YESTERDAYS WITH ACTORS

YESTERDAYS WITH ACTORS.

YESTERDAYS WITH ACTORS

BY

CATHERINE MARY REIGNOLDS-WINSLOW

BOSTON
CUPPLES AND COMPANY
1887

The Hyde Park Press.

YESTERDAYS WITH ACTORS

BY

CATHERINE MARY REIGNOLDS-WINSLOW

BOSTON
CUPPLES AND HURD
94 BOYLSTON STREET
1887

The Hyde Park Press.

To Helen Morton, M.D.,

Good Physician, Faithful Friend, True Woman;

to whose

Skill, Constancy, and Courage,

I owe

Health, Hope, and Inspiration;

these Memories are affectionately inscribed.

CONTENTS.

PHOTO-GRAVURES.

VIGNETTES.

GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

IS MADE

⁂ To Mr. Frank Hill Smith for his tasteful design for the cover of "Yesterdays with Actors,"

⁂ To Mr. F. P. Vinton, for the kind permission to copy his portrait of Mr. Warren.

IN the memories of theatre-goers, a generation is said to count no more than ten years, and we are reckoned old folks by the public after a comparatively short service. But I was startled to find in a recent book of dramatic biography a statement that my father was killed at Waterloo ; whereas it was my grandfather who died there, when my father was eight weeks old.

This seemed to crowd me rather cruelly into an historic period, and the incident has been the spur to jot down a few trifling recollections that may be of some slight interest to those who share them ; before their subjects are forgotten, and the writer has become "the idle singer of an empty day."

My earliest remembrance was keeping the anniversary of this same grandfather's death ; certainly a meaningless attempt at sentiment on my part, but a mournful observance on my father's, with which my mother early taught me to sympathize.

Major Reignolds came from Germany to England in the suite of the *Duke of York*, and,

and, acting as aide-de-camp to *Sir William Ponsonby*, fell in the battle of Waterloo. The portrait of my grandfather, standing by the horse that was killed under him on the field, was a discipline in my early days — partly, no doubt, on account of the reverential manner with which I was used to see it treated. But the slightly knitted brow, large, deep-set gray eyes, and sensitive truthful mouth, were in themselves a reproach to me more than once, and well do I remember hesitating to make a selfish complaint of my sister in the room where that stern pleader silently looked down upon me.

I never knew a military man who was not more or less of a fatalist, and I have often thought of the morning when the note of war sounded, and the young husband and father answered the roll call for what he might have felt to be his last battle. It must have been, indeed, "an unaccustomed spirit" that could lift him "above the ground with cheerful thoughts" at such a moment.

My grandmother, too, had a premonition of woe, and, while looking upon the faces of her four little children, she remembered the happiness of the last few years, only to tremble for the future. Her grief at the prospect of parting from her husband was so uncontrollable,

ble, it was at last decided that she, with her infant and nurse, and some dear friends, should travel to Brussels, and there await the news from Waterloo.

Suspense is torture to us all, and what the hours were to that poor wife in the little inn at Brussels, who can say?

The tender hearts about her made the most elaborate plans for getting news after the fight began, and, early in the day, almost before they had dared to hope — it came. The first messenger was the last; he brought all the news they waited for. There was no more to tell — her hero was dead. Bearing orders across the field, he had been one of the first to fall!

Who, among the kind friends telling the sad tidings, offering tears and love and sympathy, could have been prepared for the dry-eyed sorrow they encountered, silent and rigid, a long and piteous sigh the only sign of life from the bereaved one?

Long before *Lord Tennyson* wrote the words of "Home they brought her warrior dead" was the poem lived over, for, when the days went by, still "she neither wept nor moved." The old nurse put the fatherless baby into her arms, but with no such happy result as the poet describes. There came no

tears

tears "like summer tempests," no struggle for her helpless little children. She moved mechanically, never spoke unless questioned, and silently drooped and faded. The pulse grew more feeble, the breath less and less, until they whispered she was dead, dead of a broken heart! Six weeks after the battle of Waterloo she was lying in the same grave with her lover-husband at East Cowes, in the Isle of Wight, and my father, with his sisters and brother, were orphans.

Under able guardianship these children were reared. My aunts had a certain native dignity, and, leading the ordinary lives of English gentlewomen, they were preserved from rough contact with the world.

My uncle, *Colonel Reignolds*, must have known his share. But he was so entirely the soldier that, in despite of sorrows and afflictions that well-nigh crushed the man, he rose up at the call of duty, and won honor and forgetfulness in the East.

My father had not his brother's strength, and passed from the timid studious lad to the reserved and sensitive man, who, while he read and wrote several languages, spoke only what he must. Although receiving his education at Woolwich, his commission offered no all-absorbing interest for the younger

younger son, and, at the same time that he did not want courage to face the fire of the enemy, he grew coward at the cold greeting of a friend, so that, when worldly misfortunes fell upon him, he could make no more headway under the cruel load of life than the mother before him.

As it became necessary for my mother to take up the task of maintaining her children, she very naturally profited by the only means in her power, an unusually lovely voice; and the pursuit which she then adopted, may, indeed, have been shaped by hereditary influence. Her family were not only possessed of rare musical and artistic gifts, but traits of character less conventional than those of my German ancestry.

When I was in England, my uncle, *John Absolon*, the artist, pointed out in the record of the "Issue Roll" of *Edward III.*, the name of the first *John Absolon*, who figures there as "King's Minstrel" with a pension of "twopence a day," along with *Geoffrey Chaucer*, "King's valet, pension two-pence-half-penny."

My own debut was at the age of four, and brought about in the following accidental way. On the occasion of a drawing-room concert, a carriage was sent for my mother, also

also conveying the tenor singer of the night. Not liking a long drive with a stranger, she hastily concluded to take her little daughter as chaperone. During the evening I was handed from lap to lap, and petted by all, as a child is in a circle of grown people, when at last some one asked if I would sing. I promptly responded, "Yes, I know one song." Upon the ladies submitting the request to my mother, it was at first denied — nevertheless she was at last urged to help me with a leading chord, and standing on the top of the piano, I twittered out, in pretty fair time and tune, "My mother dear."

"There was a place in childhood that I remember well,
And there a voice of sweetest tone, bright fairy tales did tell,
And kindest words and fond embrace were given with joy to me,
When I was in that happy place upon my mother's knee."

This I addressed, very properly, to the audience gathered about me, but in the refrain of

"My mother dear, my mother dear,
My gentle mother dear,"

I turned from the little group, and, looking at my idol, sang to her alone, and, stretching across

across the key-board, ended with my arms around her neck.

By great exertion I was kept for some few years at an excellent school near London, until my mother was led to come to America. Instead of finding her way easier, no opportunity presented itself in the career she had chosen, and the influence of friends, and protection of family at home, were painfully missed. There seemed no opening but the stage, toward which she had already made a half step, to support her children, my sisters being seven and nine years of age.

It was now, in all the sanguine confidence of fourteen, possessed by the common youthful passion for the stage, I demanded my right to share the burden.

So while my mother was playing Cinderella in an engagement at *Mr. John Rice's* Theatre, Chicago, I persuaded her to let me try a small part.

We all recognize the especial importance of a high standard and pure example to those just starting in the world, for it is then we are most impressionable and likely to take color from those set above us. And let me here offer a handshake over time and space to *Mrs. John Rice*, and express my very grateful remembrance of my first manager, his

his wife and all of his family. I had a watchful, loving mother by my side, but if ever there was an atmosphere where guardianship could be dispensed with, it was where *Mrs. Rice* lived her simple, lovely, womanly life, true help-meet, true mother, a blessing in her own home and an honor to her profession. As a man, an actor, a manager, mayor of Chicago, and in every other office he ever filled, *John Rice* also proved himself sterling metal, and the respect and confidence of his fellow-men in every walk of life bore witness to it.

For the sake of encouragement to others, let me say that my novitiate was an utter failure, most awkward, unpromising, and uninspired. Any success I afterwards met, followed as hopeless a year or two of unintermitting effort and struggles as ever human being spent. Only duty, affection and necessity held me up, my one comfort the being speedily enabled, with my most generous and devoted sisters' help, to release our mother from a thoroughly uncongenial occupation.

In what follows, I have purposely refrained from touching upon that which belongs to the inner life either of myself or my subjects.

While constrained to say a few words of family circumstances which led me to the theatre,

theatre: to violate the domestic privacy of other actors would be impertinent and out of taste. The veil that shelters home should be sacred. Indeed it has always seemed to me the very gift of so much of ourselves behind the footlights ought to make them a more absolute barrier between the world and the rest of our lives.

Of course charlatans seek every form of notoriety, but the great actors I have known "dwelt apart" far more than other people.

These then are only a few wayside notes culled from a public career, which, by reason of its hard work, knew but little pleasure save the blessed one which bread-winners, toiling for those they love, alone can understand. As they are written, so must they be read, as one would listen to a voice in the gloaming—not in the spirit of criticism—for that they are beneath it no one knows better than the story-teller. Lacking even a spice of gossip, these trifles may be without flavor, but, such as they are, *Nil nisi bonum.* Innocent and wholesome, it is hoped they can be read by young eyes, and upon young ears fall harmless.

C. M. R. W.

Boston, April, 1887.

YESTERDAYS WITH ACTORS.

CHAPTER I.

Charlotte Cushman.

I was once asked by some philanthropic people what I thought of a young lad going into a theatre as assistant carpenter. I said I should consider him in the best of schools, and that an apprenticeship so spent could not but serve him well in any condition of life. Many hundred children may be educated in the same building and by the same teachers, and yet few of them may truly profit by their opportunities. I do not say, therefore, that all who spend a few brief years in the theatre come forth reflecting credit and honor on their chosen profession, but I do say they cannot but be the better, if they choose to benefit by the education of a theatre; and here are some of the lessons taught: Punctuality, industry, self-control, endurance, concentration, self-

The theatre as a school.

self-reliance, silence, patience, obedience and charity.

Balzac tells us that man is neither good nor bad, but born with instincts and capacities that self-interest develops. The theatre is a little world within itself, with all the varying phases of good, bad and indifferent, like any other and every other condition of life, and the stage, like society and empires, has its days of rise and decline. It has been said of painters and authors that they live in their labors. Why not actors? Would it be strange if, living as they do in an atmosphere of higher and better thoughts, their lives were "tuned to a higher key?" Certain it is that you find many such. Some, not in the front rank, are never recognized beyond the footlights, scarcely even by those about them. They pass through the various scenes of duty with such delicacy as to leave no trace, until they themselves are no more and the place they filled is empty. It is only the spot of muddy water that leaves the stain. The snowflake vanishes.

The standard of actors' lives.

Foremost among actresses and women was *Miss Charlotte Cushman.* Clever people have already told of her life — its trials and its triumphs — and all that may be added are but a few old memories.

Pre-eminence of Charlotte Cushman.

The

The first time I ever looked upon *Miss Cushman* was in Washington, where she was to appear in Guy Mannering, in which I was intrusted with the small part of the Gipsy Girl — a very insignificant line or two — but at rehearsal I had been expressly told to carry a table off the stage at a certain "cue" together with some other little details of "business," rather important to the action of the scene, as every minute particular is indeed, however trifling it may appear. All was clearly impressed upon my anxious mind until the time of its fulfilment, when, at the entrance of Meg Merrilies, I could not say "four of my five wits went walking off," for that would have left me "one to be known a reasonable creature," whereas mine went, all, every one, scattered like leaves before the gale. And looking back from this standpoint, I undertake my own defence, for to a person totally unprepared I can imagine nothing more frightfully startling than *Miss Cushman's* "make-up" in that character. I only know I have never witnessed anything approaching it. The work of the artist was so perfect, close study only made it the more wonderful. It could not be surpassed. Not only from head to heel was the observance complete, but in action, speech, carriage, voice, even in the

My first meeting with her.

Entrance of Meg Merrilies.

Miss Cushman's wonderful make-up.

the old nurse's lullaby, there was an unbroken realization of a truly masterful creation. And the entrance of the witch, as *Miss Cushman* made it, added to the horror a thousand fold, with her hurricane-swooping rush to the middle of the stage, where, as her glance fell upon her foster-child, she reminded you of a wave arrested at its very crest. She stood at her topmost height, as it seemed, without drawing her breath, partially holding her position by aid of the forked bough she carried for a staff. Though the attitude strained every muscle, she was absolutely motionless.

An imitation of Miss Cushman.

I once saw a very clever girl give an imitation of this scene. In endeavoring to make her entrance with the speed and force of the original, she forgot her slippery footgear and the slope of the stage, and never stopped at the point of making her halt until she hurriedly sat down just, and only just, short of the footlights. Ah! that's twenty years ago, but I can seem to see the big, beautiful black eyes turning mournfully back from the past upon me, bidding me go on with my own shortcoming. So here they are. All went well upon the night in question, up to the point where my "business" should have been remembered, when after "a wait" there remained the table I should have taken off, and there

there the gipsy girl, blind to all but the one hideous figure, and deaf to everything; for muttered "go's" and "comes," I was told of afterwards, were all unheard at the moment; my only remembrance is that the face glared down upon me, the brown turbaned head towered above me, the bat-like wings of drapery enveloped me, the bony hand clutched me. Yes; hand!—for in the other, they said, remained the staff, but that one hand lifted me like a rag doll from one place and set me gently down upon my feet in another! *Miss Cushman* had "cleared the stage" for herself; the volley of angry words fired at me in the entrance, from stage manager, prompter and everybody else, made my remissness and disgrace stand in their true enormity before me and broke the witch's spell.

Miss Cushman clears the stage.

On the same evening poor *Miss Cushman* suffered from another mistake far more disastrous than my own. In the last scene the characters are all in the front of the stage, and a crowd of supernumeraries at the back. At a grand crisis Meg Merrilies points to Henry Bertram, and bids them "shout for the Laird of Ellangowan," and the crowd shout.

Another disaster in Guy Mannering.

Now, like most other stage directions, this looks simple enough, but its fulfilment required

quired intelligence and watchfulness. According to *Miss Cushman's* rendering, struggling in her death agony, she said, "shout" three times before the cheer was really given, and then it was given in earnest.

In all the rehearsals preceding the star's arrival, the prompter had hastily murmured the lines, as is the custom — indeed, in original manuscripts it is only the last words of the principal part that are even written, which gives to such copies in theatrical nomenclature the name "skeleton." So the "shout" had only been said once, to which the crowd had been in the habit of responding.

A tedious rehearsal.

Though *Miss Cushman* gave the proper directions at the last rehearsal which she personally conducted, it had been very long; it was late in the play when the scene occurred; everybody was tired and hungry — the crowd of unimportant people was as usual inattentive and indifferent. At night a general conviction was felt that something had to be done and something left undone. But as out of a group of supernumeraries there will always be found some interested leaders, each one made up his mind to do what the next man did. So when Meg Merrilies gave her first feeble cry of "shout," a lusty voice roared "Hur —"

"Hur—," and the groaning "not yet," from *Miss Cushman* just held back the "rah," only, however, to remind all of their duty; so that with the next "shout" the whole crowd burst forth with a loud "Hur—." With a stride and a menace she once more froze the "rah" upon their lips, and when the "shout" for the third time came, only one wee body in all the band was found to say "Hurrah," in a falsetto voice so shrill and with an advancing gesture so exaggerated that poor Meg Merrilies died to the sounds of smothered laughter. The triple shout.

Dear lion-hearted, loyal-hearted *Charlotte Cushman!* I may not esteem myself among her friends, for with such a woman *friend* meant something more than a mere acquaintance, but later I was brought near enough to love and honor her.

