

Actors' Dressing Rooms.



HE robing apartments of actors are pleasant retreats. Quaint old prints, autographed portraits and pictures, highly-prized programmes, letters from celebrities are as numerous as they are interesting, whilst every actor bids "good luck" cross his threshold by exhibiting his own particular horse-shoe in a conspicuous corner.

Where is a more picturesque room than that which Henry Irving enters nightly? Scarcely a dozen square inches of wall paper is to be seen—pictures are everywhere. The eminent tragedian has a

was on his way to America. He turned up, however, at the Lyceum stage door four days afterwards, and it remains a mystery to this day as to whether Fussie came by road or rail.

Henry Irving's room is a comfortable apartment. The floor is covered with oil-cloth, and a huge rug imparts a cosy appearance. Irving always uses the same chair to sit in when making up. It has broken down a score of times, but has been patched up again and again. In fact, the actor has almost a reverence for anything which is a connecting link with old associations.

Look at the costumes, for instance, hanging behind a door which leads to a very



MR. IRVING'S DRESSING-ROOM.

private entrance in Burleigh-street, and you may know when the actor is not far away, for "Fussie," a pet fox-terrier, always heralds his approach. "Fussie" has his own mat to sit on, and here he waits during the whole of the performance until after the second act, when he regularly looks up for his customary biscuit. It was "Fussie" who was lost at Southampton when Mr. Irving

unpretentious-looking wash-basin. There hangs the clothing of *The Master of Ravenswood*. The two Spanish hats with long feathers, the velvet coat and waistcoat with innumerable buttons, a quaint old crimson waistcoat, with elaborate silver work. Mr. Irving clings to an old coat so long as it will cling to him. He makes his clothes old—wears them during the day.

That old beaver hat was worn in "Charles I." and "The Dead Heart"—now it is the characteristic head-gear of *The Master of Ravenswood*. The hat worn in the last act did duty ten years ago in "The Corsican Brothers."

There, just by the long pier glass, is the old fashioned oak dressing-table, of a pattern associated with the days of King Arthur—in fact, the table has done duty in "Macbeth" in one of the banqueting scenes. Handle some of the veritable curiosities on it. The very looking-glass is tied up with string—it has reflected its owner's face for fourteen years, and went across the Atlantic with him. The old pincushion went as well. On a chair are the actor's eye-glasses, which he always uses when making up. Scissors, nail parers, &c., are about, whilst the paints lie in a little side cabinet by the looking-glass, and four diminutive gallipots are conspicuous, filled with the colours mostly used. A great tin box of crepe hair is also at hand, for Mr. Irving makes all his own moustaches. He gums a little hair on where needed and then works in colour to get the effect.

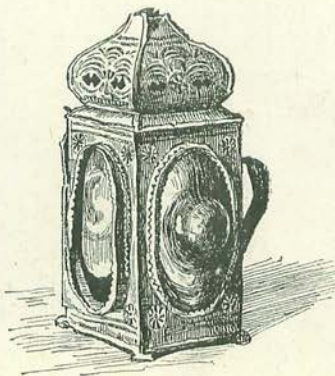
The wicker hand-basket is interesting. The dresser carries this to "the wings" when the actor needs a rapid change of "make-up." It has three compartments, holding a glass of water, powder puff, saucer containing fuller's earth, cold cream, hare's foot, lip salve, rouge, and a remarkably old comb and brush. Here is a striking collection of rings; a great emerald—only a "stage" gem, alas!—is worn in "Louis XI." and "Richelieu," whilst here is one worn as *Doricourt* in the "Belle's Stratagem," the space where the stone ought to be being ingeniously filled up with blue sealing wax. These long pear-shaped pearl earrings are worn as *Charles I.*, such as all gay cavaliers were wont to wear.

You can handle the quaint old bull's-eye lantern which tradition says Eugene Aram carried on the night of the murder—for it is on the table. A piece of wick still remains and grease is visible—not as the morbid Aram left it, but as last used. The lantern itself is of stamped metal. The glass on either side is there, though that

through which the light was seen in the centre has long since left. It is a highly interesting relic.

