yet arrived for the continuance of such a rash departure. Just at this juncture William Stuart made me an offer of an engagement at his new theater, the Winter Garden, which place was to be under the direction of Dion Boucicault. I accepted the offer, at a much larger salary than I had ever received, and was enrolled as a member of the company. The title of "Winter Garden" had been adopted from a place of amusement in Paris, where plays were acted in a kind of conservatory filled with tropical plants. If I remember rightly, the treasury of the management was not in what could be called an overflowing condition; and although the actors whom they engaged were quite strong, the horticultural display was comparatively weak.

Some sharp-pointed tropical plants of an inhospitable and sticky character exuded their "medicinal gums" in the vestibule, and the dress circle was festooned with artificial flowers so rare that they must have been unknown to the science of botany. To give these delicate exotics a sweet and natural odor they were plentifully sprinkled with some perfume resembling closely the sweet scent of hair-oil, so that the audience as they were entering could "nose" them in the lobby. Take it altogether the theater was a failure; for, added to the meager decorations, the acoustics were inferior, and the view of the stage from the auditorium unpardonably bad. To make amends, however, for these shortcomings, Mr. Boucicault had secured a strong company; not so far as great names were concerned, but they had been carefully selected with regard to the plays that were to be produced. The opening piece was an adaptation of Dickens's "Cricket on the Hearth," and called "Dot." It was a hit. The cast was as follows:

<i>John Peerybingle</i>	MR. HARRY PEARSON.
<i>Caleb Plummer</i>	MR. JOSEPH JEFFERSON.
<i>The Stranger</i>	MR. A. H. DAVENPORT.
<i>Tackleton</i>	MR. T. B. JOHNSON.
<i>Dot</i>	MISS AGNES ROBERTSON.
<i>May Fielding</i>	MRS. J. H. ALLEN.
<i>Bertha</i>	MISS SARA STEVENS.
<i>Tillie Slowboy</i>	MRS. JOHN WOOD.
<i>Mrs. Fielding</i>	MRS. BLAKE.

The four first-named ladies were the pictures of female grace and beauty. This season I acted *Newman Noggs*, *Caleb Plummer*, *Salem Scudder*, and several other characters; but the latter were not very important.

Previous to the commencement of the season, Mr. Boucicault and I had some conversation in relation to the opening bill. I told him I was rather apprehensive of my hitting the part of *Caleb Plummer*, as I had never acted a character requiring pathos, and, with the exception of the love scene in "Our American Cousin," as yet had not spoken a serious line upon the stage. He seemed to have more confidence in my powers than I had, and insisted that I could act the part with success. I agreed therefore to open in *Caleb* with the understanding that I should finish the performance with a farce, so in the event of my failing in the first piece, I might save my reputation in the last. He assented to the arrangement, but warned me, however, that I would regret it; and he was right, for when the curtain fell upon "Dot," I should have much preferred not to have acted in the farce. So the little piece was taken off after the first night, as I was quite satisfied with *Caleb* alone.



ENGRAVED BY R. G. TIETZE.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH FORMERLY OWNED BY JOHN BROUGHAM, LENT BY PETER GILSEY.

JOSEPH JEFFERSON AS "NEWMAN NOGGS" IN "NICHOLAS NICKLEBY."

I RECEIVE GOOD ADVICE.

AN incident occurred during the first rehearsal of "Dot" that may be worth relating, as it bears upon a theory in acting that I have established for myself ever since it took place. Mr. Boucicault, I think, understood me, and felt from what I had said to him on previous occasions that I was not averse to suggestions in the dramatic art, and was in the habit of listening to advice, though I always reserved to myself the right of acting on my own judgment as to whether the proffered counsel was good or bad. During my rehearsal of the first scene, which I went through just as I intended acting it at night, I saw by his manner that he was disappointed with my rendering of the part, and I asked him what was the matter. He replied, "If that is the way you intend to act the part I do not wonder you were afraid to undertake it." This was a crushing blow to a young man from one older in years and experience; but feeling that there was something to learn, I asked him to explain what he meant. "Why, you have acted your last scene first; if you begin in that solemn strain you have nothing left for the end of the play." This was his remark, or words to the same effect; and I am certainly indebted to him, through this advice, for whatever success I achieved in the part.