Five years after my Washington experience, she came to the St. Charles Theatre, New Orleans, and, finding me biddable, obedient, and unfeignedly glad to adopt her corrections, she graciously taught me not only what concerned her own scenes, but the whole part of Juliet, and everything else I played with her. When the engagement was drawing near its close, she desired most earnestly that I might be allowed to travel Miss Cushman in New Orleans.

travel with her, and, unknown to me, tried to induce the manager, *Mr. De Bar*, to find a substitute and give me up to her for the remainder of the season. Home ties prevented the fulfilment of any such plan, although I felt very proud of her election, and very grateful for her most generous appreciation and invaluable help.

Miss Cushman's patience in rehearsal.

I wish people who think acting so easy had seen one little lesson I call to mind in this engagement. With my faulty memory I can think of neither plot nor names of characters. I only know the play was The Actress of Padua, and that *Miss Cushman* told me to stay, that after the regular rehearsal she might drill me in some particular business she required. As far as I remember, it was one woman forcing another to kneel at a shrine which was placed on an elevation of three or four steps. But the tremendous crescendo with which it must be reached, and the picture then to be formed of the two figures grouped one above the other, was not readily accomplished. The whole action in the representation was probably not more than thirty seconds. But not seconds, nor minutes, but hours were spent before the lesson was pronounced perfect by the patient teacher, who had her reward later on in the

the deafening applause that followed the effect.

New Orleans audiences.

New Orleans in those days, with its critical French element, had, I think, the most exacting audiences I ever played before, but also the most generous. You could not help acting well to them. In the first place, they listened. No society buzz, except between the acts, when the French opera especially represented a fashionable party — every one in full dress, — gentlemen and even ladies visiting from box to box. There was no chance with them for covering up an imperfect sentence or bungling error. They were listening, and then, upon the silence their satisfaction, when aroused, broke forth in that especially local, sharp, quick, hearty recognition, and the "Brava" that rang through the house, as on this occasion, was inspiration.

The three qualities requisite to success.

In all great successes we can trace three qualities: the power of concentration — riveting every force upon the one unwavering aim — perseverance in the pursuit of our undertaking, — and the courage to enable us to bear up under all trials, disappointments and temptations that assail us in this life of probation. As I remember the friend *Miss Harriet Martineau* tells us of, who, "at the age of eighty, renewed the lease of her house for fourteen

fourteen years," I marvel at the strength of that woman's heart; for surely "there's the rub." Bone and sinew may hold out against the wear and tear of life. At the worst, they have seasons of rest, more or less imperfect; but the never-ceasing heart and brain, with their delicate mechanism, must be tough withal that can last out the allotted span and retain hope and courage.

Miss Cushman an example of courage, concentration and perseverance.

Miss Cushman was a most helpful and striking example. Whatever she undertook was done with all her energy. No lack-lustre work, no half-hearted interest, no divided attention, no cowardly shrinking. With all her talent, she could not have been what she was without constant labor, persistent effort, and a brave heart. Who, that ever heard her speak of her London debut, could forget the description she gave of sitting in her simple lodging in anxious waiting, hoping against hope. Poor, unattractive and unknown — what chance had she? In her agony of dread and doubt, looking back upon the past, and forward to the future, she brooded upon the struggle which, as bread-winner for those she loved, she felt for them, more than for herself. It is not enough in this world that we pray for help, we must help ourselves, and this night was to be *Charlotte Cushman's* crucial

crucial test. As the clock gave out the hour for her going to the theatre, she sprang to her feet, and, with clasped hands, cried out aloud for the power which she felt to be within her, to be given to her grasp in all its fulness, and it was. She slept in the little lodging that night laurel crowned. She awoke the following morning to find herself famous!

Her return to the stage.

After her retirement, and a sojourn of, I think, eight years in Rome, she came home to her native land, to her life-long friends, to her "dearly loved" and trusted doctors, in whom she had the most pathetic confidence, to see if there was any cure for a terrible and exhausting disease. She told of their decision against it in all calmness; and while taking strength from a nervous clasping of the hands (I have seen this in others of like temperament) she added with fervor: "But, my dear doctors here have taught me how to live with my trouble." I grew cold and sick as I thought what "her trouble" must have been when *she* needed to be taught how to live with it. The alleviation they proposed was that she should return to her readings, even perhaps the stage, that the excitement of the old life might awaken new interests, and if possible afford relief in the necessary strain of every faculty. The triumph of mind over matter was exemplified

Acting as an alleviation of pain.

emplified in this rare woman. Without one personal charm of face or figure, as the beautiful Queen Katherine, the lovely Rosalind, she did not woo her audience, she seized upon them.

At home, abroad, she was sought out in every drawing room. She not only attracted but held her listeners. Beauty and coloring are indigenous to every soil, but this American stood alone. Dimpled feminine grace could not strike the balance against the genius and power of a grand soul.

Last appearances.

I heard her read in the Music Hall in one of her last readings. I saw her act at the Globe Theatre in one of her last performances upon the stage. The hair was white, but the old fire was intense as ever. I have seen other famous Queen Katherines, but as the words come back upon my ear, "My Lord Cardinal, to you I speak," I seem to remember only that one ringing voice, the averted head, the magnificent pose, the grandeur of the out-stretched arm, the power, even in the pointed finger, and the thrill that held me spell-bound.

Others have found their imitators and successors. The force of *Charlotte Cushman's* genius so stamped our memories that we cannot regret that the great queen's throne remains empty.

CHAPTER II.

Edwin Forrest.

The theatre a new world.

THE theatre is indeed a little world in itself, and behind the scenes a very strange world to the uninitiated; so strange, that as a girl I experienced a sort of "Alice in Wonderland" feeling in reaching the Mecca of my desires. The walrus and the carpenter and the young oysters, hand in hand, could not have astonished me more than the odd combination of characters and their queer surroundings, as I found them in the beehive of industry, — behind the scenes. The very use of words made its language a foreign tongue. I was told to go off at "the tormentor," and that meant, as I learned, to leave the stage by the door nearest the audience. I was sent to my dressing room "in the flies" with a young girl, who informed me she was "a walking lady," the name given to a class of parts in theatres, but having a singular sound in my ears, until, upon close observance of the performance that night, I thought I had solved the

the problem for myself, for I saw she did not sit down. In those days we had to serve an apprenticeship, and with most of us it was a hard one. May no poor child in like circumstances sink down discouraged, thinking all the world is turned against her as the weeks go by, and nothing but failure comes to crown her efforts! Even when success does follow, no triumph can be won without many a defeat and many a wound. How many, only those who have fought the battle of life can realize!

My gratitude to Edwin Forrest.

But there are kind hearts, by the way, and I have met with many, — God bless them! To no one do I owe so deep a debt of gratitude as to the late *Edwin Forrest.* He was playing an engagement at the old Broadway Theatre when I arrived, a stranger in New York; and my astonishment is great today when I remember I had the desperate courage to go to his hotel and ask for him, like any common mortal, and greater far, that he came in answer to the summons — came in all the simple dignity so pre-eminently his, so often found accompanying true genius. The boldness of the step I took will miss its point unless the reader appreciates the importance of such a person in my esteem. Actors are, as a race, heartily cordial in their recognition of talent. Neither money nor power nor

Actors' enthusiasm for good acting.

nor social position weigh with them against it. They may not like the man, but they will stand at the side scenes night after night, and lose themselves in honest admiration of the artist. I may have been more than ordinarily impressionable, but the coming of every crowned head in Europe would not have filled me with the awe I felt as the servant showed me into a little parlor where I awaited the great tragedian. And another important point must be considered: I fully realized the value of *Mr. Forrest's* time. A conspicuous man was worried then, as now, with a thousand little annoyances that beset public people; demands for assistance from those who seem to think an actor owns a mint of his own; stage-struck youths and damsels who implore, if nothing else, entrance behind the scenes; requests for his autograph; photographers wanting a picture; ambitious young play-writers who coolly request the artist to give his brain in criticism of a maiden effort, even if he does not accept the tragedy; not to speak of the applications such a man receives, asking him to act for this charity or that, by people who would be never so surprised if you were constantly making calls upon them for the same value in merchandise; and then the ordinary business to be attended

The demands upon a great actor's time.

attended to; social matters to remember; besides the artist's own reading; study; rehearsals; travel; and at least four or five hours given to acting, dressing and undressing, every night, six days out of seven! There were no matinees to make a seventh and eighth performance at this time, but the work was much harder than it is now, since we had not entered upon the "long run" of plays. Stars followed each other in quick succession, and, although many legitimate pieces were repeated they involved constant rehearsals. What wonder if some hedging and fencing was found necessary, then as now, to gain rest and recreation. But the ceremony that conceit affects among some, in the ranks, makes the simplicity of the great General more forcibly and gratefully remembered.

Mr. Forrest's accessibility.

Interview with Mr. Forrest.

On introducing myself, I briefly stated that my object in seeking him was to ask an opening in the city of New York, for, by making an appearance under his auspices something might surely come of it. The grave and taciturn man listened to all I had to say, evidently pitying my distress, for he knew this was no case of "going on the stage" for any gratification of personal conceit or silly vanity, but an earnest appeal of a fellow-worker in sore need of work. Nevertheless,

theless, he told me frankly I was too young to play before a metropolitan audience, and his advice was that I should return to Nashville (whence I had come) for a year or two, and acquire more experience. These words took almost the last "straw from the drowning man," and pride, if there were any, went under, leaving honest poverty to speak for itself, which it did in the frank confession that I had spent all my money to bring me to New York, and in New York, therefore, I must take my chance of earning more.

"You will be worse off yet if you play here and fail."

"But, *Mr. Forrest,* in Richelieu you say 'there's no such word as fail.'"

Kindness to a young aspirant.

Whether the reply struck him as a happy one, or his own goodness of heart spoke for me, suffice it to say he did seem pleased with the answer, and from that moment my star was in the ascendant. I was first told to read to him, then asked what I wanted to play, "Lady Macbeth or Pauline?"

"Neither Lady Macbeth nor Pauline, but any part, however small, that you think I am competent to play."

If my most ardent well wisher had cudgelled his brains for a successful debut, he could not have done better for me than *Mr. Forrest*

Virginia selected for my New York debut.

Forrest, when, after a two hours' ordeal, in which I was made to read first one author and then another, he finally decided upon Virginia for a first appearance. I learned afterward he had not been able to play Virginius for two years, not having a youthful and at the same time competent Roman maiden ; for while this character wants a sufficiently trained actress to let acting alone (a delicate touch of art, let me say) the part is not one to make greater demands than a young girl can fulfil. When the night of the performance came, *Mr. Forrest* sent to my dressing room to say he wished to see me. My costume was severely simple, my only ornament the fillet of white ribbon holding back hair that fell to my knees, which my mother had let loose, thinking it in keeping with the childish appearance the character demanded. As I emerged from my room an interested, kindly soul would have held me back while she coiled up the veil of tresses before inspection, for as she said, "He never would allow that." But there he was looming up in the distance, impatient, as I felt, at any delay. Right or wrong I stood before him. He took a general survey, from head to foot, with an absolutely immovable countenance, then in solemn silence, shifted his position to the side, and

Preparing for a stern judgment.

in

in an instant had run his hand under the offending hair at the roots. Using his fingers for a comb he carried it to the ends. The fear of his displeasure gave me courage to say, "I can put it up if you don't like it." Imagine the relief when the gruff reply came, "I do; it's your own," and after another suspension of breath on my part and yet another savagely silent examination on his, he growled out: "Little pale, but you'll do." This sentence from the lips of my judge, moderate and merciful from him, gave me a convulsive sensation of gratitude that almost choked me, and, with set teeth and clenched hands, in the dim silence of that strange theatre did I pray the verdict of the public that night might be no less, for on that depended "daily bread" for me and mine.

Mr. Forrest's merciful verdict.

When, in obedience to the call of Virginius, I made my first appearance in the doorway at the back of the stage and faced the crowded theatre, the applause so warmly bestowed frightened me even more than I had been frightened before. As I stood in the deep trough of that sea of people (for that is what a closely packed auditorium most resembles when viewed from that point) I felt paralyzed and speechless; until, through the tumult, there came to me a man's voice wooing

Stage fright quelled by Mr. Forrest's personation of Virginius.

wooing and tender, saying: "Don't be frightened. Come to me; you're all right. Come!" So real was the illusion, so strong, so perfect, so true was the personation of the Roman father that, at his word, I was by his side; his child Virginia, — stilled, comforted and safe.

Mr. Forrest's reserve.

The tenderness of the characterization was in singular contrast with the severity and remoteness of the man. It will always be a sincere regret to me that, never while he lived, could I express myself to my benefactor as my heart prompted. So reserved, so business-like, so impersonal in his teaching was he.

Pauline taught me.

If I did not play Pauline at that time, I learned to do so in the time to come. A scene from the Lady of Lyons had been made one of my test readings, so having begun upon the part, *Mr. Forrest* expressed his willingness to give me another appointment and then another, until it should be finished. Such a master naturally found plenty of faults. My want of feeling especially induced him to repeat some of the speeches for me. And when in years that followed I did play Pauline, I never lingered on the words, "What was the slight of a poor, powerless girl?" as he had taught me, without the incongruous Gladiator in connection

nection with the "poor, powerless girl" recurring to my mind.

I naturally desire to speak with a grateful appreciation of *Mr. Forrest* and all I consider he did for me. This one act of disinterested goodness was the means of opening various avenues. Within a week I was engaged for the summer season in Montreal, *Mr. John Buckland* manager; and for the following winter I signed articles with *Mr. William E. Burton* for his Chambers Street Theatre, New York.

Mr. Forrest's commanding genius.

Edwin Forrest rose, as all know, to the most lofty height in his profession by inherent force of genius. There was no fantastical advertising necessary in his case. His own iron will and indomitable perseverance went hand in hand with his great power and carried him upward and onward in his career. His very faults were the outgrowth of his day. Coarse, muscular physique and stentorian lungs were more in accordance with the requirements of the stage during the first half of the century in America than the so-called "natural" school that followed, and which in turn is opening up a new era of a higher and better taste again. Had *Edwin Forrest* been born twenty years later, no roughness would have dimmed the lustre of the

Mr. Forrest's faults those of the taste of the day.

the diamond in his prime, any more than in his later performances. Apropos of one of these occasions. A well known lady in Boston, was the fortunate means of taking a little party of critical people to the Boston Theatre, when the tragedian was to appear in Richelieu. Her friends were filled with prejudice ; they argued loud and long, all to no purpose ; she was broad, they narrow, narrow as the streets of their dear native city, intolerant as the Puritans of old who trod them.

Prejudice against Mr. Forrest.

Had they ever seen *Mr. Forrest* act ?

No. Neither did they wish to do so. They knew what he was, "all sound and fury, signifying nothing ;" besides, the man was socially ostracized, and that was enough. We read of the French court, "as they grew in exquisite refinement of manner they troubled themselves less about morals." Heaven save the mark! Is there no via media? However, in a contentious spirit, but for love of their hostess, they consented to accompany her to her box at the theatre. When Richelieu entered they were too well bred not to affect a certain silent interest. That was enough. He came, they saw, he conquered! The scholar and the artist in the auditorium could not but recognize the scholar and the artist on the stage, his every tone and look, the very play of his hands,

A conquest by his performance of Richelieu.

hands, were so studiously observed and so historically correct. The power and magnetism that in Richelieu held all France, through *Edwin Forrest* cast its charm upon the audience, and Richelieu lived again. When the curtain fell upon the last act, the party of critical friends were, without an exception, as lavish of their enthusiasm as the actor's warmest admirer could desire, and the impression of that performance remains with them to this day.