Be careful not to step into a big flower-pot saucer just close by, where "Fussie" drinks; mind not to overturn what looks like a magnified pepper-box near the fireplace, but which, after all, only contains the dust which is "peppered" on to the actor's long boots, to make them look travel-stained and worn. Then walk round the room and admire the treasures.

There is a little gift sent from Denmark. In a neat oak frame is a picture of Elsinore, sprays of leaves from "Ophelia's brook," and a number of tiny stones and pebbles from "Hamlet's Grave." Here again is Kean, by Sir Thomas Lawrence, a small "Maclise," a sketch by Charles Matthews, Fechter—who used to dress in this very room himself—as *The Master of Ravenswood*, Ellen Terry as *Ophelia*, Sara Bernhardt, and John L. Toole. Variety is found in a pair of horseshoes, one of which Mr. Irving carried with him to America.



EUGENE ARAM'S LANTERN.

Over the crimson plush mantel-board is "Garrick in the Green-room," and on either side a pair of ancient coloured prints of the one and only Joey Grimaldi, one of which represents him "as he appeared when he took his farewell benefit at Drury Lane Theatre on June 27, 1828," with pan and soap in his lap, arrayed in highly coloured garments, wonderfully made, and wearing a remarkably broad smile on his face. But to mention every one of Mr. Irving's treasures would be impossible.

The play over, he is in walking costume, cigar alight, and away in less than a quarter of an hour—"Fussie" with him, following faithfully in his steps.

Mr. Toole's room is exactly what every body imagines it to be—cosy and homely, like its genial occupant. The casual passer-by over the iron grating in King William-street little thinks that he is throwing a momentary shadow over the very corner where Toole's washstand, soap and towel find a convenient lodging.

How simple everything is! The little table in the centre where Toole sits down

and religiously "drops a line," during the time he is not wanted in the piece, to all those unknown "young friends" who would tempt good fortune on the stage; the sofa covered with flowered cretonne; and in close proximity to the fireplace a

rising young actor who had only recently made his appearance—J. L. Toole by name.

Near a capital character sketch of Henry J. Byron, by Alfred Bryan, is an old playbill in a black ebony frame. This was the programme for one night:—



MR. TOOLE'S DRESSING-ROOM.

rickety arm-chair in brown leather. The springs are broken, but what matter? That chair is Toole's, sir, and Royalty has occupied it many a time. Yes, nothing could be more simple than our own comedian's dressing-room. It is just a cosy parlour, and with Toole in the chair by the fire-side one would be loth to leave it.

The mantel-board has a clock in the centre, an ornament or two, and a bust of the occupant in his younger days. In a corner is the veritable umbrella used in *Paul Pry*. What a priceless collection of theatrical reminiscences meet the eye everywhere! There is a portrait group of a company of young actors who appeared in the original production of "Dearer than Life," at the New Queen's Theatre, Long-acre—Henry Irving, Charles Wyndham, John Clayton, Lionel Brough, John L. Toole, and Miss Henrietta Hodson, who afterwards became Mrs. Labouchere. A tolerably good cast! And here are portraits of a few actors taken years ago at Ryde, Isle of Wight, showing W. Creswick in a great Inverness cape, Benjamin Webster, S. Phelps, Paul Bedford, and a

THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET.

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

The Drama in 3 Acts:
MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS.

KEELEY WORRIED BY BUCKSTONE.

Mr. Keeley By himself.
Mr. Buckstone By himself.

To conclude with the laughable farce,

THE SPITALFIELDS WEAVER.

Simmons Mr. John L. Toole.

(*His first appearance on any stage*).

Many a white satin programme is about, and the tenant of the little dressing-room of King William-street is represented in many parts. Just by the door is Mr. Liston as *Paul Pry*, arrayed in bottle-green coat, big beaver hat, and armed with the inevitable umbrella—"just called to ask you how your tooth was."