I am not sure whether Mr. Boucicault was aware of what a large field for dramatic thought he opened up, and if I did not clearly understand the importance of it then, I have found it out since, and so far as I have been able applied it as a general rule. These reflections taught me never to anticipate a strong effect; in fact, to lead your audience by your manner, so that they shall scarcely suspect the character capable of such emotion; then, when some sudden blow has fallen, the terrible shock prepares the audience for a new and striking phase in the character: they feel that under these new conditions you would naturally exhibit the passion which till then was not suspected.

"THE OCTOROON."

RISING young actors usually guard their positions with a jealous eye, and, as I was no exception to this rule, it had been clearly understood between myself and the management that my name should be as prominently set before the public as that of any other member of the company. This agreement was not carried out; for on the announcement in the papers of the play of "The Octoroon" my name did not appear. I was to act one of the principal parts in the drama. I felt that I was something of a

favorite with the public, and naturally became irate at this indignity; so I sent my part, *Salem Scudder*, to the theater, with a note to Mr. Stuart, saying that I considered my engagement canceled by my name being publicly ignored in the announcement of the play, and I concluded my resignation by saying that, as I had no wish to distress the management, if Mr. Stuart or Mr. Boucicault would call on me I would be pleased to enter into a new engagement with them where my claims should be written out to prevent any further misunderstanding; otherwise I must decline to act again in the theater. As the play was ready and to be acted on the following Monday night, this being Saturday, I felt pretty sure that my note of resignation would act as a bombshell and explode with considerable force in the managerial office. And it did.

But I must now digress in order to show the sequel of the story. I had been for some time suffering with an attack of dyspepsia,—not a happy condition for an actor who is quarreling with the manager,—and conceived the idea that gentle exercise in the way of boxing would relieve me. So I engaged a professor, in the shape of an old retired "champion of light-weights," to give me lessons in the manly art of self-defense for the sum of two dollars per lesson, in consideration of which he was to allow me to pommel him over the head with soft gloves *ad libitum*. In our contract it was understood that I was the party of the first part, and the party of the second part agreed, never, under any consideration, to counter on the party of the first part. These lessons had been going on in my drawing-room—my teacher coming to the house—for several weeks, and I fancied that I was improving; certainly I was, so far as hitting-out went, for, as I observed before, according to the contract I had it all my own way.

On the occasion I am now about to describe I had been perhaps taking unwarranted liberties with the "champion," who must have got a little excited, for before I knew where I was I found myself stretched full length under the piano. I expostulated with him, informing him solemnly that this was the second breach of contract I had suffered from him during the last two days, and begged him in the future to subdue the old war-horse within him. In fact, I said that I would prefer to pay a little extra if he would conform to the contract more rigidly. We shook hands and began work again. My feelings were hurt, to say the least of it, and I was determined to get even with him. I now began to dance around my adversary in the conventional style, and had just given him "one for his nob," when looking over his shoulders I discovered the amazed



JOSEPH JEFFERSON AS "CALEB PLUMMER" IN "THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH."
(DRAWN FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY MORRISON, CHICAGO.)

faces of Dion Boucicault and William Stuart. Against the dark background of the room the two heads of these gentlemen loomed up like another pair of boxing-gloves. They stood aghast at the scene, and I fancy it must have naturally entered their minds that I had invited them up to settle our difficulties by an appeal to science, and had secured the services of a professional bruiser to assist me. But the record of these gentlemen, like my own, proves that we are, pugilistically speaking, men of peace; so if they had any doubt, their alarm was soon set at rest by my dismissing the light-weight and politely begging them to be seated.

We soon came to a more explicit understanding, and the matter was settled without any reference to the "Marquis of Queensberry." The truth of the matter is that they were very anxious for me to act the part, and I was equally anxious to play it. With these feelings underlying the difficulty there was no occasion for arbitration. The quarrels between manager and actor are never very serious. As with loving couples, the slightest advance on either side soon brings about a reconciliation.

The history of "The Octoroon" is well known. It dealt with the one absorbing subject of slavery, and was produced at a dangerous time. The slightest allusion to this now-



ENGRAVED BY H. DAVIDSON.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY FALK.

"TAKE CARE, JACOB, DON'T RILE ME."