Mr. Forrest's unpopularity and charity.

What *Mr. Edwin Forrest* might have been in his youth I do not know. In my recollection he was most unpopular with his professional brethren. His manner certainly was far from conciliating, yet never did kinsman do more for his clan. While he lived there were many of his beneficiaries who never knew to whom they were indebted.

One instance I can quote that came under my own eye. A card was left at *Mr. Forrest's* house in Philadelphia, saying :

"Dear Sir : Do you know old *Mr.*—— is ill and in need ? "

In less than an hour an unstamped envelope, addressed in an unknown hand, inclosing

closing one hundred dollars, was lying on the sick man's bed. In another hour the patient was sleeping peacefully without fever, as he had not slept for several days and nights. His life was saved, thanks to his unknown physician. "Heartsease" had done its work.

A seasonable gift to a fellow actor.

On another occasion, in the green-room of the National Theatre at Washington, a poor fellow was telling a sympathetic comrade of his hard lot; how he was obliged to continue on with his inferior situation and insufficient salary, because half a loaf was better than none for his wife and little ones, the special aggravation being that, although he had filled in the present gap with the understanding he should go if a better chance offered; now, when the offer came of an excellent position and like remuneration, he must refuse it for lack of traveling expenses, for a long journey. Just now a single fare was more than he could obtain. All were called upon the stage or had left the green-room exceptng the poverty-stricken husband and father, who sat looking on his letter of engagement with longing, hungry eyes. The Hamlet of the night was dressing where a thin partition, not reaching to the ceiling, had forced the conversation in upon his own quietness, and,

Hamlet and Rosencrantz.

striding

striding forward out of his "bin" to the long looking-glass in the green-room, as if every thought were given to the set of his "inky cloak," while indeed his eyes were searchingly bent on the man behind him—he doubtless recognized the Rosencrantz of the play, a faithful and attentive co-laborer. The "star" wheeled suddenly round as if hesitating an instant before even offering a helping hand to a self-respecting friend, and then, with a quick action, dropped a purse into the lap of the astonished recipient, saying, "Did I hear you wanted the money for your travelling expenses. There it is; don't say where you got it." And, without waiting for acceptance or refusal, the Prince of Denmark walked out of the room.

Were these well-springs by the dusty roadside of life all, they were enough to keep fresh flowers upon a grave, and prove that "a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year, even if he did not build churches." But *Mr. Edwin Forrest* did more, much more. When an Englishman shows you the home of the Chelsea pensioners, it is with a feeling of just pride in a glorious national institution, and the heart must be stony that does not enjoy the sight of the old men, after the

A great man's memory.

the heat and burden of the day, resting upon their laurels till they shall answer "Adsum" to their names at the last and pass on to "the presence of their Master."

I quote this institution because it always suggested a model home to me, free, untrammelled, hospitable and simple.

Generosity of actors.

There are dramatic funds and societies, and much assistance is given by the more fortunate of a class that is always charitable and ready, in fact never saying nay. I have seen an appeal put up in a green-room asking help, and in two hours every soul in the theatre had made some subscription from twenty-five dollars to twenty-five cents. But, because the refined in any sphere shrink from making their wants known, there are many cases of crying need that must be helped by other methods.

Why actors often need help.

No people require to be pensioned in one way or another so much, for various reasons, as actors; one being that, as a general thing, they are singularly deficient in business knowledge, and, for the most part, — childlike and bountiful themselves, they are without the least suspicion of double dealing in others. What wonder, if, having passed out of the sunshine, they are left without the artificial warmth so necessary for the shade?

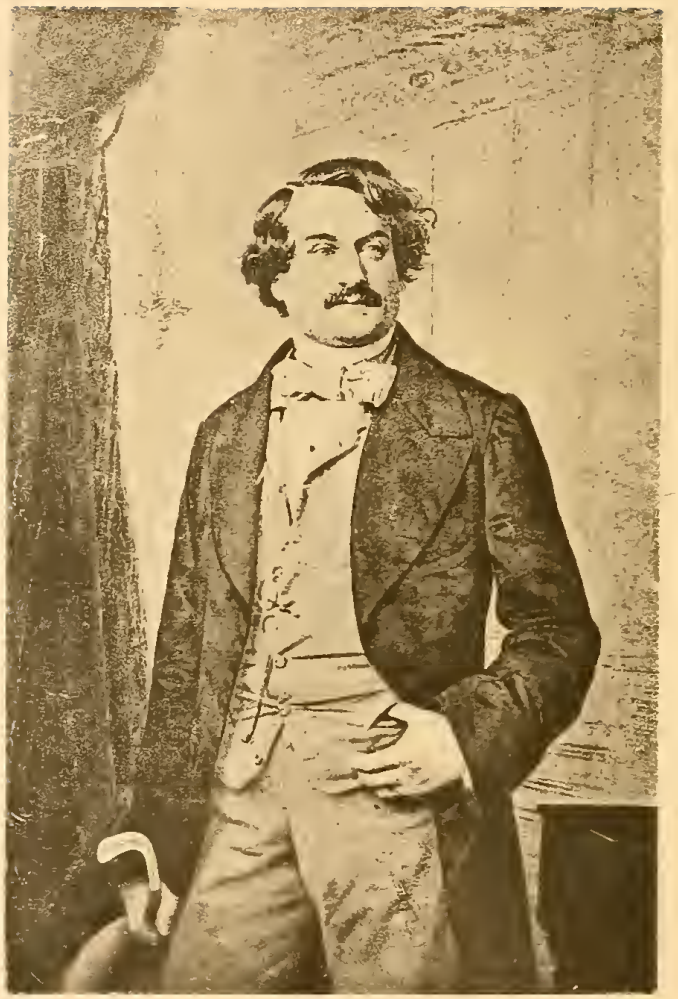
About

The Forrest Home.

About three miles from the city of Philadelphia, in its own spacious grounds, stands the Forrest Home for Old Actors and Actresses. The home contains not only comforts, but luxuries, statuary, pictures, and *Mr. Forrest's* own magnificent library. It has also a beautiful garden, a portion of which is allowed to each resident for his own use. Above and beyond all, this foundation was not intended to be regarded by its inmates as a charity. They are welcome guests, with "good quarters, good food, good light and fire, and good friends," their privacy respected, their pride tenderly dealt with, their individual requirements considered. Even when they are desirous of paying a visit to a relative or a friend, help is given, funds are pressed upon the grateful pensioner, and all in a delicate way, which heals, not hurts, the most sensitive soul. Many visitors are received by the little band; many favors accorded them. These faithful servants, who have broken down in the service of their art, are made to feel that they are only adequately rewarded by one whose bequest was made for that art's sake, which he had likewise served so loyally; while those who can do so are provided in various ways with opportunity for independence

Not a charity, but an honorable retreat.

independence and self-support, especially in the way of instruction in elocution, dramatic expression, the use of the weapons now relinquished by the tired veteran. "Here would be a place for an old fellow when his career is over, to hang his sword up, to humble his soul, and to wait thankfully for the end." And this is the work of one man. Blessed be the memory of the founder!



CHAPTER III.

John Brougham.

The hard work of the stage in my youth.

THE stage in my girlhood was a place of poorly paid respectability and hard work, — the one as unquestionable as the other. In those days a "walking lady's" whole wardrobe consisted of white muslin frocks. Lucky was she if, as in my own case, there was a chest of old East Indian riches to convert into flounces and tucks and ruffles and overskirts. With that, and a few sashes, I had all the variety expected of me. Well do I remember "the event" of a first silk dress, the almost anxious delight in thinking whether it should be pink or blue, the indecision between a flower and a stripe, the terrible moment of cutting and fitting, and, after all was over, and the dress complete, the wrapping of the choice morsel up, and laying it away in lavender as too good for common wear.

Improvidence of actors.

I know that actors and actresses are usually regarded as improvident; but take the same temperament, it will remain the same, whatever may be the surroundings. A close, cautious, saving habit does not fit into a free, generous nature, and, however praiseworthy that saving may be, we do not find it in excess among people whose health and strength is given for others. This is often the case upon the stage, and, as a consequence, actors are poor, because they have so many to support. Upon this question, too, of improvidence, let it be remembered the theatre makes not temptations only, but actual necessity to spend. Take a simple case in point. An actress must be at rehearsal at a certain time, let her condition of health be what it may; let the storm be never so severe, she must be there. She must not stand for some hours in damp clothing, for she dare not risk hoarseness or rheumatism. Illness in a servant of the public will not be received understandingly by them nor with sympathy by the management. Each individual is only a part of a great machine, and the loss of one small rubber on the wheel may produce a most unpleasant friction. Therefore, though a carriage might seem an extravagance in one of such a meagre

Necessary expenses of an actress.

meagre income, to the actress it is a necessary economy. The same again for the performance. The play cannot go on without her; she must be there at any cost. That "she must be there" reminds me that when the Colleen Bawn first achieved its great success at the Boston Museum — which had no back entrance — I found myself one evening at the foot of a great staircase blocked with the slowly surging crowd. To win my way step by step with them would have made me late. Swallowed up in the vortex, what was I to do? Gentle pushings met with more violent rejoinders. A whispered request to be allowed to pass was answered by a rude, "Do you think I'm going to lose my chance to see the play?" Finally I lost all reserve in my distress, and cried out: "There'll be no play without me; I'm the Colleen Bawn." The crowd parted, and the quick response, "It's the Colleen Bawn." "Bless her, its Eily O'Connor," revealed by their Celtic accents and quick courtesy the warm-hearted kinsfolk of the Irish heroine who were thronging the theatre. I know of a play once, however, that did go on without the principal part. True, there was only one man who would have dared to attempt it, only one man who could have done

The play of the Colleen Bawn without Eily O'Connor.

John Brougham's characteristics.

so

so successfully, and that was *John Brougham* — genial, sanguine, clever, witty, gentlemanly *John Brougham.* It was in his own burlesque of Pocahontas. One night, at the height of its success, with a ferocious snow storm raging without, Wallack's elegant little theatre, as usual, packed within, a whisper ran behind the scenes, "The Pocahontas of the night has not arrived!" The time came for the ringing up of the curtain — still she did not appear. The whole company was there, gathered in little groups about the scenes, but, without the principal character, they were useless. The back door was constantly interviewed, boys were sent off in every direction; five minutes, ten minutes, fifteen minutes past the proper time; a last lingering look in the direction of the back door, where panting, snowclad messengers rushed in from their cold hunt, but no squaw had they bagged! Every one looked serious. A slight indication of restlessness began to assert itself on the part of the audience. "Go on," said *John Brougham,* and the prompter did "go on." The orchestra struck up the well known melody. Everybody, in breathless astonishment, took their "situations" as the father of the burlesque and the lost child coolly announced that he should play

Pocahontas late.

The play without the heroine.

play the piece without her. The curtain rose on "smoking, joking Powhatan," swinging himself and his majestic cloak into the circle of his subjects, and the King played not only his own part, but, with his quick and ready wit and irresistible humor, managed to weave in the lines of the absentee; at one moment confiding to the actors, "That is what Pocahontas would say if she were here," or in turn asking sympathy of his audience for anything on his part "rather slow," but "I'm naturally affected, having lost my papoose in the snow," until the merriment knew no bounds, and the whole burlesque was successfully carried to the end, to the great amusement of one and all — for that was a strong point in *Mr. Brougham's* fun, he enjoyed it himself. He and his audience were on the best of terms everywhere, and *John Brougham* before the curtain was even more attractive than *John Brougham* in the play. I have known people in St. Louis and elsewhere to ask at the box office when "his speech" came off, so that failing to find time for the whole performance they could come in for that. Indeed, there grew up a feeling on their part that they had been defrauded of their rights if he coquettishly endeavored to omit this impromptu address. Apropos of impromptus,

Mr. Brougham's speeches.

a

a neat little bona fide inspiration of *Mr. Brougham's*, as written on *Miss Fanny Davenport's* fan, ran thus :—

"A fan to Fan, although a gift not great,
I fancy may be deemed appropriate;
For when you're fanning Fanny, do you see,
You'll have to think of your warm friend,
J. B."

Acting in New York and Philadelphia the same night.

I do not remember anything like his Pocahontas episode either before or since, but *John Brougham* was fond of odd doings. Another of these was acting in New York in the first piece and in Philadelphia in the second, on the same night. This also was a complete success. He only appeared in a farce called the Three Clerks in New York. A carriage, of course, was ready to dash with him to a special train. In the transit he cast the skin of the one part and arrayed himself for the other, so he was all ready for the stage when he reached Philadelphia. His only hindrance arose from the crowd assembled by curious incredulity at the announcement of the undertaking, in the railway station and about the back door of the theatre. Entrance was forced with difficulty, but the delay of the waiting audience inside was compensated by the delight of the immense

immense mob without, which hailed with hearty cheers the passage of King Powhatan in full war paint. This occurred at a time when *Mr. Brougham* was once again holding the reins of management, in which race he always lost, being no practical man of business, and having no more idea of the value of money than just such bright, busy-minded, easy-going, care-shedding, sanguine souls ever do have. Dazzle, in London Assurance, whose motto is, "An empty purse falling through a hole in the pocket," was created by him as an acting part, and has always been said to be his own by authorship also; drawn by him from his own mirror. But certainly it was no fault of the manager if this enterprise in the Bowery Theatre failed.

Failure as a manager.

Dazzle Mr. Brougham's prototype.

It was at the time of *Mr.* and *Mrs. Charles Kean's* great Shakesperian revival at the Princess's in London, that, profiting in the summer season by the closing of other theatres, *John Brougham* got together a picked company, embracing *Mme. Ponisi*, *Charles Fisher*, and other members of Wallack's and Laura Keene's. King John was carefully produced, re-enforced by *Mr. E. L. Davenport* as King John, *William Wheatley*, of the Arch Street, Philadelphia, as Faulconbridge, *Mrs. E. L. Davenport* as Constance, and *John*

King John at the Bowery.

A strong company.

John Brougham in the original part of Leader of the Supernumeraries. It may seem a singular role for such a man to undertake, but he meant in every detail to insure success, and it is needless to say, while he personated the head of one army, the other was well officered; and more well-drilled, earnest troops were never seen in a body of regular soldiers. There never was a stage where the possibilities were greater, being so deep as to permit the effect of the army marching up from a valley at the back, and the height of the theatre none realized more fully than myself, when, as Arthur, I stood upon the walls and looked down into the sickening space before the leap he is supposed to make. I have often jumped a distance of a few feet, but even then there is a jar, as I found when I did it night after night, although there is always a mattress laid to "break the fall." But a leap, such as the one I speak of in King John, could not be taken unless the actor were to fulfil Shakespeare's intention of death to the one taking it. As Arthur is seen on the battlements, he is heard to speak the lines: —

Arthur's leap.

"The wall is high, and yet will I leap down,
Good ground, be pitiful and hurt me not * * *
As good to die and go as die and stay."

And

And the audience sees the boy apparently dash himself from that terrific height upon the rock below, where he dies, speaking the words: —

"O me, my uncle's spirit is in these stones,
Heaven take my soul, and England keep my bones."