An excellent portrait represents John Billington as *John Peerybingle* in "Dot," underneath which are penned some noteworthy lines: "I don't want anybody to

tell me my fortune. I've got one of the best little wives alive, a happy home over my head, a blessed baby, and a cricket on my hearth."

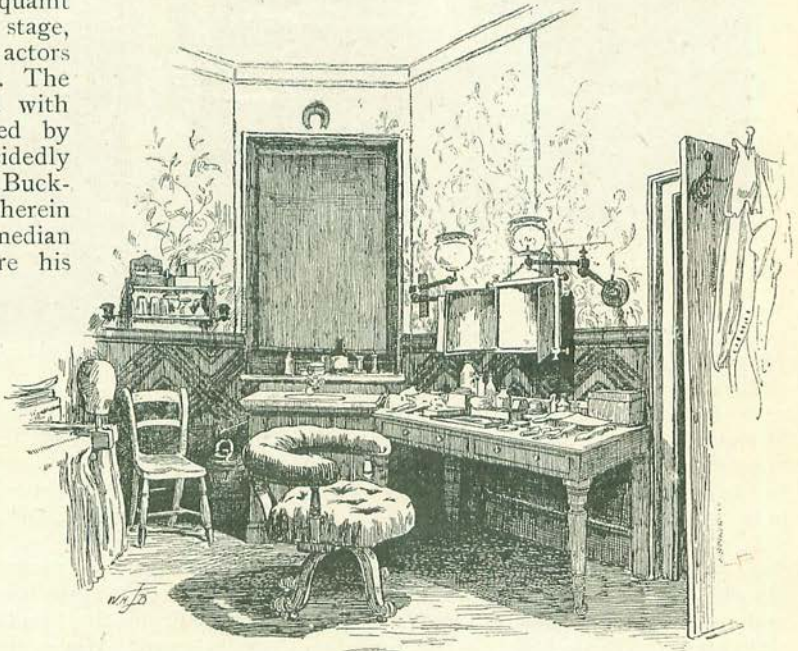
Certainly what Mr. W. S. Gilbert would term "a highly respectable" entrance is that which leads to Mr. Beerbohm Tree's dressing-room. The stage door is in Suffolk-street, and until Mr. Tree's tenancy of the Haymarket Theatre, there was an old clause in the lease setting forth that whenever Royalty visited the theatre they should have the right to enter by that way. Buckstone lived here—his dressing-room still remains. It is a quaint corner near the stage, now used by the actors as a smoking-room. The walls are covered with red paper, relieved by one or two decidedly ancient paintings. Buckstone's iron safe—wherein the renowned comedian was wont to store his money—is still visible; but the money-bags are there no longer; their place being occupied by sundry jars of tobacco and a church-warden or two. Only on one occasion has Mr. Tree found it necessary to use this room. The corpulency of the bibulous *Falstaff* prevented the actor from conveniently coming down the stairs which lead from his own room to the stage—hence *Falstaff* was attired in this apartment.

The sound of the overture is just beginning as we hurriedly follow Mr. Tree in the direction of his room. Though he has been singled out as a very master of the art of transferring the face into the presentment of character, it is a fact that Mr. Tree never sits down to dress until the overture has started, and attaches less importance to his make-up than to any other portion of the actor's art.

He throws himself into a chair of a decided "office" pattern, in front of a triple

glass which reflects all positions of his face. The sticks of paint are arranged on a small Japanese tray, and the various powders in tin boxes. Everything about the room is quiet and unassuming—a washstand near the window, a few odd wooden-back chairs. The room is regarded rather as a workshop than a lounging-room, and it certainly possesses that appearance, though not without a certain pleasant cosiness.