JOSEPH JEFFERSON AS "SALEM SCUDDER" IN "THE OCTOROON."

banished institution only served to inflame the country, which was already at a white heat. A drama told so well had a great effect on the audience, for there was at this time a divided feeling in New York with regard to the coming struggle. Some were in favor of war, others thought it best to delay, and, if possible, avert it; and it was deemed unwise, if not culpable, by many for us to act "The Octoroon" at such a time. Then there were various opinions as to which way the play leaned—whether it was Northern or Southern in its sympathy. The truth of the matter is, it was non-committal. The dialogue and characters of the play made one feel for the South, but the action proclaimed against slavery, and called loudly for its abolition. When the old negro, just before the slave sale, calls his colored "bredrin" around him and tells them they must look their best so as to bring a good price for the "missis,"

and then falling on his knees asks a blessing on the family who had been so kind to them, the language drew further sympathy for the loving hearts of the South; but when they felt by the action of the play that the old darkey who had made them weep was a slave, they became abolitionists to a man.

When *Zoe*, the loving octoroon, is offered to the highest bidder, and a warm-hearted Southern girl offers all her fortune to buy *Zoe* and release her from the threatened bondage awaiting her, the audience cheered for the South; but when again the action revealed that she could be bartered for, and was bought and sold, they cheered for the North as plainly as though they had said, "Down with slavery." This reveals at once how the power of dramatic action overwhelms the comparative impotency of the dialogue.

(To be continued.)

Joseph Jefferson.

HOW ONE WINTER CAME IN THE LAKE REGION.

FOR weeks and weeks the autumn world stood still,
 Clothed in the shadow of a smoky haze;
 The fields were dead, the wind had lost its will,
 And all the lands were hushed by wood and hill,
 In those gray, withered days.

Behind a mist the bleary sun rose and set,
 At night the moon would nestle in a cloud;
 The fisherman, a ghost, did cast his net;
 The lake its shores forgot to chafe and fret,
 And hushed its caverns loud.

Far in the smoky woods the birds were mute,
 Save that from blackened tree a jay would scream,
 Or far in swamps the lizard's lonesome lute
 Would pipe in thirst, or by some gnarled root
 The tree-toad trilled his dream.

From day to day still hushed the season's mood,
 The streams staid in their runnels shrunk and dry;
 Suns rose aghast by wave and shore and wood,
 And all the world, with ominous silence, stood
 In weird expectancy:

When one strange night the sun like blood went down,
 Flooding the heavens in a ruddy hue;
 Red grew the lake, the sear fields parched and brown,
 Red grew the marshes where the creeks stole down,
 But never a wind-breath blew.

That night I felt the winter in my veins,
 A joyous tremor of the icy glow;
 And woke to hear the north's wild vibrant strains,
 While far and wide, by withered woods and plains,
 Fast fell the driving snow.

THE CENTURY MAGAZINE.

VOL. XXXIX.

APRIL, 1890.

No. 6.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JOSEPH JEFFERSON.

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SOME REMARKS ON GUYING.



AMONG the well-remembered characters of my dramatic life was an actor named Salisbury. The only influence that he exerted upon the stage during his career was, I regret to say, anything but a good one. "Guying" was formerly a slang term, but it has of late years become a technical one for trifling with a part upon the stage. The art of guying was Mr. Salisbury's forte, and it was the only thing that he did well. Life was one huge joke to him: he treated nothing seriously. He was the delight of actors and the bane of managers. It is related of him that he once sent a telegram to Mr. Rice of the Chicago Theater applying for an engagement. The manager sent back this answer: "I would not engage you if you would come for nothing"; to which Salisbury replied: "Terms accepted. Will be with you to-morrow."

This man's memory was so wonderful that it was almost impossible to ask him a question without getting a Shakspearean quotation in reply. If he was imperfect in his part, which was generally the case with him, he would interpolate speeches from other characters, talking the most absurd nonsense, and turning a serious scene into ridicule. Sometimes the audience, detecting this impertinence, would hiss. This rebuke was the only thing that would check him, for any slight put upon himself was keenly felt; but the next night the chastisement would be forgotten, and he would repeat his indiscretion. It was said of him that he was generous to a fault; and I think he must have been, for he never paid his washerwoman. One morning the poor old laundress was dunning him for her hard earnings. He was standing at the stage door, sur-

rounded by a circle of admirers, and turning furiously upon the old woman, he paraphrased *Macbeth's* speech to the ghost of *Banquo* in the following words: "Avaunt, and quit my sight! Thy tubs are marrowless; there is no starch in my fine shirts that thou didst glare withal! Approach thou like the Russian manager, the Hyrcan critic, or the 'Old Rye whisky-us'; or, be alive again, and make it salary day. If, trembling then, I do inhibit thee, confess me but a babe of a Salisbury." The laundress fled in despair, only too glad to escape unpaid from the supposed lunatic.