But a "double" was used for the fall, a limp, made-up figure, dressed exactly like Arthur, the battlements being so constructed that, as the line was spoken, "As good to die and go as die and stay," I ran, as if to take the leap, past a turreted part of the wall. Behind that turret we changed places, the "double" was cast over the battlements and disappeared among the tangled grass beneath the wall, while I grasped the perpendicular rods, also behind the turret, and slid down simultaneously with the fall of the "dummy." As that reached the underbrush so must I. The men, whose business it was, caught me a few feet from the ground. An opening was left in the scene which admitted of my being rolled through it, so, as the "double" disappeared, I took my place behind the "set piece" under the wall and raised my head to speak the last two lines. All this seems very complicated, but it is only one scene of

The use of a double.

A risk which required coolness and quickness.

of many that an audience looks at every night without realizing its difficulty and danger, and this fact certainly can be affirmed: — had there been any hesitancy on my part, I could never have "won in" with that "double," and had there been any want of faithfulness on the part of the good fellow who caught me on that "flying drop," I should not be here to tell the tale.

This production of one of Shakespeare's greatest plays, magnificently acted, failed so signally as to leave the manager with a nightly deficit, necessitating the withdrawal of King John after only two weeks.

I quote the following to show what may fail and what may succeed with the fickle public. The manager, utterly discouraged,

The Pirates of the Mississippi.

called a rehearsal of the Pirates of the Mississippi. No one had ever heard of such a band, and a more motley mass was never seen. At the first rehearsal I read from my part in one place, "Enter — Mad — Exit," which meant that the author was to write a mad scene to enable the carpenters to prepare an important "set" behind. I asked for the rest of my part. "My dear," said *Mr. Brougham*, "it's not written yet; you shall have it to-morrow." To-morrow the same reply. On the third day I ventured to suggest,

gest, "I cannot study my scene, *Mr. Brougham* if it is not given me to-night." "Of course not, my dear. Well, write it for yourself, only go mad. The girl's in love; you know what she'd say under the circumstances better than I do, but go mad for five minutes — six, if you can — only go mad!" Now, as a pleasant way of turning a joke this was all very well; but I knew it was really a fact that I was expected to write a soliloquy for myself, and being in those days especially given to the long, sweet silences *Mr. Henry James* says are characteristic of my countrywomen, the knowledge that I must talk for five minutes was positively alarming, and bad as the language of the part had seemed hitherto, the responsibility of setting my own words down made it now appear the consummation of literary skill. However, I did my "possible" to adapt what I heard a poor lunatic say only a few hours before; her frenzied manner, her convulsive clutching that I had shrunk from, her piercing shriek that had wrung my heart, were not forgotten in my contribution to the Pirates of the Mississippi, and the kindly appreciation bestowed upon "my scene" was, as I felt, all due to the poor, unconscious example, who died a raving maniac shortly after.

Left to write my own scene.

Madness imitated from life.

This

Tom and Jerry in New York.

This piece made a tremendous hit, as well as another effort in the same style, an adaptation of Tom and Jerry, or Life in London, called Tom and Jerry in New York. It was an ingenious thought to transfer to the streets of New York the popular English story of half a century before, and to introduce a German professor (*John Brougham's* own part) whose catch phrase, "I am a gindred zoul," became the by-word of the town;—along with the familiar leather gaiters of Jerry Hawthorn, the green spectacles of Logic, the hook nose of Corinthian Tom, immortalized by *Cruikshank*. But, withal, the season proved a loss to the treasury, and a winding up of affairs brought about many difficulties, one being that of *Mr. Brougham's* withdrawal and a consequent disagreement as to the payment of certain salaries already due. Where daily income only covers daily expenses, it is indispensable, especially with sorrow and illness at home, and only one left to shoulder the burden. To every girl the asking for money is a reluctantly performed task, if not an absolutely painful one. It became doubly so to me, when I was first told to go to the treasury, then sent to *Mr. Brougham*, who, with sincere regret, but decision, returned me to the treasury, where, with

Difficulty about my salary.

with greater decision and without regret, they told me to go back to *Mr. Brougham* — but that fairly broke me down. I went home to find even greater trouble there than I had feared. All this delayed me, and I did not reach the theatre that evening until the last moment. I was running breathless to my dressing room, when the doorkeeper held me back, saying, I was to be refused admittance. I had not an instant to spare, the callboy was making his usual rounds with the well known "Overture in — everybody ready to begin." I insisted upon seeing the manager, but this had been anticipated and was denied. I could hear the orchestra preparing their instruments. Every moment was vital, and yet I stood dazed and stupefied, not believing my senses. The man was soft spoken in the discharge of his duty, but every word was a stab, and I remained, listening, without the ability to move until I heard the overture acually begin and the boy call the characters for the first scene. It was really true, then; some one else had replaced me, and with the last notes of *Bellini* sounding in my ear I turned to go home. As sometimes happens, "some cold mannered friend may often do us the truest service." There I found such an acquaintance

Refused admittance to the theatre.

acquaintance. Astonished at my appearance, he knew something must be wrong, so the key of sympathy unlocked the floodgates, and left me without restraint. I told all I knew. He returned to the theatre to demand an explanation. The fact was elicited that it was taken for granted I was remaining away until the last moment, to enforce payment of my salary; therefore, not to be at my mercy, they refused me justice. Before I knew it, the case was in the hands of a lawyer, and a suit against the manager was the result. The call for my testimony in court, the publicity, the anxiety, and then the delay from week to week were so painful that I never desire another. Although I won my first case, I won it by the evidence of my opponent, strangely enough, and I cite the little circumstance to *Mr. Brougham's* honor. The manager who denied me entrance maintained I had forfeited my engagement by not being at the theatre in time, which was his only point, and *John Brougham* was put upon the stand to corroborate his testimony. The witness was serious, unlike himself, and bore his cross-questioning with a rueful expression and made equivocal replies, until finally the inquiry was definitely and testily put: "Do you not recognize

Suit against Mr. Brougham's manager.

John Brougham a witness for the defence.

recognize it as a fact that ten minutes would be an impossible time for a lady to dress for the part?" "No," said *John Brougham*, breaking out like the sun from behind a cloud, "No, it entirely depends on the celerity of her movements," and that clinched it!

He testifies for the plaintiff.

My last memory of *Mr. Brougham* was a pleasant meeting one night in Louisville. I was at one theatre, he at another, and we both met in the hotel and sat down in the dining room together after the play. It was very comfortable in a strange place to find a friend from the days of auld lang syne, and I told him so. He said he, too, was homesick, aud longing to get back to New York. The word home was enough to bring up all sorts of tender memories to us both, and a child's face especially came before me, as I said: "Yes, but you are not a thousand miles away from your little boy." He was looking old and worn as he said, with real feeling, "No, but I do want to get home to my dogs." *John Brougham* had more than his dogs to love him; but in his declining years and altered circumstances, what a tragic sentence from the popular idol of New York! In this life we daily see a verification of the wisdom of the old Greek who admonished his son to make

Meeting in Louisville.

Mr. Brougham's homesickness for his dogs.

make friends, and when the lad told his father in an ecstasy that he had two hundred, the sage philosopher replied: "You are fortunate, my son; after all these years I have but one and a half: that is, one who would stand by me to the end, at any sacrifice and another who would, provided it did not affect his own interest."

Mr. Brougham a prolific author.

John Brougham as an author would be more famous if his facile fecundity had been less. In recalling the mass of trifles which he dashed off for the needs of the hour, we forget that he has written a considerable portion of the original acting drama of the day in comedy, melodrama and burlesque, continually in use, and likely to be drawn upon for the amusement of the public for generations, as the cycles of taste change and recur. Of course, the Irish humor of the man, racy, brilliant, inexhaustible, but ever sweet and pure, was his abounding gift. Take Pocahontas for example — a burlesque which ridicules no lofty idyl, whose music profanes no elevated theme yet is as purely funny as anything in the modern style, where every dear-bought laugh is at the expense of some shattered idol, forever debased by a ludicrous association. The contrast, which is needful for humor, is as easily

easily obtained by the blasphemy of ideal forms in literature and music as by irreverence in speech. Here was a master of merry fancies upon the simplest themes, the creator of a quantity of innocent mirth. What a rare and real benefactor to his kind!

His sound humor.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER IV.

Laura Keene — Agnes Robertson.

Theatrical companies, like other large bodies of working people, are not exempt from strikes now and again, and one of these occurred under the management of *Mr. William E. Burton* of the Chambers Street Theatre, New York, who, with a constant change of bill the established custom elsewhere, kept his audience convulsed with laughter two nights in the week for three years with Aminadab Sleek and Toodles. If ever a man could believe himself independent, *Mr. Burton* might; for he was the bright particular star of his own little firmament, and his satellites were not only brilliant, but unusually numerous. Beside a comedy company, including the handsome *George Jordan*, there was a complete

Mr. Burton's Chambers Street Theatre.

complete little operatic troupe, charming *Rosalie Durand*, the prima donna. But an act of injustice visited upon one created a spirit of discontent which spread like contagion, and in one week *Mr. Burton* found himself deprived of nine of his principal supporters — a very serious loss even with such a star.

Miss Keene opens the Winter Garden.

Miss Laura Keene, who was on the eve of opening the Winter Garden, thought to profit by *Mr. Burton's* error, but on the opening night, when the curtain rose on the fair manager with her enormous band all massed around her, it needed no very ancient mariner to prophesy that such a crew must sink the ship. There were at least three ordinary companies, and the weeding out, which must have been a painful and difficult task, soon began. Those of the rival establishment were retained however, *Mr. George Jordan* especially being an invaluable attraction to *Miss Keene's* patrons. Some of the finest actors were always found in her theatre. Think of *Joseph Jefferson*, *E. A. Sothern* and *Couldock* in one cast, its minor parts filled as well. That the jewel is enhanced by the setting, none knew better than she. Some of the best plays were originally brought out by her. *Dion Boucicault's* Colleen

A remarkable company.

The original Colleen Bawn.

leen Bawn for one, with *Agnes Robertson* "the pretty girl" and *Laura Keene* the "girl with the golden hair." The parts were made for them; it would not be strange if they never fitted any others equally well. Of course, it was to *Miss Keene's* interest to make her theatre a success, but she was sufficiently individual in herself to be fearless of rivalry, and a small or petty thought of jealousy never occurred to her; besides, while these two women were alike charming, they were at the same time unlike enough to be foils. The one with her sunny auburn hair and magnificent eyes, which she opened wide upon you, but never rolled and ogled with, her sloping shoulders and slight form, dressed so exquisitely with Frou-Frou airy trifles, only suggesting a thistledown transformed into a woman; and the other, of rounded, "vase-like" beauty, in the simple peasant garb that needed no adornment, for this was a time when curves, not angles were the fashion, and she was perfect.

Two beautiful women.

Agnes Robertson.

Agnes Robertson! Is there not a charm in that name which makes many an old heart young? She played in the

the United States for the first time at the Boston Museum. Queues were not formed in those days by speculators but the actual people, and it seemed all the people of Boston, jostled and squeezed each other, week after week, to enjoy any seating or standing opportunity to see and hear that dewy, fresh and winsome little creature. Was there ever such a Maid with the Milking Pail, such a Cat turned to a Woman, such a Young Actress, Bob Nettles, Andy Blake? How many will recall the thrill with which they heard the first notes of her bird-like voice before she tripped upon the scene! Have those (then) young Harvard men forgotten, who pawned their clothes for money to buy tickets for the "Fairy Star," until a set had only one available suit, to be used in rotation, while the rest stayed in bed until remittances came from home? She was petted in society, for women were fascinated by her perhaps even more than men, and equally in drawing-rooms and among the garish adjuncts of the stage there was a bright purity about her, like the atmosphere of her own Scotland. Opposite the Museum in those days was *Mrs. Mayer's* ice cream saloon, a favorite meeting place for parties going to the play. A mob of girls would cluster

Miss Robertson's peculiar parts.

A hunt by Miss Robertson's admirers.

cluster about the sidewalk to await the exit of *Agnes Robertson*, and the more favored customers of the shop gathered at its windows, which *Mrs. Mayer* would empty of her showcase to make room for the curious throng. This was a trying ordeal for the shy and sensitive child, who had to make her flitting to the Tremont House under the searching and curious gaze of these indiscreet admirers. Often, under good *Mrs. Vincent's* care, and beneath her ample cloak, the little form was smuggled past the eager eyes; but one afternoon, careless or forgetful, "the young actress" came down the staircase alone right into the waiting crowd and frightened, she took to her heels and ran through Tremont street! The girls followed.

Run down.

It was a real chase. The timid hare doubled into Tremont place, followed by the hounds, into the ladies' entrance, into the parlor, still pursued, up to her own bedroom, where she jumped upon the bed! The room filled in a minute. With the last instinct of the quarry, she dashed out once more. Taking advantage of her knowledge of corridors and back stairs, she succeeded in shaking off the pursuit, and, locking herself into her maid's room at the top of the house, was at last free! I know no measure of criticism for her charm in

in those days, and it may be pleasant to those who admired her then, if I tell them that Boston still remains "a sentiment" to *Agnes Robertson.*

Laura Keene was an exponent of the elegant "modern comedy," in which her delicate taste and feminine charm controlled the imagination. It was not photography nor labored art, but a water color sketch, full of light and grace. A pity it is that, together with the high comedy of a former generation, it seems completely to have passed away, for such performances are the ideal amusement of a gay hour for men and women of the world, who do not delight to find themselves and their doings reproduced on the stage, nor to be betrayed into vehement and unpleasant emotion.

Laura Keene's style of acting.

As we have seen in other cases, however, managers who succeed must sometimes set aside their own preference, and, if themselves actors, their own special gifts, and follow where the public leads: so *Laura Keene* was driven in dark days to a variety show, the first of its kind, perhaps, and in a play called Variety, without plot or plan or unity, she, in her own person and in "citizen's" dress, appeared in her own situation as a perplexed manager, puzzled what to do

Laura Keene's variety show.

to

to regain the public favor. Fairy help produced "samples" for approval, and these specimens were the piece. There were songs in character, a burlesque of Lady Macbeth, tableaux, dances and, finally, a basket horse, and a miniature circus. One of the loveliest pictures I ever saw on any stage was The Rose, in which, through a large cloud aperture, appeared the great Jacqueminot, each petal a little pink clad child, fold within fold, down to a sweet cherub face, which was the heart of the living flower.

Losses in management.

But there is no greater game of chance than a theatrical venture, and this was *Miss Keene's* experience. Expensively mounted pieces met financially with meagre results, the truth being that theatre-going people were fewer then than now, and a play that runs six months would last then but six weeks, even this being an uncommon success. So *Laura Keene*, like every other wearer of a crown, found it no easy task to smile while the heart ached with care. We see it in every condition of life. The leaders of society, with all the alleviations that money and position can give, have all a special strain that responsibility of any nature must of necessity bring. Only the very few well placed, unambitious, mercifully sheltered

Cares of responsible position.

sheltered lives are free from it, and the cruel tension to keep up to concert pitch, together with the intense pressure in time of doubt and failure in catering for the public, must be felt to be known. It seems as if I rather anticipated my share in those early days with *Laura Keene.* All women, I suppose, in girlhood adore some other woman. I adored her; I found an excuse for every fault; I waited her bidding, ran at her call, and meekly accepted the scoldings I got for my pains: and these were not a few, since she took advantage of my devotion, and when anything in others deserved a rebuke, she invariably administered that rebuke to me, like the tutor who punished the fag when the prince was naughty. It is a fact, she was so in the habit of calling me to account for others to take warning, that on one occasion, when her complaint was a smell of "tobacco, tobacco from a pipe," *Laura Keene,* addressing men in general, from pure force of habit turned in my direction and riveted her eyes upon me with such severity that there was a universal smile at my expense.

My adoration for Laura Keene.