The actor's fingers have evidently been recently at work on the lengthy pier-glass. Young Mr. Irving has just been in. He wanted some idea of a make-up for *King John*. Mr. Tree gave him one by taking a

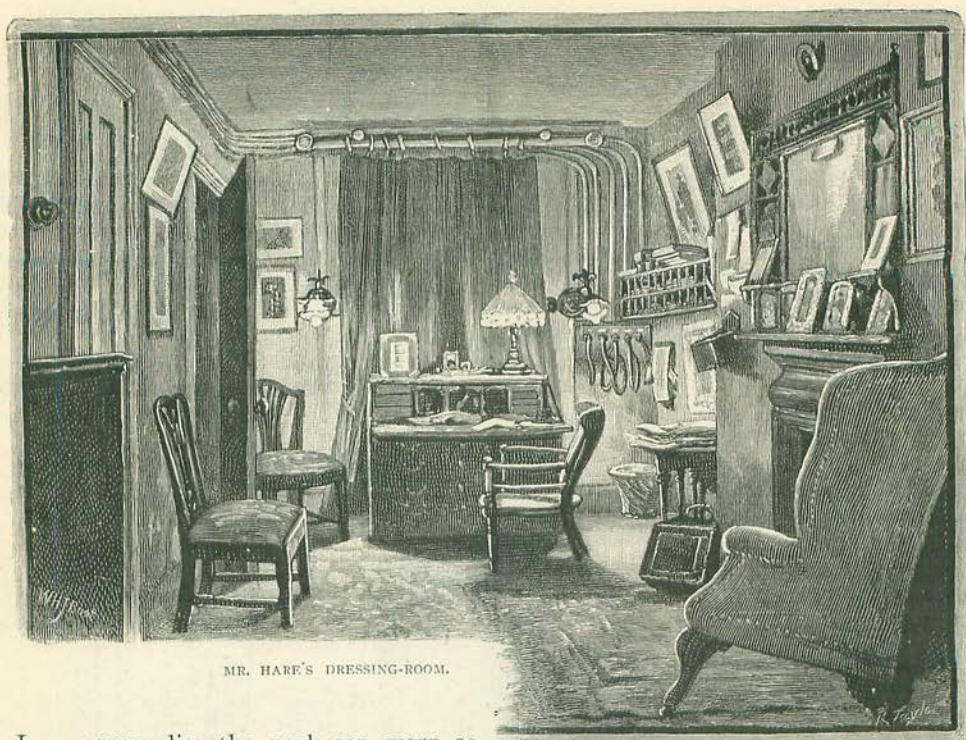


MR. BEERBOHM TREE'S DRESSING-ROOM.

stick of grease paint and sketching it in outline on the glass. A number of still unanswered letters are lying about—some of them delightfully humorous missives from "stage-struck" young people. One is positively from a footman. It runs:—

"DEAR SIR,—I want to be an actor, so thought I would write to you. I am tall and dark, and have been a footman for five years in a nobleman's family. I have just had a hundred pounds left me, and if you will give me a part in one of your pieces I will give you fifty pounds of it. Write by return, as I have already given notice.—Your obedient servant,

"P.S.—Mark the letter private."



MR. HARE'S DRESSING-ROOM.

In a corner lies the peak cap worn as *Demetrius* in "The Red Lamp"; here the cloth cap, gaily decorated with poppies, corn and feathers, used in "The Ballad Monger." Over the door is a gigantic horseshoe, measuring at least a couple of feet from top to bottom. This was placed here by Mrs. Bancroft.

Just at this moment a magnificent bulldog—whose appearance we had not previously noticed—turns lazily on a mat under the dressing-table. This is "Ned," rechristened "Bully Boy." The dog plays a prominent part in the piece now running at the Haymarket.

A tap at the door. A voice cries, "Mr. Tree"—and hurriedly applying a line here and there about the eyes, as we accompany the actor to the stage, he has something interesting to say regarding "making-up." He rather laughs at the idea, and is perplexed to understand the reason why his facial paintings are so commented upon. He is always the last to reach the theatre. "The less make-up, the better," he observes. "The art of acting is not a matter of painting the face, for a very plain person can in a few seconds become extremely good-looking and *vice versa*; it is what comes from within—what the player feels. It is his imagination which really illuminates the

face, and not what he has put on it with hare's foot and pencil."