Innocent mirth is most desirable, but not mirth expended at the cost of another's feelings; and Salisbury's unfortunate career, terminating as it did in sickness and poverty, is an example of a handsome man, possessed of fair ability, who, by utter disregard of loyalty to his manager and of respect for the public, gradually lost the confidence of all who knew him, and became a neglected wreck. The practice of guying is unpardonable, and the indulgence in it unworthy of an artist or a gentleman. The leisure hours passed in the dressing-room or the greenroom afford ample time for an actor's amusement without inflicting the exuberance of his personal humor upon the audience. The rehearsals and subsequent performances of a play are not his property, and he has no right to mutilate them. Managers and leading actors are altogether too lax in their rebuke of this senseless and ruinous practice. They should neither commit the outrage themselves nor permit it in others. "Where example leads the way" the multitude will follow, and no leader can rightly claim the respect of his company unless he shows it to them and the public. I have a suspicion that guying begins where ability leaves off, and that many actors exhibit this trifling to conceal their own shortcomings.

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ENGRAVED BY J. H. E. WHITNEY.

"VERE IS DAT VAT YOU READ?"

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SARONY.

JOSEPH JEFFERSON AS "RIP VAN WINKLE."

I believe it is the ostrich that runs his head in the sand, thinking that if he does n't see his pursuer his pursuer can't see him: I wish, for the sake of simile, that it were the goose. Actors are often under the erroneous impression that their auditors do not observe these little bits of trifling. They not only observe them, but they resent them in a quiet and dangerous way — they do not come again. Having paid their money, and perhaps foregone the pleasure they could have enjoyed somewhere else, it suddenly comes upon them that they have been taken in, and are sitting in front of the theater only to witness the enjoyment of the actors, who are reveling in some private joke and refuse to let them into the secret; and as they walk home, pondering on their experience, they determine within themselves never to risk a repetition of the occurrence.

An actor, perhaps a good one, too, comes gaily on the stage. The audience like him and give him a hearty welcome; an evening's enjoyment has been promised, and they are in high expectation of the compact being fulfilled. Ah! who are those young fellows in the private box? Quite a jolly party, I declare. They know the comedian, too; see, he recognizes them. Now the comedian — just for fun, you know; he does n't mean any harm by it — introduces some joke: foreign to the play, to be sure; but then the private box recognize it at once as some allusion to their last merry-making. How they do enjoy it! Now a friendly wink, they laugh again; it's delightful. But how about the audience all this time? What are they doing while all this sport is going on? I will tell you. They are not hissing, to be sure, — well-bred American audiences



ENGRAVED BY H. DAVIDSON.

"I BELIEVE I VAS!"

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SARONY.

JOSEPH JEFFERSON AS "RIP VAN WINKLE."

seldom forget themselves so far, for they feel this breach of decorum would interfere with the enjoyment of others,—but they are determining within their minds that they are insulted, and that they will never come again to see that actor. He has taken a liberty with them that they will neither forget nor forgive.

I will not say that in my youth I never indulged in what I am now condemning. I did so, but I never obtained the position I coveted until I abandoned the pernicious habit. There is no other profession in which honest

and serious attention to the matter in hand is so promptly rewarded as ours.

Suppose, for an example of the harm that might be done, we take a case like this: An actor has worked for weeks patiently to study or perhaps create a character, and his success in it may prove the turning-point of his life. He is poor, and has a large family to support. If he but hit the part, his fortune is made, and he will not only serve the manager, the author, and the public, but be enabled to provide comforts for his home and an education for his children. Now, with all this at stake, some

wanton actor deliberately "guys" his part and overturns the patient care of his comrade, undermining the foundation and causing the whole structure to fall to the ground. See what a wreck we have here! Think of a poor artist before a picture upon which he has spent days of toil and nights of thought. It is just ready for the Academy, and now some comrade steals up behind the easel and pours a pot of paint over the canvas, ruining the work. What shall be said of him? And yet he may have done no more harm than the actor who has ruined the bright prospects of his brother actor.