A stranger would undoubtedly have credited me with the capital offence of smoking that pipe.

On another occasion my fascinating tyrant saw

A female tyrant.

saw she had tried even my spaniel affection too far, and, sending for me to her own room, where I went with red and swollen eyes, her greeting was as follows: "What are you crying for, you little fool? I didn't mean you, but *Mr. Harold*," but, as this cold comfort was dispensed with a downright shake, it somehow did not have the effect of healing my wounded feelings, so I turned my back upon her — yes, I did; with a very large lump in my throat and tears streaming, but I did turn my back upon her, and spent a wretched afternoon in consequence. "Suspense is the condition of the spider, but most injurious to man." It surely is to woman, as I can testify. Oh, how long the hours seemed! She would surely send for me, as she often did, to help find a pocket handkerchief, or search for a lost ring. But no messenger came! I grew, as I flattered myself, quite calm, indifferent, even dignified, under the fancied slight; until, in our first scene of the Rivals that night, she subjugated me completely with her penitence.

Stage forgiveness.

For, when I went on as Julia, the reception of Lydia Languish was so felicitous, her kisses so loving, her introduced line of admiration so enthusiastic, that, as she led me down to the footlights, there was a round of applause

applause given, and the next day a lady, who had been in the audience remarked, "How fond *Miss Keene* is of you!" Well, I never said then what brought that special fondness about. Years afterwards, when *Miss Keene* and I met on equal ground, we had many happy hours together, and in one of them a good laugh over my scapegoat days; but when I said, perhaps rather too feelingly, "Oh, you did treat me shamefully," the little lady instantly recovered her ancient attitude, as she earnestly rejoined: "Your character needed it. You would not be what you are but for my early discipline. It was all good for you." Perhaps it was! At any rate, my admiration for her never waned, and she is one of my pleasant memories to-day.

Miss Keene's confidence in her training.

The resources of a woman's mind concentrated upon a crisis certainly invest her for the moment with extraordinary executive ability. One night, when Much Ado About Nothing was to be given, it was found almost at the last moment that the costumes were not ready.

All the women not in the cast were instantly pressed into service. Under *Laura Keene's* direction the unfinished garments were *sewn* upon the wearers. The time running short, the distracted manager, who had her

Miss Keene meets a crisis.

her own hands full, and was still to dress for Beatrice, called the lords and attendants to stand before her, and sending to the paint room for a pot and brush, finished the borders of their "jackets and trunks" in black paint! "Now keep apart! Don't sit down! Don't come near the ladies!" with her spasmodic, quick speech and she was off to array herself in a twinkling for the dainty lady of Messina!

In executive ability *Miss Keene* was not alone among women. *Mrs. John Drew*, director of the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, has proved herself one of the best in this country or any other, while as comedienne, she has no peer. *Mrs. Conway* held the reins of government in Brooklyn for many years. At one time, in London, *Miss Oliver* was managing one theatre, *Miss Swanborough* another, *Mrs. Bateman* a third, *Mrs. Bancroft* (*Marie Wilton*) the fashionable "Prince of Wales." Indeed, their name is legion, and I do not remember any case where they have not graced the office, and where in this kind of administrative power the sex in any way may be considered deficient.

Women as successful managers.

The "Prince of Wales" brings with it the remembrance of a name well known throughout the English speaking world, of which *Mr. Henderson* told me the following story: When

An unfortunate author.

When he was manager of a theatre in Liverpool he was sitting one day in his office casting about for a stop gap — something it must be in the way of a novelty — when an unknown, shabby, but well-bred man was shown in, who begged a hearing for his play called Society. It was read, accepted, produced on the following Monday, and made a grand success! "This, said *Mr. Henderson*, "is the thing for *Marie Wilton*. She wants a new piece, and this must go to London."

Mr. Robertson's success.

"It has been there," said *Mr. Robertson*, for he it was. "I took it to *Miss Wilton*. I have taken it everywhere, only to meet with rejection for two whole years, until I am reduced to my last shilling and boots too ragged to walk another mile!"

When Peg Woffington offers to make Manager Rich read poor Triplet's tragedies he tells her it is "useless; they have been refused." *Charles Reade*, who knew human nature so well, makes her reply: "Reading comes after, when it comes at all. Do you know I called on Mr. Rich fifteen times before I could even see him?" But the merry soul laughingly continues: "I have made him pay a hundred pounds for each of these little visits since." And so with the young unknown. *Mr. Henderson* wrote a note to *Miss Wilton*

Mr. Robertson writes for the "Prince of Wales."

Wilton making her look at Society through rose-colored glasses, and many a hundred pounds did the author take from her hands for his clever works, of School, Caste and Ours, year after year. *Miss Wilton* made a specialty of these delicious morceaux, and *Mr. Robertson* wrote to order for the "Prince of Wales" as long as he lived. His was not a very long life, but surely a satisfactory one, for after the discouragement and heart-weariness of these two years came the sun of happiness and good fortune in abundance.

Hard work of some actors' lives.

When the watchword of our life is labor — labor of brain and body, labor that occupies, as mine once did for seven consecutive months, twenty hours out of the twenty-four, there is scant opportunity or disposition for diversion. Again, some exceptional natures are rendered more sensitive by the nervous strain of reproducing tragic and painful characterizations. A conscientious endeavor to analyze feelings, that they may be the better able to portray, leaves them ready to suffer acutely in their own proper persons.

Susceptibility caused by their pursuit.

A merry set.

The order of the Sock and Buskin is, however, mainly composed of people so happily constituted that they can invest the commonest circumstances with a tinge of romance and by aid of their own odd twisting and mirthful

mirthful spirit can find a merry side to the most gloomy prospect — especially with the large number who are not over-burdened with labor. So actors are, on the whole, a cheerful race. The ability to adapt themselves to the lives of others takes them out of their own, and develops a light-heartedness that leaves them quick to profit by a happy thought and always ready for a joke. One night when we were about leaving *Laura Keene's* Theatre a peremptory request was sent to every dressing room that all might be left in good order.

The disorder "behind the scenes."

Those who have ever been behind the scenes of private theatricals know something of the untidy remainders that eight or ten young men can leave about, and the fact that this was not only a novel, but, as it was delivered, an impertinent demand, caused the whole male sex to resent it. A rehearsal had been called and cancelled for the next day. Ordinarily these very young men would have revelled in their freedom, but curiosity brought a sharp attendance. To their surprise, from "the end unto the beginning" the place was in the most perfect trim. For some weeks they had complained of damp and cold in these same dressing rooms; warmth had been grudgingly and seldom bestowed.

A remarkable transformation.

To-

To-day every fireplace was ablaze, the debris of the night before was all hidden away, and an air of comfort given by some rugs and easy-chairs. Behind the scenes the flats were neatly stacked, and an effect of space thereby obtained. The baize on the stage at that hour was unusual, the green room shone resplendent with multiplied mirrors, the door ajar of *Miss Keene's* own office gave forth a ruddy glow and an odor of fresh flowers, and she herself greeted them with an added dignity and a spasmodic twitch of the gray glove, as she stood robed in dove color, with an apple blossom of a bonnet on her head, and, in a voice that always had a tear in it, requested the "actors to leave the building before eleven o'clock, for some *gentlemen* were coming." Of course this was too much!

Miss Keene prepares for visitors.

The "gentlemen," as it afterwards appeared, were *Dr. Bellows*, who was at that time writing a "Defence of the Stage," and a party of friends. The manageress had promised to show them over her model theatre, and she sat awaiting them in the elegant surroundings of her own apartment, while the "actors" paid a scampering visit to theirs, and what they accomplished in that few minutes who could repeat? The grotesque charcoal sketches on the walls, that grew life-size beneath

Dr. Bellows expected.

beneath one artist's fingers, the wig block ornamented by another with the most rakish of wigs and dissipated whiskers, the general chaos of old shoes, brushes and paint boxes that were strewn around the tables, and, lastly, the incursion made into the "property room" for sticks and poles for the questionable articles of wearing apparel made up into scarecrows, and left standing in the middle of the room, as if bowing to the *gentlemanly* party!

The Defence of the Stage

Fortunately for "The Defence of the Stage," the cicerone was too alert, and *Dr. Bellows* was saved the practical jokers' welcome and the shock it might have proved. But he doubtless marvelled somewhat at *Miss Keene's* mysterious and sudden closing of that door, and the confusion and rapidity with which she turned her guests "face about," and bent her steps in another direction.

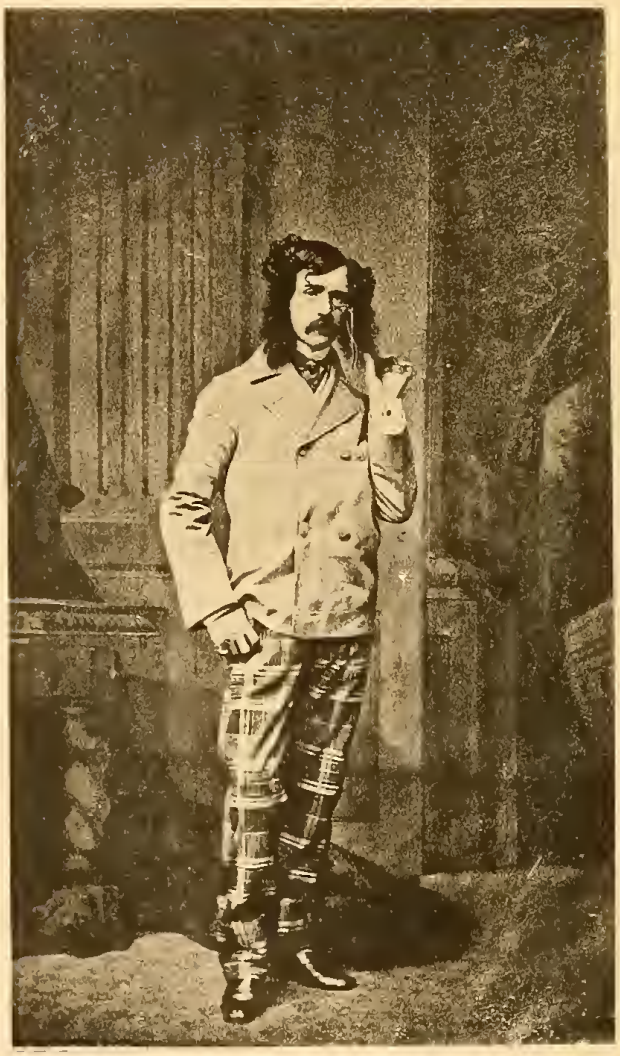
Miss Keene in private.

Like many another Englishwoman, *Laura Keene* was seen at her best in her own home, where she was a charming hostess, without a touch of affectation. Bubbling with delightful conversation, she yet had a rare and attractive reserve which stimulated the fancy, and was never broken with her most intimate friends. A woman's life, if not led in sheltered places, must lose some of its finer fibres; or

or they must protect themselves by deep, shrinking sensitiveness and a veil of reticence. She had a frail physical constitution, which made the hard life of an actress a specially severe one to her, and her delicate temperament brought its usual penalty of a great capability for suffering. She had much pain, her life had many struggles and failures; and, though she passed away in her prime, those who loved her and mourned her, felt their sorrow alleviated in knowing she was at rest. The public missed a little — but mourned not, as is its wont — a name and presence that were potent spells for many years, and the mimic triumphs of the comedienne passed into speedy oblivion. She died in the comfortable faith of the Roman Catholic church.

The assassination of Mr. Lincoln.

One lurid gleam fell on the name of *Laura Keene* to preserve it from absolute forgetfulness, out of the stormiest moment of American history. She stood upon the stage, beneath the box where the tragedy of *Abraham Lincoln's* assassination was enacted that Good Friday night of 1865, and her robes were brushed by *John Wilkes Booth* as he rushed away for his dismal flight. She never made, or could bear to hear, the slightest allusion to that moment, and the horror and shock of it shortened her days.



CHAPTER V.

E. A. Sothern.

The modern Sheridan.

The name of *Sothern* will long be pleasantly remembered, not for his Dundreary only — a delightful mimicry of the young lordling of the period — but for the jokes he wrote and wrought, which will be told in many a year to come of the *Sheridan* of our day. If a man may be known by his friends, *Mr. Sothern* was of a rare type, for his were of the best and warmest, and most loyal. While, on the one hand, he was at home with distinguished people, who sought and flattered him, after his success in England; he would, on the other, adapt himself most graciously and sympathetically to those who never heard of "Burke's Peerage." An apt illustration that "manners are not idle."

Mr. Sothern's amiable character.

There never was a character without flaw, therefore I do not claim this perfection for *Mr. Sothern;* but since the bad is generally aggressive,

aggressive, speaks for itself and is acknowledged readily enough — for "a shrug of the shoulders will blacken a man's reputation" — let us speak of what good comes to the surface, and even go so far as to search for it, once in a while, — since some of the fairest flowers blossom under the snow. *Mr. Sothern* had the most obvious and pleasant virtues. His sound, sweet charity was known but to his intimates, and could only have endured to the end through a good use of the lesson of life's follies and failures.

A lesson from rivets.

I shall always thank a mender of broken china for teaching me a moral, which I repeat, though commonplace enough except in its form. I saw a cup that I wanted on his counter marked "three dollars." "But," I said, "a new one is only two dollars." "I know it," replied the philosopher, "but there are one dollar and a half worth of rivets in that. It'll never break in those same places again!" I did not buy the cup, but I benefited by the lesson, and often hopefully dwell on the blessing recovered falls may be to character; not only safeguards against worse, but because, though broken in many places, we have but to stand "erect on our rivets" — in other words, profit by experience — and we need never fear weakness in the same spot again! Twenty-

Twenty-eight years ago *Mr. Sothern* was introduced to me by one now dead, whose affection for his friend impressed me, for I knew it was founded on no youthful ardor nor blind enthusiasm, but mature respect and esteem. To-day I do not need to go out of Boston to find real, true friends who knew him for what he was, and loved him accordingly. He was a man of gentle blood, innate refinement and infinite tact, or his name would not have been a household word in the homes to which I can point, nor his memory treasured in the hearts of men, women and children alike. *Mr. Sothern* was by his father intended for the medical profession, but, proving rather a refractory pupil, he was at last joyfully expelled by the faculty for his first practical joke, which was this. He had been assigned a study in the dissecting room, and, left alone to pursue it. Instead of applying the knife, from which he shrunk, together with its sanguinary tones, he resorted to his inseparable palette, and when the professors returned they found "the subject" painted *green* from head to foot. For such a turbulent spirit, it is needless to say, the expulsion was not a sorry one.

Mr. Sothern as a medical student.

Having married the daughter of a dean, it was naturally expected of young *Sothern* that

that he would settle down. In order to do this, he shocked his family by going on the stage, where *Charles Kean* happened to see him, and spoke of him as having promise. An agent in London had orders from an American manager, who wanted people. The Englishman wanted a situation; he might be good enough; who knew? So the young couple set sail. A very cold shoulder having been given them by their relations, they left their name behind them, and "*Mr. Stewart*" appeared in Boston, under the management of *Mr. Leonard*, as Dr. Pangloss. With the appearance of a lad of seventeen, exuberant with animation, full of vigor, brimming over with fun, such a "push-along," "keep-moving" Dr. Pangloss never was seen by the critical audience of our Athens. Nevertheless, the lad was clever, and professional success was only a question of time. A generous and indulgent manager was most kind in helping him to bridge time over. Not only was *Mr. Leonard* himself interested, but his wife, who went to her friend, *Mrs. Vincent* for assistance. These "innocents abroad" were mere children. Some one must take them in where they would be well cared for. She was that one. Babes in the wood, *Mrs. Vincent* must be the cock robin, and bring them food and

Charles Kean sees promise in him.