A peculiar interest is attached to the visit which we made to Mr. John Hare's room at the Garrick Theatre. Mr. Hare has been on the stage for twenty-six years, and previous to our finding him seated in his great arm-chair by the fireplace, had never been interviewed. Hence the few words he said, as he played with a cigarette, become particularly notable.

"I have been acting now for twenty-six years. I was for ten years with Mrs. Bancroft at the Prince of Wales's, and have been some twelve or thirteen years in management."

"What is your favourite part, Mr. Hare?"

"The present one in 'A Pair of Spectacles,' is the reply. "I take about a month to study up a character. I always wear the clothes I am going to play in for some time previously, so as to get them to my figure. The longest time I ever bestowed on a make-up was in 'The Profligate.' I took half an hour over it."

Mr. Hare has really two rooms. The

big one is used for an office as much as possible, where the actor does all his correspondence. Note the old-fashioned high wire fender, the heavy plush curtains, and elaborate rosewood furniture. It is a most artistic apartment. Those speaking-tubes communicate with the stage door, prompter, box office, and acting manager.

The pictures which adorn the walls are as varied as they are valuable. Here may be



MR. HARE'S INNER ROOM.

found Leslie Ward's caricature of Corney Grain and of George Grossmith, together with an old engraving of Garrick, after R. E. Pine, published in 1818. Just by the glass is one of the few photos of Compton, in frock coat and plaid tie. Many a reminiscence of the Hare and Kendal management is about, and on the mantel-board of ebony and gold—over which rests the customary horse-shoe with the initials J. H. in the centre—portraits in silver frames of members of Mr. Hare's family are to be seen.

But by far the most attractive corner is a little room, scarcely large enough for two people to stand in, which branches off from the more spacious apartment. There, hanging up, is the light suit worn as *Benjamin Goldfinch*, with the long black coat which flaps about so marvellously—the actor finds plenty of "character" even in a coat—and the shepherd's-plaid trousers.

The looking-glass is of walnut, with electric lights on either side shaded with metal leaves. In front of this he sits, amidst a hundred little oddments. Here are tiny bottles of medicine and quinine—for the actor being is a firm believer in the properties of this traditional strength-reviver. The little room is as comfortable as it well can be, and has a thoroughly domesticated air about it.

There are many things to notice as we pass through the passages on our way toward Mr. Charles Wyndham's room at the Criterion; programmes and play-bills in German and Russian of "David Garrick"—in fact the passages are literally decorated with mementoes of the clever comedian's admirable impersonation of this character. A bronze of the actor as *Davy* raising the glass on high, and a massive silver loving cup, engraved "Garrick," is mounted on a pedestal bearing the inscription "Charles Wyndham, Von Direktor Lautenberg, Residenz Theatre, Berlin, December, 1887." Prints and pictures typical of Russian life are freely displayed. And here is an exceptional curiosity, and one which is doubtless highly treasured. In a modest oak frame is a piece of paper which once served to settle a little dispute, which is historical among things theatrical:—

"Mr. Bedford wages two gallons of claret with Mr. Williams, that Mr. Garrick did not play upon ye stage in ye year 1732 or before."

Then follows the suggestive word "Paid," and below it are the words:—

"I acted upon Goodman's Fields Theatre for ye first time in ye year 1741.

"D. GARRICK.

"Witness,

"SOMERSET DRAPER."

Mr. Wyndham's room has one thing about it which distinguishes it from all similar apartments in London. It is next to the stage, and by pulling up a little red blind he can see through an aperture just what is going on, and know exactly when his services are required.