I do not say that guying is always the result of cruel mischief. A man may be really good-hearted and yet do all this damage; but whether it be from design or thoughtlessness, the result is the same, and the habit should be frowned down and checked by every honest actor. In making these assertions I do not put them forth as an argument. This subject does not admit of argument, for nothing can be said in defense. There is no other side to the question. But the actor who guys is as much to be pitied as condemned, for the crime carries the punishment along with it.

THE COMEDIAN'S DISADVANTAGE.

THE repertory that naturally falls to a tragic actor gives him an immeasurable advantage over a comedian. Nearly all of the tragedies or serious plays, both of ancient and modern structure, have for their heroes one conspicuous and central figure, who is in a marked degree superior to the surrounding characters that support him, whereas the comedies, with but few exceptions, have been constructed with the view of displaying a group of actors.

If the starring system, as it is called, be an evil, then Shakspeare is undoubtedly responsible for its existence, as his tragedies almost without exception contain one great character on whom the interest of the play turns, and upon whom the attention of the audience is centered. When he introduces two figures for this purpose, as shown in the attitudes of *Othello* and *Iago*, and *Macbeth* and *Lady Macbeth*, they are so closely knit together that the double light shines only with a single ray. In the play of "Romeo and Juliet" it is supposed that *Mercutio* was killed early in the drama lest his brilliancy should dim the luster of the lovers. There are undoubtedly other splendid characters in the tragedies of Shakspeare, but when brought in contrast with the magnitude of his heroes they are comparatively subordinate. In his comedies the characters are formed in groups, and are generally so arranged that

they may be in some measure of equal value. *Falstaff* would seem to be an exception, yet even here the historical drama of "Henry IV.," in which the fat knight figures so conspicuously, is a play, not a comedy. Under these conditions the comedians of the olden time, though great favorites with the public, and in many instances superb actors, as individual attractions never drew large audiences. Possibly Sam Foote, who acted during Garrick's time, and later the elder Mathews, were notable exceptions; but even these actors, the legitimate comedians, were forced to abandon the old comedies and arrange special entertainments of their own in which they gave imitations of popular and easily recognized public characters.

THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL STAR COMEDIAN.

THE first to command universal attention as a single magnet was Tyrone Power. Possibly he was no greater than the comedians that preceded him, but Irish comedy up to the time of his advent had been confined to characters that were less important. Fortunately for Power, a number of rollicking and effective plays were written for him, through which his own unique character shone with special brilliancy. Besides this, he was not a mushroom. His professional growth had been gradual and healthy. As the leading juvenile actor and light comedian of the Theater Royal, Dublin, he had been for four years the prime favorite of the city, and afterwards, as a leader in legitimate plays at the Haymarket Theater, in London, he held a no less important position. This career was a firm foundation upon which to build his lighter, but to the public more valued, work; so that his long theatrical experience, added to his new and effective repertory, ranked him as the greatest and most successful Irish comedian of his time. I am not aware what effect Power's success as a star had upon the English stage,—it is more conservative than our own,—but his achievements here stirred up a new ambition among the comedians of America, and with national energy they immediately set to work developing their especial gifts; and these in many instances qualified them for becoming distinct features. Casting aside the old comedies, they came forward with novel and effective, if not legitimate, plays. Dramatic portraits of Dutchmen, Yankees, Frenchmen, together with the Western and local characters of our own country, were speedily and vigorously exhibited, many of them commanding immediate attention. Among the most successful comedians may be mentioned Hackett, Hill, Marble, Burke, Chanfrau, Williams, and, later on,



HARRY A. PERRY. (SEE PAGE 811.) (FROM A PRINT IN THE COLLECTION OF THOMAS J. MCKEE.)

Owens, Sothern, Florence, Raymond, and a host of others.

For myself, like some of those already mentioned, I had always been, more or less, a legitimate actor, and the hope of entering the race for dramatic fame as an individual and single attraction never came into my head until, in 1858, I acted *Asa Trenchard* in "Our American Cousin"; but as the curtain descended the first night on that remarkably successful play, visions of large type, foreign countries, and increased remuneration floated before me, and I resolved to be a star if I could. A

resolution to this effect is easily made; its accomplishment is quite another matter.