Mr. Sothern appears in Boston as Mr. Stewart.

Mrs. Vincent befriends Mr. and Mrs. Sothern.

and cover them with leaves! Where *Mrs. Vincent* is known, it is superfluous to add that she characteristically yielded, and, though the good protectress does laugh as she tells the story of her "lively babies," there is a vein of retrospective terror as she describes "their nearly being the death of me."

Mr. Sothern as a medium.

Spiritual manifestations were a new interest then. *Mrs. Vincent* took her guests to see the "Rappers," and they took their cue from what they saw and .heard to introduce the most surprising phenomena into her quiet home. If she went early to bed, it was only to be startled out of it by the ringing of every bell in the house. To be sure, she was petted and fondled when they got hold of her, but as she sat with them for the next hour in the hitherto fancied security of her own parlor, it was to be agonized by seeing chairs and tables walking about the room — at the bidding of the so-called "spirits." Not content with the furniture, these same invisibles laid cold hands upon the poor victim herself, stabbed, pricked and pinched, until visible proof was left in black and blue for days to come. Once she tried to retaliate, and really mystified her bewildered inmates, who for a moment half believed themselves that real spirits beyond their quelling had come among their own

Mrs. Vincent cruelly handled by spirits.

(which

(which were only of the animal kind) for suddenly *J. A. Smith* ("*Smithy*") who was one of the circle round the table, cried out: "There is a hand upon me," and as *they* had no hand in this, what was it? Nobody suspected the simple-hearted hostess, until she tried it again, and *Mr. Smith* caught her in the act, and her hand on his. But so deeply had the delusion wrought that the good fellow could not be shaken. "Of course it was you this time; there is no mistaking a human touch. It was as different from the last as darkness from light. That was a marble hand — clammy, cold, with a grasp like iron." Withal there was a certain discomfort to *Mrs. Vincent* in all this, for, in spite of her one innocent attempt, there was something uncanny about her guests, who pretended immense horror and astonishment. The crisis was reached when, one day, *Mrs. Stewart* was going out with her friend in the rain, an umbrella in her hand. It is better to give it in *Mrs. Vincent's* own words: "Whatever happened to that umbrella I never can say, but just as we got to the front door, and she had it already

Mr. J. A. Smith's faith in the manifestations.

already to open, up it went and disappeared!"

In the days I speak of promotion was not a matter of purchase in the theatres. The reign of society-beauties on the stage had not begun. The standard of excellence in morals and manners was very much more lofty than it is now, and consequently everything was on a better basis. There were recognized schools where "practice" could be secured, and the earnest worker who could get into Wallack's under the old master was sure to rise. There we find *Mr. Stewart.* His first step of real importance was playing Armand to the Camille of *Miss Matilda Heron,* who had spent months in Paris in her turn, learning to act the play by seeing *Mlle. Doche* and *Fechter* night after night. Dundreary was *Sothern,* and *Sothern* Dundreary afterward, and the identity could never be destroyed. But they were fortunate who saw him perform other of his parts before that surprising creation bewildered their judgment. He played with astonishing delicacy and feeling in Camille, Suspense, The Romance of a Poor Young Man, and David Garrick. The natural and tender pathos of his sentimental roles brought tears of sympathy to the eyes as plentifully as when we laughed

The schools of acting in theatres.

Mr. Sothern as Armand.

laughed till we cried, at his utter, inconsequent drollery. And before his absorption into that monstrous misfortune, a one-part reputation, he was a most conscientious and faithful student of his art. *Miss Matilda Heron* was so delighted with *Mr. Sothern's* Armand that she engaged him to go on a tour with her, and for the first time he took his own name. After that all went well. He steadily rose until *Laura Keene's* production of the American Cousin, when he secured his fortune and made hers, for it was a critical juncture; business bad and *Tom Taylors's* comedy a last resort. Nothing was really expected of it in itself, but every valuable member of the company was in the "cast," and *Joseph Jefferson* would of course be strong as Asa Trenchard. It is one thing to cast a piece, but quite another matter to make the people play the parts. After the reading, *Mr. Couldock* refused Abel Murcot, *Sothern* followed suit with Lord Dundreary, and there began a universal shaking of heads that spoke volumes of condemnation! Actors are, as a rule, bad judges of plays, and it is a recognized fact that neither author nor critic can tell what will succeed with any surety. Language that convulsed the company at rehearsal will not win a smile from the audience, and

The American Cousin.

Discontent at the cast of the American Cousin.

and a "situation" that may be nearly cut out proves one of the best points in a play. Notwithstanding all this, the human species is apt to run in droves, and *Miss Keene* knew that, once give a disorganizing element leeway, the whole company would be more or less affected, and then good by to the comedy. The cast must stand. Not only was *Mr. Couldock* too valuable and important to be out of the performance, while *Mr. Sothern* was growing in popularity every day, but they were the touchstones for general harmony, and *Miss Keene* cleverly suggested that they should write the parts up and do what they liked to improve them, to which they agreed. *Sothern's* scenes were principally with his wife, who played Georgina, and this enabled him to elaborate them "at his own sweet will." In fact, it was not known at rehearsal just what he was going to do, and the letter from "Tham" astonished everybody, himself included. The American Cousin ran to crowded houses for six months!

The actors allowed to write up their parts.

Success.

With such a card in hand, the game seemed his own, and he naturally turned in the direction of London. "If Lord Dundreary is appreciated here, what will he be there?" said the hopeful visionary. But experience found the

Lord Dundreary in London.

the path to be strewn with thorns, and *Mr. Sothern* spoke with real emotion of those first weeks which, lengthened with anxiety and bitter disappointment, seemed years. The custom of London theatres was to "paper" them, a practice not unknown in America, but there a generally recognized necessity to insure a favorable hearing. This method was as systematized as ever the "claque" was in Paris, and the persons having any sort of "claims" upon the theatre, being first accustomed to receive free passes as an appropriate consideration in their relation to it, such as literary people, artists, actors, tradesmen — whoever touched the profession in the most tangential manner — grew to regard these favors as a vested right. Indeed, the favor was in many cases done to the manager, for when he needed to fill his house, he could not give away his tickets without some apparent reason; such gifts would be unused and neglected, whereas these channels could be employed with some appearance of propriety. But when real triumph came, the enormous free list had to be cut down or suspended, and its members either became malicious enemies, or refused on the next occasion to be the catspaw of a shrewd entrepreneur,

Paper houses.

Free pass system.

The free list snspended.

trepreneur, who knew his docile public; so ready to follow an apparent success, and to believe that one hundred nights in the capital proved a meritorious performance. The whole system of metropolitan successes became an advertising scheme for real money-making in the provinces. Actors and plays which spontaneously attract real audiences have of late broken through the necessity of these methods, and the evils of the free list of which I have spoken, and the fact that it had come to include large numbers of those who could and would soon learn to pay, caused the managers to combine in abolishing the abuses of the system. Then, however, it was in full force. *Mr. Sothern* had not "papered" the house. *Mr. Sothern* failed!

Mr. Sothern's failure.

On this side of the Atlantic actors are hospitably met by fellow-workers behind the scenes, and there is great comfort in a friendly smile when all is strange and depressing, but you will not get it in London until you stand in the good graces of your audience. There is a general prejudice against foreign invasion, and you are made very keenly to feel that you are a foreigner and had better go back whence you came, though you may even be of English birth.

Inhospitality of English actors.

birth. This was *Mr. Sothern's* experience, as it has been that of others, and he determined to ask for a release and return in the next ship to the land of his adoption. But *Mr. Buckstone*, manager of the Haymarket Theatre, had nothing ready to supplant the American Cousin, besides which, he took a hint from the Dundreary family occupying the stalls, who, while they "never saw anything like it, yer know," nevertheless bore a striking resemblance to the "original." So, with a confident hope in a prosperous issue, although the loss, by the way, was really serious, *Mr. Buckstone* proposed "papering" the house for six weeks, and the result was that my Lord Dundreary became the cynosure of all eyes, and the American Cousin was played to crowded and enthusiastic audiences for four hundred and seventy-seven consecutive nights.

Mr. Buckstone's confidence.

A London hit.

Then began a life for *Mr. Sothern* that in his wildest fancies he never imagined, and in his sober moments he would probably rather have shrunk from, for, however delightful the

the companionship of noblemen may be, it is exacting upon the purse strings of one not equally endowed by the nation, and too much of a gentleman to receive from any man without reciprocating. Thus, after years of professional prosperity, but also years of race horses and clubs and costly entertainments, *Mr. Sothern* told me he must return to America and earn something for his old age. He had made one fortune and spent it; he must now come where he could not only make but save! We find excuse for the follies of a prince in thinking over his temptations, but from his very position the prince is hedged about and saved from many a pitfall; whereas, let any one reading these lines think seriously of the balance any ordinary man must have had to be received as a friend by a proud aristocracy — not their companion only, but a leader! It seems to me that no greater tribute could be paid *Mr. Sothern* than for a looker-on to say that he was true to himself throughout, inasmuch as he remained the same single-hearted man from first to last; at ease with his friends and able to place them at their ease — gentle or simple — and stanch to them, one and all, whether they belonged to the present or the past.

Expense of fashionable life.

Mr. Sothern's single-hearted nature.

past. Let me not forget what I have been told — that with a large correspondence and a busy life, he was never known to leave a letter addressed to his name unanswered, whether it bore the stamp of riches or poverty. No small test of politeness! These same letters of *Sothern's* were the very archetypes of droll composition, and are kept as curiosities by their lucky possessors. One friend I know received a most important looking envelope. Seeing "private" in large characters, it was wonderingly laid by for the moment, until quiet and seclusion could be had, and then the mysterious, official-looking document was carefully opened and a sheet of blank paper extracted. This was turned and shaken, the envelope inspected, the floor supiciously glanced at for what could have fallen out, even a sensation of alarm felt for what might be lost, before the joke was fairly understood. To one person he signed himself according to his moods, "Ever yours much and very," "Ever yours extra very," "Yours fanatically," "britannically," "frightfully," "monstrously," "cringingly," "suspiciously askew!" The following was sent on the outside of an envelope, and perhaps caused more pain than pleasure, since it was addressed to a shy young girl whose great dread was that it might have been

His droll letters.

Offer to purchase the Brunswick.

been read by some indiscreet person, and together with her name, get into the newspapers:

"They positively refused your offer of $400,000 for the Brunswick Hotel here, but if you will make it $20,000 more, I think I can secure it for you. Terms would be $250,000 cash, the balance on mortgage for three years at 7 per cent. If 'yes,' send me a telegram, and I will pay the deposit for you, though I cannot conceive what you will do with so large a private residence. Poor old Shogner, your godfather, died this morning in great agony, having accidently swallowed his tooth brush as he was parting his hair. Don't worry yourself, I will see him buried, attend to flowers, etc. Very, very sad!

E. A. SOTHERN."

Shogner's death.

At a house in Boston where distinguished people are not unknown, the maid one day astonished her mistress by announcing "The *Duke of Wellington.*" There was a debonair, calm, condescending grace about the man that caused the well trained servant to transmit the extraordinary announcement with good faith. It is needless to unmask the famous hero.

The Duke of Wellington.

Upon the recovery of the *Prince of Wales*, after

after an illness some years ago, a holiday was appointed to express the national rejoicing. Special services were held at St. Paul's Cathedral, and the streets through which the procession was to pass were densely crowded hours before. The lines were drawn by the cordon of military and police, and the road left perfectly clear, as is the rule on these occasions, a rule which only the military or police dare to break. *Sothern* had promised to join a party of men at the club, and at the eleventh hour and a half, here he was, wedged in with the seething crowd on one side of the way, the faces of his smiling comrades at the club window on the other; only a few yards between them, but the barrier was impenetrable. The laugh turned on the practical joker, for they knew there was no help for him this time. What was their surprise to see the crowd sway to and fro. Angry voices were heard — cries of "pickpocket." The strong arm of the law seized the offender, and *Sothern* in the hands of the police, is hurriedly led in the direction of the nearest station, which well he knew was at a corner on the other side of the street. The club door once gained, a card verifying his whispered "I am *Sothern*; all right, thank you," and five shillings to boot, enabled the "unabashed

Mr. Sothern's dilemma.

Escape in the role of a pickpocket.

abashed" to escape to his own party in triumph.

Tiger hides the rolls.

On another occasion the scene is a private parlor in a hotel, where the actor and guests are gathered about the fire, while a pompous waiter is concluding the arrangements of the dinner table. He enters with a tray of rolls, places them carefully at the places, regards the distribution with a solemn eye, corrects with mathematical precision some slight irregularities and retires. No sooner has the door closed than *Mr. Sothern* whistles to his trained dog *Tiger*, who leaps up, takes one roll after another and places them under the sofa. The waiter returns with the napkins, and as he is assorting them, discovers with intense surprise that the bread is gone. Has his memory deserted him? He thought he remembered the accuracy with which he laid a roll at every place, and yet — he must have been mistaken; they are not there! He hurriedly repairs his omission, to the satisfaction of his tormentors, who remain clustered about the fire in conversation, while he retires into the adjoining room to await the last expected guest. No sooner is his back turned than *Tiger* repeats his trick. This time, as the waiter enters with the cooler, he stares at the table, rubs his head, — and finally

A disconcerted waiter.

finally the observant party discover, by the contemptuous gleam of intelligence in his impassive face, that he has settled the matter to his mental satisfaction. The hungry convives must have eaten the rolls in his absence! No remonstrance can be wrung from his starched propriety, but he plainly resolves that no more rations shall be supplied until they are seated at table. The belated guest has not come, and in obedience to *Mr. Sothern's* request the dinner is served — the gentlemen sit down. Then, and not until then, does the waiter reappear with his rolls, and the cold stab of the fork which every one receives, as it is set down, emphasizes his indignation. A step is heard. The host exclaims: "Quick, there is *Fred.;* get under the table." No sooner said than there is a scramble to carry out the happy thought. In the confusion it is not perceived that *Sothern* retains his seat at the head of the board. *Fred.* comes in, and he rises to greet him with his usual affability. "Hallo, where are our friends? I thought I was awfully late." "Why," says *Mr. Sothern*, "I can't fancy what possessed them, but, strangely enough, as soon as they heard you coming they all got under the table!" And so, with a disconcerted air, the betrayed conspirators had to

Mr. Sothern's belated guest.

A disconcerting situation.

to crawl out, while *Sothern* looked on with courteous sympathy.

Mr. Sothern as an artist.

I have before me an album of sketches which is treasured by an old friend of this versatile being. It contains every sort of grotesque illustration of his private and public life — the theatrical supernumerary, the crushed tragedian, sleeping car scenes, camp life, landing a salmon, and what not — drawn with as delightful a humor as *Thackeray's* famous vignettes. There is a most spirited pen and ink drawing of two negro fencers standing at guard, on the outside of an envelope; inspired, apparently, by the postage stamp, which is framed as a banner, carried over the shoulder of one of the combatants. Four strokes of the pen have produced a wonderful burlesque of the face of a distinguished brother actor. Dainty little water colors, full of sentiment and fancy, are interspersed. One hideous face, with a "boiled" eye, a true jettatura, is drawn on an envelope, with a legend written under it, "This is the likeness of a man who has fixed me with his eye, in the parquet. Pity me!" This scrap of paper was sent to the box where the friend who owns this precious album was sitting, with a party of ladies, during one of *Mr. Sothern's* performances.