The room is square, divided by a curtain. Strange to say, not a single portrait of a brother actor is apparent; but, whilst the actor paints his face, he can see many an invitation to dinner negligently thrust in the edges of the gilt frame. The dressing-table which occupies nearly the whole length of one end of the room is fully

supplied with countless colours, whilst a little tray is positively brimming over with all patterns of collar studs. An egg is handy; it is intended for the hair, as Mr. Wyndham and wigs have never agreed. There is a writing-table and a chair or two, and an elaborate inlaid rosewood escritoire is in a corner, against which Mr. Wyndham stands for his portrait in the character of *Dazzle*, with his flowered waistcoat, frilled front, and hanging fob.

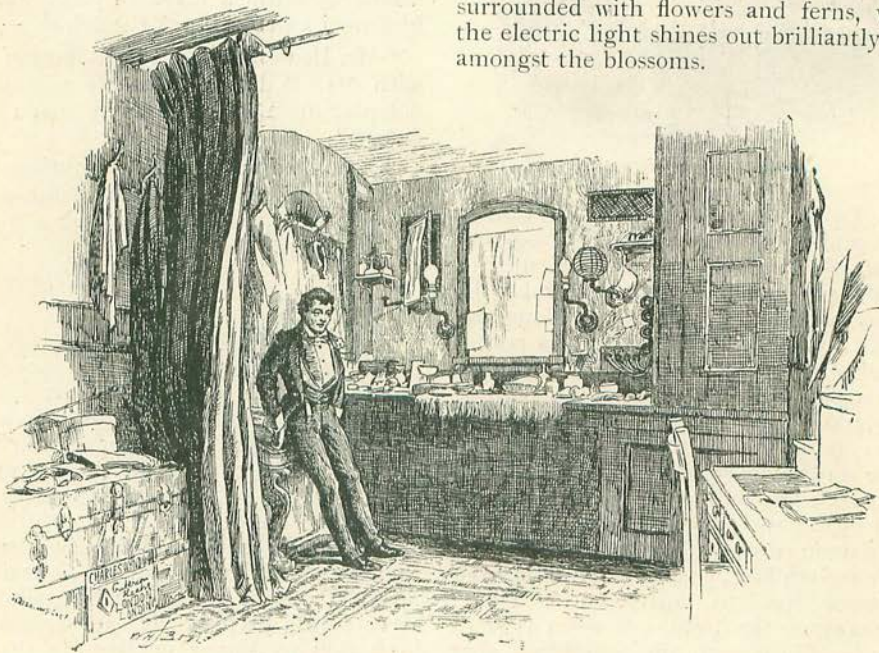
Nor must the apartment in which Mr. Wyndham entertains his friends be passed unnoticed. This is a room overlooking Piccadilly, and capable of seating some twenty or twenty-five persons. It was dark when we entered, but the next instant the electric light was switched on, and an apartment was presented which may be singled out as the only one of its kind ever built.

We were standing in the middle of a first-class cabin of a ship. Not a solitary item was wanting to complete the illusion. The ceiling was built low, and every article of furniture was made on sea-going principles, even down to the table. The walls are of walnut, the panels between being lined

with exquisite sateen. Though one or two windows look out on to Piccadilly Circus, there are many port-holes about, all draped with old gold plush curtains. The upholstery consists principally of a series of settees of light blue plush, which go round the sides of the room.

The looking-glass over the mantelpiece is typical of a cabin. It is surrounded, in the form of a framework, by a cable, the ends of which are fastened off by diminutive anchors. Exactly in the centre, in an elaborate frame, is the programme used on the occasion of the performance of "David Garrick," which Mr. Wyndham and his brother actors gave before the Prince and Princess of Wales at Sandringham some years ago.

The very lamps suspended from the ceiling are made to sway to and fro in case of rough and windy weather. The whole thing is an ingenious idea, delightfully carried out, and to-night Mr. Wyndham's cabin is seen at its best. There is to be a supper-party at the conclusion of the performance downstairs, and the tables for the time being are burdened down with every luxury. Fairy lamps are peeping out amongst the pines and hot-house grapes, and the lamps hanging from the roof are surrounded with flowers and ferns, whilst the electric light shines out brilliantly from amongst the blossoms.



MR. WYNDHAM'S DRESSING-ROOM.