Art has always been my sweetheart, and I have loved her for herself alone. I had fancied that our affection was mutual, so that when I failed as a star, which I certainly did, I thought she had jilted me. Not so. I wronged her. She only reminded me that I had taken too great a liberty, and that if I expected to win her I must press my suit with more patience. Checked, but undaunted in the resolve, my mind dwelt upon my vision, and I still indulged in day-dreams of the future.



ENGRAVED BY T. JOHNSON.

"IS DAT THE VILLAGE OF FALLING VATER?"

PHOTOGRAPHED BY WALKER & SONS.

JOSEPH JEFFERSON AS "RIP VAN WINKLE."

HOW I CAME TO PLAY "RIP VAN WINKLE."

DURING these delightful reveries it came up before me that in acting *Asa Trenchard* I had, for the first time in my life on the stage, spoken a pathetic speech; and though I did not look at the audience during the time I was acting,—for that is dreadful,—I felt that they both laughed and cried. I had before this often made my audience smile, but never until now had I moved them to tears. This to me novel accomplishment was delightful, and in casting about for a new character my mind was ever dwelling on reproducing an effect where humor would be so closely allied to pathos that smiles and tears should mingle with each other. Where could I get one? There had been many written, and as I looked back into the dramatic history of the past a long line of lovely ghosts loomed up before me, passing as in a procession: *Job Thornberry*, *Bob Tyke*, *Frank Oatland*, *Zekiel Home-spun*, and a host of departed heroes "with martial stalk went by my watch." Charming fellows all, but not for me. I felt I could not do them justice. Besides, they were too human. I was looking for a myth—something intangible and impossible. But he would not come. Time went on, and still with no result.

During the summer of 1859 I arranged to board with my family at a queer old Dutch farmhouse in Paradise Valley, at the foot of Pocono Mountain, in Pennsylvania. A ridge of hills covered with tall hemlocks surrounds the vale, and numerous trout-streams wind through the meadows and tumble over the rocks. Stray farms are scattered through the valley, and the few old Dutchmen and their families who till the soil were born upon it; there and only there they have ever lived. The valley harmonized with me and our resources. The scene was wild, the air was fresh, and the board was cheap. What could the light heart and purse of a poor actor ask for more than this?

On one of those long rainy days that always render the country so dull I had climbed to the loft of the barn, and lying upon the hay was reading that delightful book "The Life and Letters of Washington Irving." I had gotten well into the volume, and was much interested in it, when to my surprise I came upon a passage which said that he had seen me at Laura Keene's theater as *Goldfinch* in Holcroft's comedy of "The Road to Ruin," and that I reminded him of my father "in look, gesture, size, and make." Till then I was not aware that he had ever seen me. I was comparatively obscure, and to find myself remembered and written of by such a man gave me a thrill of pleasure I can never forget. I put down the book, and lay there thinking how proud I was, and ought to be, at the revelation

of this compliment. What an incentive to a youngster like me to go on.

And so I thought to myself, "Washington Irving, the author of 'The Sketch-Book,' in which is the quaint story of Rip Van Winkle." Rip Van Winkle! There was to me magic in the sound of the name as I repeated it. Why, was not this the very character I wanted? An American story by an American author was surely just the theme suited to an American actor.

In ten minutes I had gone to the house and returned to the barn with "The Sketch-Book." I had not read the story since I was a boy. I was disappointed with it; not as a story, of course, but the tale was purely a narrative. The theme was interesting, but not dramatic. The silver Hudson stretches out before you as you read, the quaint red roofs and queer gables of the old Dutch cottages stand out against the mist upon the mountains; but all this is descriptive. The character of *Rip* does not speak ten lines. What could be done dramatically with so simple a sketch? How could it be turned into an effective play?

Three or four bad dramatizations of the story had already been acted, but without marked success. Yates of London had given one in which the hero dies, one had been acted by my father, one by Hackett, and another by Burke. Some of these versions I had remembered when I was a boy, and I should say that Burke's play and performance were the best, but nothing that I remembered gave me the slightest encouragement that I could get a good play out of any of the existing materials. Still I was so bent upon acting the part that I started for the city, and in less than a week, by industriously ransacking the theatrical wardrobe establishments for old leather and mildewed cloth, and by personally superintending the making of the wigs, each article of my costume was completed; and all this too before I had written a line of the play or studied a word of the part.