The jettatura at the theatre.

What

What was their horror when, standing directly under them, he presently wove into his part the line: "That man has got his eye on me now," looking into their faces and speaking with the most deliberate distinctness. So certain were they that the entire audience must be privy to the confidence, that the whole group rushed to the back of the box and were seen no more. Yet they forgave him!

Mr. Sothern's charity.

All this was only one side of the man's character, that fell in most happily with the exigencies of a bright moment. There were in this same nature minor chords far more precious to those who knew them. Among the charity funds of Boston there existed, during *Mr. Sothern's* lifetime, a perennial one administered by his oldest friend, beloved by him and by multitudes among her townsfolk, for her great heart and good deeds. It was originally a hundred dollars, and she was admonished never to let it be exhausted, but to ask for more in time, and keep the treasury replenished, that the drafts upon it to the order of the unfortnnate might always be honored. Many and many a time was the unfailing cruse refilled by the giver, and when *Mr. Sothern* died, *Mrs. Vincent* held in her trust eleven dollars. She still has that

Mrs. Vincent's Sothern fund.

that eleven dollars! — for, she says, I can't bear to have it come to an end, and though I try to send no one away, I manage somehow to keep the sum made up, so that his work may not cease."

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VI.

Ben. De Bar.
J. H. Hackett.
James E. Murdoch.
Matilda Heron.
Mrs. John Wood.
Mrs. Lander.

Ben. De Bar in St. Louis and New Orleans.

Ben. De Bar, the brother-in-law of *Junius Brutus Booth*, was a very successful manager and actor thirty years ago. He conducted two theatres, of which the good seasons were complementary; one in St. Louis, which he would open for the autumn months, and then, letting it for the winter, carry his company to New Orleans, bringing them back to St. Louis in the spring. New Orleans in those days was the Paris of America; there was a delightful French society, a French part of the town, French churches, French opera, and the principal boulevard had even its French side of the way. The season was short, but exceedingly gay; everything of the best was to be had for money, and money was lavishly spent. To enable us to meet the extravagant prices

The Paris of America.

prices we must pay, salaries that were thirty dollars in St. Louis, were fifty dollars in New Orleans.

There were incidental expenses that one never had elsewhere, and for which a stranger was totally unprepared. For example, I remember once being caught in one of the frequent tropical rain storms of that region, and, after waiting half an hour in a shop, its owner suggested that I should let him hail the next cab; otherwise I shouldn't get home at all, as the "water was rising." In fact, the gutters and gratings over the sewers were rapidly being blocked by the imprisoned rainfall, so that walking would be soon impossible. A carriage came splashing past. He beckoned it, and while I was lifting my skirts and looking hopelessly at two or three inches of water, the cabman, who knew his business, and was provided for the occasion with boots up to his waist, came toward me, and before I suspected his intentions, had, to my great surprise, safely landed me in the cab, having accomplished that feat by taking me in both arms, as is the custom in such a storm. He went through the same ceremony at my own door, and the entirely novel sensation was, perhaps, worth the five dollars he charged; certainly the getting home dry

A tropical rain storm.

A gallant cab man.

dry was, and as the next hour went by, and the next, and I sat at the windows watching the water rise first up to the level of one step, and then a second, my gratitude rose in like manner, until that cabman appeared in the light of my preserver, and his reward a mere bagatelle. At the third hour, the swollen rain, having nearly reached the point of entrance into the house, the sky lightened and the storm ceased as suddenlv as it began. Waders came with carts and pitchforks, and, standing knee-deep in water, cleared the gratings of the flotsam and jetsam of the freshet. The streets emptied themselves so rapidly that in two hours the wooden sidewalks were perfectly clear, without trace of the deluge, save for the half drowned rats, expelled from their haunts, whose dismal squeaks startled the wayfarer as he trod the loose planks, beneath which they had found refuge.

The waters subside.

The festivities of the Mardi Gras are a twice-told tale, and yet my memory lingers fondly on that holiday time in old New Orleans, with its fantastically dressed crowds, the interchange of witty sallies, the throwing of confetti and the beautiful pageant of the evening. Glories now passed away as are those of the Roman carnival! Gentlefolks kept from

The Mardi Gras.

from the streets during the day, which were possessed, for the most part, by the merry-making vulgar. At night they were all ablaze with flambeaux; every illuminated window filled with people in full dress for the coming ball, watching the long train of cars which bore the groups of living statuary, draped all in white, admirably posed, like figures of purest marble — their motionless silence a striking contrast to the noise and tumult which was hushed for the passage of the weird and ghostly procession. Beside the private parties, there was the great masked ball at the St. Charles Theatre, which *Mr. De Bar* surrendered for the occasion.

The night procession.

This favorite low comedian was of the *Burton* school, comically fat, with large blue eyes and an innocent stare, a round, boyish face, with a portentous grin, genial, but never coarse. Even his Bayadère, in ballet costume, illustrated by brilliant dancing and travestied feminine graces, never passed the limits of perfect propriety.

Mr. De Bar's style of acting.

Who that ever saw The Two Boys will forget *Ben. De Bar* as one of them, in schoolboy rig of short nankeen trousers, very much outgrown jacket, deep collar and several-years-too-small round straw hat, the good-humored rosy face trained in an aureole of flaxen hair?

The Two Boys.

Carlyle

Carlyle, in his most dyspeptic mood, must have been diverted at the sight of this "fat boy" mounting a stool to "speak his piece"—"Friends, Romans, countrymen" — with the sawing gestures of an awkward lad and a voice as tiny as his hat. We are told of the incomparable *Liston* (who, by the by, always believed himself a crushed tragedian) that he was unintentionally droll in the most commonplace utterances, so that when he said, without a smile, "I wonder where the trees come from!" the audience would be convulsed with mirth. The same with *Mr. De Bar*. It does not seem funny to write, but the innocent simplicity of speech and shrinking apology of manner with which he replied, when asked to "Step in a little," "I will step in, but I can't step in a *little*," was very, very funny to hear, and the stage would wait half a minute after it for the laughter and applause to cease. *Ben. De Bar* was not unknown in the East, but in New Orleans, where he made his first appearance in America, and in St. Louis, he held that peculiarly cheerful place in popular esteem which belongs to his line of business. A man of great integrity, he lost, as is often the case, in management what he had made as a star. I think that *Mr. De Bar* with *Mr. Moses Kimball* and *Mr. Wallack*, were the only

Mr. De Bar unconsciously funny.

His integrity.

only managers in this country who paid their actors in full through the disastrous season of 1857.

We used to go up and down the Mississippi in the high pressure steamboats, and a most delightfully high pressure life we had on board these agreeable, but flimsy craft, in the gay, antebellum days. I have been told that people put off their journey for the fun of travelling with *Mr. De Bar*, and what halcyon times those were for the waiters! I have seen half a score of chuckling auditors at the back of his chair at one time, while all the other guests were neglected. When a very small piece of beef was brought by one of them, *Ben. De Bar* was the originator of the joke, "Yes! yes! yes! That's it! that's it! that's it! bring me some," causing the colored men to explode with mirth as they disappeared, with their heads in their aprons, into the steward's room. As he opened his big eyes upon the laughing table with an injured stare, he was even more comical than when intending to be so, a moment after, he said, thanking the boy for filling his order: "But you need never trouble yourself to bring me a sample again."

Mr. De Bar on the Mississippi.

There was dancing, music and card playing on these Mississippi boats, the pleasures heightened,

Life on the Mississippi boats.

heightened, perhaps, by the constant expectation of possible snag, or fire, or explosion. There were picturesque scenes at the landings by night; the pine torches glaring on the shiny black faces, in the busy task of "wooding up," the toil enlivened by quaint cries and catches of native melodies. Then, under way again, the pathway of the steamer lighted up by the shower of sparks which fell on the dark waters.

A tragedy.

I was a witness to one of the tragedies which often startled the thoughtless and happy, sporting so near the jaws of danger. There came on board one night, at a landing where we touched, a haggard man with a colored nurse and a wizened infant. The fun had just ended, for it was late, and most of the passengers had gone to their state-rooms. But the wailing of the child brought some motherly hearts to the saloon, and the poor fellow's story soon found human sympathy, and the infant such comfort as its exhausted nurse seemed unable to give. He had been travelling with his wife, maid and two children on a vessel which had been snagged by night. Almost before they could get on a few clothes the steamer filled. The man knew that their only hope was to reach the boats, and, in the darkness, terror and confusion,

A snagged vessel.

fusion, started with his family for the deck. At the foot of the gangway the nurse and baby were separated from them. He turned back to seek her, telling his wife and little girl to stand still and wait for him. Every moment the panic was becoming greater, and the crowd of partly dressed, frightened people grew more and more distracted as they surged up and around the gangway. Some wanted to return for valuables; others were being dragged, against their will, half fainting, out of the sinking ship. The man took the baby from the nurse, told her to follow him, pushed his way back to the place where he had left his wife, and taking the woman and child he found there, struggled to the deck, then to the boat, which they reached in time. As the steamer sank, by the lantern's light, he saw that the woman and child were strangers, and realized that he had left his own dear ones to perish! He had waited a week to recover their bodies, and I never can forget the subsequent landing at his own home, which he had quitted six weeks before. The dying infant was carried on shore, followed by two coffins. The poor, heart-broken man staggered after them, and fell into his friends' arms, with a cry that made the blood run cold.

A fatal mistake.

Another

Yellow fever.

Another reminder of the darker possibilities of life was the discussion of the date of our going to New Orleans, dangerous until the latent scourge of the yellow fever was subdued by the first frosts. I must instance the thoughtfulness with which, at a great pecuniary loss, *Mr. De Bar* would postpone the departure of his unacclimatized company until absolute safety was certain. We had, of course, a constant succession of stars, and, in addition to the enormous labor of nightly changes of bills with them, the stock company played alone on Sunday night, the great night of the week in New Orleans, and too profitable to share, especially since the manager reserved himself for these occasions. Custom has now familiarized Sunday amusements, but to some people these performances were a dark cloud that rested upon all the bright season, and I saw one sick room painfully haunted with remorse, and its pain accepted as a penalty for wrong doing.

Sunday acting.

The strain of study.

Looking back to these days, it is difficult to believe that mind and body could have borne the strain of learning and remembering long parts of hundreds of lines night after night. I have heard actors say: "I could get up in my sleep and go on for *Shakespeare*." I remember one old lady who

who told me she studied the Duchess of York in Richard III., when she was sixteen, and had never looked at the book since; but all are not so fortunate, and in my own case, without having what is called a "quick study," I never retained a part for six weeks in my life. My practice was to re-read even the most familiar part the night before a performance, and so confirmed a habit did this become that I felt utterly incompetent in an emergency. Once only do I remember speaking the words correctly without sleeping upon them, and that was when unexpectedly called upon to study Lady Macbeth. The part is short, but the importance of such a role and my total want of ability to cope with it, gave me no time for sleep. Indeed I was sleepless for thirty-two or thirty-three hours. Remember, this was not mere memorizing, but exciting absorption in a character which left the mind thrilling and the eyelids quivering long after it was over.

Reading parts over night.

There was a certain train arriving at four o'clock in the morning, the whistle of which was the earliest signal for giving up my task for many months!

To bed at four in the morning.

It is perhaps because the river journeys were such rare interludes of rest that retrospection pictures them as such oases.

Matilda

Matilda Heron's eccentricity.

Matilda Heron, that most impulsive, large-hearted and erratic being, the founder of the "emotional" school, came to us in St. Louis, where she was a great favorite. As a pupil of *Peter Richings*, she had a careful training, but her chief claim to public interest in her early career lay in eccentricity, before as well as behind the curtain. I once followed her at the Planters' Hotel, St. Louis, and occupied the room she had left. On the wall, besides the fireplace, she had written in immense crayon letters, "Easter Sunday. God bless St. Louis! *Matilda Heron.*" She used to make vehement and passionate speeches when she was called out. I remember this conclusion to one in the same city: "You were the first people to take me by the hand. I thank you for this beautiful audience. I love you. I owe to you my husband. I owe to you my child. I have done what I could for you. For your sake I have called her *Louise*!" She was playing a very successful engagement, and I went to her for assistance in behalf of two children of a deceased member of the company, whose expenses must be paid home, and who were to leave by the same train that she was to take the next day. I did not think *Miss Heron* particularly regarded what had been said, but when

Letter on a hotel wall.

Speech in St. Louis.

when she was seated in the car the following morning, and our good treasurer appeared with the two interesting orphans, she rushed to them, and crying: "What are these? Are these the poor, dear things?" knelt in the aisle, clutched them to her breast, and, with her free hand emptying her pockets, showered them with gold pieces! When *Sarah Siddons* took a potato, she stabbed it; when she muttered to the salesman, over a piece of print, "Will it wash?" she made him shake in his shoes. *Matilda Heron* was dramatic to the last degree on every occasion. She was to follow me in an engagement I was playing in Indianopolis, and arrived on Sunday evening. When I went to call upon her in her room, which was close by mine in the same hotel, there was an intermittent knocking going on overhead and she asked me what it meant. "Were they putting down carpets on Sunday?" I said they must have been doing it all the week, for the noise had disturbed me by day and sometimes by night. *Miss Heron* said she should not be as patient as I had been, and instantly rang the bell. When the waiter came, she told him, with a most tragic manner, that "the noise must cease." After waiting half an hour, while it continued as before, she passionately pulled the

A dramatic scene with two orphans.

Miss Heron objects to a knocking.

Rebuke to the hotel clerk.

the bell again and sent for the clerk. Throwing her shawl about her like a Roman toga, with a commanding gesture, she repeated: "This noise must cease. It is sinful to put down carpets on Sunday night." The man reluctantly explained that he could not stop the knocking, because it came from a coffin maker, whose workshop was overhead. "All the same," said *Matilda Heron*, "it must be stopped. I'll have no such doings during my engagement!" And, cowed by her Medea tone and attitude, the functionary bowed and retired, apparently quelled into obedience, and prepared to stop coffin making and funerals for the next two weeks in Indianapolis!

Miss Heron's wardrobe.

Miss Heron was one of the first actresses who made a point of wardrobe, and had her costumes described in the newspapers. She had excellent taste, and, while she studied *Doche* in Paris for many months, she also studied millinery and dressmaking. Her laces were such as any lady might have worn in a ball room, and she told me that the large square veil of real point that she wore in the first act of Camille, she intended, somewhat incongruously, to bequeath to the church, of which she was a member, for an altar cloth. She generously gave me permission

mission to play her version of La Dame aux Camelias. One day in New York, after her retirement, I received a line from her saying: "Please let two little boys see *our* Camille." I sent for the boys, and asked where she was, for it had been months since she had disappeared from the knowledge of her friends. It was an obscure address, and I found it with difficulty—she had been ill, and owed her life to the good Sisters who nursed her. *Matilda Heron* was now living in one room, with poor surroundings, in greatly reduced circumstances, changed in manner and appearance, reminding me, as she stood there in her black dress, a long, gray curl falling on either side of her face, of *Marie Antoinette* after her sorrow. One jewel she had, beyond all price, her little child, still daintily dressed and cared for.

Changed circumstances.

I treasure a characteristic little line she gave me—in the whole interview the only touch of her former self—addressed to *George Ryer* in London, which says: "Give her my Pearl, and play in it yourself with her. Love me a little, and think of me a great deal, as of old."