This is working in an opposite direction from all the conventional methods in the study and elaboration of a dramatic character, and certainly not following the course I would advise any one to pursue. I merely mention the out-of-the-way, upside-down manner of going to work as an illustration of the impatience and enthusiasm with which I entered upon the task. I can only account for my getting the dress ready before I studied the part to the vain desire I had of witnessing myself in the glass, decked out and equipped as the hero of the Catskills.

I got together the three old printed versions of the drama and the story itself. The plays were all in two acts. I thought it would be an improvement in the drama to arrange it in three, making the scene with the specter crew an act by itself. This would separate the poet-

ical from the domestic side of the story. But by far the most important alteration was in the interview with the spirits. In the old versions they spoke and sang. I remembered that the effect of this ghostly dialogue was dreadfully human, so I arranged that no voice but *Rip's* should be heard. This is the only act on the stage in which but one person speaks while all the others merely gesticulate, and I was quite sure that the silence of the crew would give a lonely and desolate character to the scene and add to its supernatural weirdness. By this means, too, a strong contrast with the single voice of *Rip* was obtained by the deathlike stillness of the "demons" as they glided about the stage in solemn silence. It required some thought to hit upon just the best questions that could be answered by a nod and shake of the head, and to arrange that at times even *Rip* should propound a query to himself and answer it; but I had availed myself of so much of the old material that in a few days after I had begun my work it was finished.

In the seclusion of the barn I studied and rehearsed the part, and by the end of summer I was prepared to transplant it from the rustic realms of an old farmhouse to a cosmopolitan audience in the city of Washington, where I opened at Carusi's Hall under the management of John T. Raymond. I had gone over the play so thoroughly that each situation was fairly engraved on my mind. The rehearsals were therefore not tedious to the actors; no one was delayed that I might consider how he or she should be disposed in the scene. I had by repeated experiments so saturated myself with the action of the play that a few days seemed to perfect the rehearsals. I acted on these occasions with all the point and feeling that I could muster. This answered the double purpose of giving me freedom and of observing the effect of what I was doing on the actors. They seemed to be watching me closely, and I could tell by little nods of approval where and when the points hit.

I became each day more and more interested in the work; there was in the subject and the part much scope for novel and fanciful treatment. If the sleep of twenty years was merely incongruous, there would be room for argument pro and con; but as it is an impossibility, I felt that the audience would accept it at once, not because it was an impossibility, but from a desire to know in what condition a man's mind would be if such an event could happen. Would he be thus changed? His identity being denied both by strangers, friends, and family, would he at last almost accept the verdict and exclaim, "Then I am dead, and that is a fact"? This was the strange and original attitude of the character that attracted me.

In acting such a part what to do was simple enough, but what not to do was the important and difficult point to determine. As the earlier scenes of the play were of a natural and domestic character, I had only to draw upon my experience for their effect, or employ such conventional methods as myself and others had used before in characters of that ilk. But from the moment *Rip* meets the spirits of Hendrik Hudson and his crew I felt that all colloquial dialogue and commonplace pantomime should cease. It is at this point in the story that the supernatural element begins, and henceforth the character must be raised from the domestic plane and lifted into the realms of the ideal.

To be brief, the play was acted with a result that was to me both satisfactory and disappointing. I was quite sure that the character was what I had been seeking, and I was equally satisfied that the play was not. The action had neither the body nor the strength to carry the hero; the spiritual quality was there, but the human interest was wanting. The final alterations and additions were made five years later by Dion Boucicault, and will be referred to in their place.

FAILURE IN SAN FRANCISCO.

AT the death of my wife, which occurred in March, 1861, I broke up my household in New York, and, leaving three of my children at school, left home with my eldest son for California.

Through the act of an overzealous agent, my engagement in San Francisco was an unmistakable failure. Before my arrival I had been "overbilled," as it is technically termed. If a circus had been coming the placards could hardly have been more numerous. Those fatal documents known as the "opinions of the press" had been so freely circulated that every one was aware not only of what I could do but what I had done, and must therefore take for granted what I was going to do. All power of judging for themselves had been denied both to the public and the local press. I felt that I should fail, and I did fail.

One of the first actors I met on my arrival was Harry Perry. I had known him years before, and we had acted together in our youth. He was standing in front of the theater reading, rather quizzically I fancy, one of the many cards on which were printed the previously mentioned, and, I think, always to be avoided, "opinions of the press." After we had shaken hands, he looked at me with the same old twinkle of mischief in his eye that I had remembered years ago, and said, pointing to the "opinions," "You must have improved greatly since we last met."

HARRY PERRY.

HARRY PERRY was one of the handsomest men on the stage, and a capital actor too. His animal spirits and personal magnetism, however, were the raw materials out of which his popularity was manufactured. In those parts that belonged to a farce light comedian he was quite unequaled. Youth, vivacity, and a ringing laugh made him altogether one of the most captivating fellows in his line. His

(To be continued.)

figure was lithe and graceful, and, as was said of one of the old light comedians years ago, he had a five-act comedy in each eye. On the occasion I speak of he was quite intoxicated with happiness, being in the height of a honeymoon. His bride was Miss Agnes Land,—now Mrs. Agnes Booth,—a young lady who had lately arrived from Australia, and whose talent and beauty combined with his own made them valuable members of the theatrical profession.

Joseph Jefferson.

[BEGUN IN THE NOVEMBER NUMBER.]

FRIEND OLIVIA.

BY AMELIA E. BARR,

Author of "Jan Vedder's Wife," "The Border Shepherdess," "A Daughter of Fife,"
"The Bow of Orange Ribbon," etc.

X.

A MEETING. (Continued.)



TO Nathaniel and Olivia it was a charmed journey. The slow rumbling of the wheels in the wagon ruts, the ring of the whetstone sharpening the hay-makers' scythes, the call of the crake in the meadows, the never-ceasing murmur of running water—all these simple sounds made distinct impressions, and yet blended with their own whispered speech as perfectly as if Nature was composing a piece for six voices, and doing it with that delightful perfection of imperfection which charms all discords into sweetest harmony.

Who can blame them if they lingered on their way—if they did not reach Sandys until the sun was westering low on the horizon? Never could hours with just the same bliss come back to them. For love must have the flavor of its circumstances, and these continually change. This afternoon there was the parting with Jenifer Waring, and the expected meeting with Hannah Mettelane, and the long unbroken companionship of their happy journey; and, not without its influence, though unspoken of, the meeting with Anastasia de Burg. Unconsciously, even this had drawn them closer together. Anastasia was a bitter element in herself, but the very act of eluding her special notice turned the bitterness into that sense of elation which is the result of escape from anything evil. Perhaps, indeed, when the light of heaven shows us clearly the pitfalls and dangers of the earth road which led us to the Holy City our sweetest songs of gratitude will be not for the troubles we have conquered, but for those which we have escaped.

When they reached Sandys Olivia was pleasantly surprised. She had expected the house to express by many outward tokens of

neglect the anxiety and loss which was in its owner's heart. But Hannah Mettelane was not a woman who delighted in ceremonious and mournful symbols of sorrow. Joy in the Lord, and doing her duty in it, was the cheerful law of her life. In all troublous events she could find some comfort, though it was only the negative admission that things might have been worse. She had no children, and Olivia was dear to her. Indeed, the girl had spent much of her life in the low, wide-spreading Mettelane farmhouse under the almost motherly care of Hannah Mettelane.

She was at the open door of Sandys to meet them, her broad beaming face one general smile of welcome; and it fully included Nathaniel, although she had never seen him before. But her woman's heart told her that he was Olivia's lover, and a true love affair was to Hannah Mettelane a true delight.

The house had its usual atmosphere of peace and content and spotless cleanliness. They went into the parlor. The basil pot in the window diffused its restorative aroma, and great nosegays of roses gave a delightful freshness and fragrance to the handsome old room. A cold capon, a dish of curds and cream, some delicate Christ Church tarts, and a bowl of ripe cherries were spread upon the whitest of linen. Red Rhine wine stood by Nathaniel's side, and Aunt Hannah brought with her own hands a foaming pitcher of delicious new milk. She understood also their desire to be everything to each other, and she invented a number of house duties in order to leave Olivia the pleasant task of entertaining her lover.

Nathaniel had told himself that he would not remain many minutes, but he could not resist the enchantment of the hour and the love which glorified it. He remembered his lonely mother affectionately, but yet he lingered until the twilight lost every tinge of color and