Mr. De Bar was the promptest of managers. His punctuality was the cause of an unprecedentedly meagre Falstaff in the first act

Mr. De Bar a punctual manager.

act of the Merry Wives of Windsor. *Mr. Hackett* was the star, and very late on this occasion. Nobody suspected it of his conscientious and trustworthy habit, and lateness was never allowed by *Mr. De Bar.*

Mr. Hackett late.

The Falstaffian paunch is a rubber bag, which is blown up. When the moment came for the rising of the curtain, the call boy rushed to the prompter with a "Stop, stop, *Mr. Hackett* isn't blown up yet." *Mr. De Bar* replied: "Then he will have to play as he is; my curtain waits for nobody," and up went the curtain, and on went *Mr. Hackett*, his doublet falling about him like a petticoat, until an opportunity offered to apply the bellows. Anne Oldfield, according to *Charles Reade*, says, when her maid, full of enthusiasm for her inspired mistress, demands: "Oh, do tell me your feelings in the theatre." "Well, Susan, first I cast my eyes around and try to count the house." It is odd that my two memories of *Mr. Hackett* relate to little slips in one who was so faithful and true to his professional duties, but this one again occurred because nobody thought he could ever need ordinary assistance,

A meagre Falstaff.

Another slip.

assistance, especially in the character which he knew in every tone and line. So the prompter never thought of Falstaff, and he and all the actors and the audience were paralyzed at a dead stick on *Mr. Hackett's* part, from which he was finally rescued by the help of the Mr. Ford, who gave him his line and set him going after considerable confusion. I never saw more mortification than that with which the great Shakesperean confessed that, having had some doubt of the "returns" of the treasurer, he had lost his cue in "counting the house." And then, as his good humor returned, how quaintly he said, "His thefts were too open. His filching *made me* an unskilful singer. I kept not time!" This was neither in New Orleans nor St. Louis.

Mr. Hackett's mortification.

Mrs. John Wood, the ideal soubrette and the best burlesque actress I ever saw, came to New Orleans after her engagement at the Boston Theatre. She played farce, extravaganza and the Planché burlesques with innocent impudence and saucy effrontery, which made you catch your breath for fear of what might come—but

Mrs. John Wood.

but never did! Her Conrad the Corsair and Invisible Prince, wore a swashing and a martial outside. So much so, that in playing the opposite parts to her, it was with a perfect conviction that she was the frank, bold boy she represented. Of course, *Mrs. Wood* was full of the direct approach to her audience, which her style of acting permits, and each individual in it felt taken into the confidence of her brilliant by-play, winged by the arrows which shot from her magnificent eyes straight to every susceptible heart. She was a very effective singer and dancer, and had every personal charm a woman could possess. Her reign has continued on both continents with uninterrupted success for more than thirty years, and she is still an established favorite on the London boards.

Mrs. Wood's brilliant acting.

Mr. James E. Murdoch.

Mr. James E. Murdoch was another of *Mr. De Bar's* stars. At the age of seventy-four, though he no longer lags superfluous on the stage, he is yet capable, in occasional readings, of arousing an audience to the enthusiasm which he kindled in his incomparable light comedy parts of yore. His Young Mirabel was as famous

famous in England as in America. Born an actor, though not of theatrical lineage, he served a patient apprenticeship after a considerable success on the amateur stage. *Mr. Murdoch*, like most actors of his time, played the whole round of the drama, Hamlet one night, the Inconstant the next. These large foundations tended to produce better special results than the narrow training which young people get nowadays, in playing a few parts in a season, not acquiring a free style but their leaders' mannerisms. *Mr. Murdoch*, like the elder *Booth*, had none. It would have been difficult to have made him food for burlesque.

A famous light comedian.

His natural temperament seemed more fitted for the impersonation of tragedy than comedy, though his comedy was like the froth of champagne. He was a serious and profound scholar, and intensely interested in social and political affairs. As a Swedenborgian he had a strong and beautiful faith in the unseen world. I remember one night, when the talk ran upon a friend whom he had loved and lost, he reproached himself for speaking of loneliness, and said, while pointing to a vacant chair:—"She is there!"

Mr. Murdoch's scholarly attainments.

A devoted patriot, when the war broke out

Patriotism.

out he gave up his career as inconsistent with the serious purpose of the times, packed his trunks and vowed never to unlock his theatrical wardrobe until peace should be proclaimed. That must have been a strange scene in Milwaukee when, as he was playing Hamlet, the news came of *Lincoln's* first call for troops, and *Murdoch*, refusing to finish the piece, sent his audience home in an enthusiastic glow of patriotism with a burning speech, delivered from the stage, "accoutred as he was!" His health did not allow him to serve actively in the field, but he held a staff position for some time under *General Rousseau*, and by personal efforts and readings for the benefit of the Sanitary Commission, he contributed largely to the national cause.

Mrs. General Lander.

One word here of another bright jewel of our order, *Jean Margaret Davenport*, who married *Colonel*, afterwards *General Lander*, in 1860. Only two years later he died from the effect of wounds received in battle, and for love of him and in commemoration of his heroic death, his widow took upon herself, with her mother's assistance, the entire charge of the hospital department at Port Royal, S. C. So long as *Florence Nightingale's* name is revered in England will *Mrs. Lander's* devoted labors be remembered in America. Not that there

Her services in the war hospital.

is

is anything inconsistent in these with a laborious and conscientious life as an actress, from the hardships of an infant prodigy to the brilliant success of a crowned queen of the stage. But the world will have it so.

The belief in native talent for acting.

I am always struck with the common belief that everybody knows enough to act. The apparent ease is borne in upon them, and the happy conclusion is that, with "native talent," which all are sure they possess, there is little or nothing to learn. I often think of the countryman who complained of the great physician charging "a guinea for writing a little bit of paper," to which the doctor replied: "Ah, my friend, but you must remember how long I have been learning what to write on that little bit of paper." *Mrs. Lander*, like *Edmund Kean* and scores of others in theatrical families, went upon the stage before she could speak plainly; and yet it is such as these who are not ashamed to tell you "the responsibility of standing before an audience — the proper ambition to excel for my own sake — kept me cold from nervousness up to my last appearance." It is in these families of actors — peace be to their ashes — we find whole generations who lived lives of constant study and hard work, while their private virtues equalled

Mrs. Lander goes on the stage as a child.

Roll of Honor.

equalled their professional distinction. To quote a few "of yesterday," I instance, first, *Mrs. Warner*, a contemporary of *Mrs. Charles Kean*, who, together with *Mrs. Kean*, in her hour of sorrow, received every tribute of admiration and respect, even the womanly sympathy of the Queen herself; *Mrs. Fanny Kemble* and all her distinguished family; *Miss Helen Faucit*, whose husband, *Sir Theodore Martin*, was commissioned to write the "Life of the Prince Consort." Among ourselves there is a roll I am proud to enumerate; *Charlotte Cushman*, *Julia Dean*, *Eliza Logan*, *Kate Bateman*, *Caroline Richings*, *Mrs. Farren*, *Mrs. James Wallack* and many and many another. What had these of the frivolity and vanity which are the supposed temptations of stage land; some working from babyhood—all spending their best years in the drudgery of their profession? But then, it was recognized by them in this, as in other arts, that the entrance was narrow, long and rugged. They must pursue it step by step; there was no leaping over the wall. Acting to an audience, like singing in opera, was a final result of long and severe practice. We cannot all possess the scholarly mind of *James E. Murdoch.* He is a rarely gifted man among the learned. We cannot all have the strength,

Laborious lives of actors.

strength, charity and opportunity combined that made *Mrs. Lander* more welcome in the last hour to those dying soldiers than ever she was in her glorious moments upon the stage; but as these names are written and as these names are read, who will not join with me in placing one more sprig of rosemary in the wreath they wear? Who among us does not wish, with me, that the path they trod on their way to fame were the only path; that their art might never be profaned?

A sprig of rosemary.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VII.

Boston Museum.

Mr. Barry Sullivan in St. Louis.

In the spring of 1860, *Barry Sullivan*, the famous Irish tragedian, came to St. Louis. Before him came his reputation as an overbearing, autocratic actor, of brilliant and eccentric gifts, who carried delight to his audience, but terror behind the scenes. But the kind heartedness of his race and his own courtesy made him gentleness itself to the young manager, painfully overwhelmed by the cares of her situation. Indeed, *Mr. Sullivan* made me the most flattering offer to join him in his proposed tour through California, Australia and the English-speaking world and, though this was declined, I believe I owe to his kind offices when he left us the tender that was made me of an engagement

engagement at the Boston Museum by *Mr. E. F. Keach.* Considerable correspondence had taken place, terms and conditions were arranged when, in consequence of a misunderstanding on my part, everything came near falling through. Because *Mr. Keach* was in Philadelphia managing a theatre during my epistolary knowledge of him, I located the engagement he offered there and, being a stranger to Boston, when I found it was for "the Museum" the title startled me on account of its association with places of similar names where the dramatic standard was not high, so that I ended by sending a refusal in a tone of sincere regret, and went to sleep satisfied with the wisdom of my decision. At seven o'clock the next morning I awoke with a startlingly distinct impression of a voice in my ear which said, "Go to Boston," so potent that I reversed my decision and dispatched a message to *Mr. Keach* then and there: "Accept your offer for the season at the Boston Museum. Don't mind letter." It was an auspicious voice, for it led me to fellowship with a company of excellent actors, governed by an admirable manager,

Engagement at the Museum by Mr. Keach.

A misunderstanding.

A voice calls me to Boston.

Home and friends.

manager, to my present home and some of the truest, dearest, best of friends.

Mr. Kimball gives me a chart.

I have a kind memory of my first meeting with *Mr. Moses Kimball*, who was much about the Museum, of which, together with his brother, he was then the owner and, in his greeting, asked if I had seen anything of Boston. I told him I really did not know what I had seen, for the streets were so crooked that, if I started out for a long walk, I often brought up at my own door in a few minutes, and if I attempted to go straight to the Museum I lost myself for an hour or two. *Mr. Kimball* laughingly took a card and made a chart of the streets in my course; which, absurd as it may seem to those who have a bump of locality, was referred to as a guide for weeks.

Behind the scenes.

Writers of sensational literature love to draw highly colored pictures of "behind the scenes." Let me describe the charmed precinct and its conditions as they existed in the Museum when I first entered its service; very little changed now, very little different in any American theatre. Its life is not the wonderful stroller's romance of Wilhelm Meister. Nay! Rather as commonplace a routine as that of the loom or the counter. Of course, from all this monotony blossoms the

Commonplace drudgery.

the play of fancy, the music of beautiful language, the joy of interpretation, forgetfulness in a sublime thought, the sympathy of the heart of a great audience; but I would say most emphatically that, except for this artistic intoxication, which is wholly impersonal, the stage in my time was a dingy, sordid workshop, where there was infinitely less temptation for young women than in any breadwinning career whatever, since a right minded girl could not help living up to a higher and better standard in her endeavor to understand the words she spoke, educating herself for the demands they made upon her. Beyond all this, even if she were not of very strong principles; as *Dr. Watts* says Satan himself is looking out only for idle hands to do his mischief, these were not found behind the scenes of the Museum.

Pleasure of acting.

Reasons why a stage life offers few temptations.

We entered by a narrow door from one of the galleries, which gave at a touch, but fell back as quickly with the force of a ponderous spring. A doorkeeper, seated at the end of a narrow aisle some three feet wide between enormous piles of dusty canvas, permitted none to pass except the actual employees of the theatre. About the same space between the inner edge of the scenery standing in its grooves and the masses stacked along the walls,

The stage door.

Narrow ways.

walls, allowed a scant passage, down the side of the stage. At one corner, where the private box is now, was a "property room," behind that the manager's office; on the opposite side, a small space of, perhaps six feet wide at one end tapering down to four at the other, was the green room, its furniture a bench about the wall, a cast case, a dictionary and a mirror, over which was inscribed "Trifles make perfection." To move about, except warily, on business, was at any time difficult; at night, when carpenters and scene shifters were active, a veritable running the gauntlet. Two dressing rooms in the place of the two upper boxes were approached by stair-cases as steep as ladders, and these were assigned the "leading" man and woman. The others had little "bins" under the stage, and crowded as closely by the machinery of the "traps" and other subterranean contrivances as the space above. Well was it for us if we failed to stumble over "set" pieces and properties. I think all that saved me from many a severe fall was the caution inspired by the fear of spoiling fine clothes. I remember, with painful distinctness, my injured feelings when, squeezing through a tight place, I heard my satin "fray" as it brushed the rough edges of

Difficulty of motion.

Tight squeezing

of the scenes, or in a hurried entrance felt the obnoxious nail that caught my lace flounce, while I had to go straight on, whatever stayed behind; for the stage must not wait!

The intervals of acting.

A hasty glance at the "call" in the green room for the coming plays, a word of courteous greeting for our fellow-actors, the last conning of the part; such were the interludes between the appearances on the stage, and a more work-a-day, matter-of-fact place it would be hard to find.

services in the the Museum.

That zealous manager, *Mr. E. F. Keach,* placed the Boston Museum stage and company in full and complete equipment as a first-rate theatre from being something of a mere adjunct to the wax figures and the curiosities, which good people frequented who were afraid of the very name of theatre. He began his season of 1860 and 1861 with a round of the "old comedies."

William Warren.

I can never forget the overwhelming impression *William Warren* made upon me in these classic plays, though he had such co-operation as that of *Mr. W. H. Smith, Mrs. Vincent, Keach, Ring, Whitman, J. A. Smith* and others. Familiar with the Sir Harcourt Courtly of *William Rufus Blake,* regarded through the country as its typical representative,

His Sir Harcourt Courtly.

Sir Peter Teazle.

tive, while *Mr. Warren's* fame, by his own choice, was chiefly local, I found his performance unsurpassed and unsurpassable; and, greater yet, his Sir Peter Teazle, with all its delicacy, feeling, humor, exquisite refinement and lofty bearing. Criticism is not the object of these lines, but a fellow actor's tribute means something, and mine was unfeignedly paid to this wonderful creation night after night, all by myself, as I listened behind the screen to his pathetic provision for me; blinking back the tears in fear of red eyes and nose under my white wig!

A fellow actor's tribute.

Oh! the pity of it, never to hear again the broken, quavering, gentle voice,—"If I were to die she will find I have not been inattentive to her interests while living!"

Rachel's criticism of Warren.

Rachel may well have exclaimed of *William Warren*: "He is one of us." This great artist belonged to the best French school, as can hardly be said of any living English-speaking actor beside. The fine art, the fruition of study, the faithfulness in detail, all were there. There were no sketchy bits, to be varied night after night, as inspiration might suggest or humor dictate.

It is said that the hardship of the actor lies in the fact that his work is all done before the public eye, so that if he has to feel his

his way in his part, or is out of his depth, he must struggle on in the full glare of criticism.

Mr. Warren was often, in the exigencies of the cast, required to play unworthy and certainly unsympathetic parts. But it was always the same; the creation was complete, uniform, and fulfilled to its absolute possibilities, the work of time and study, not of the moment. Many actors, and some of the most admired, will turn about, even from an heroic declamation, make wry faces or play tricks to disturb the equanimity of their fellows, and many more will enter the side scenes with an instantaneous transformation to their own personalities. But *Mr. Warren* seemed to put on his character with his dress. Scrupulously particular in speaking the author's own words, he was seldom seen reading a part; in fact I have known him to receive a long *Madison Morton* farce over night and recite it at rehearsal the next morning without prompting.

Mr. Warren's treatment of inferior parts.

Accuracy of study.

Perhaps the very perfection of his own work may have made him the more patient with the short-comings of others. Certain it is, in five years of daily intercourse and co-labor I never heard from him an unkind or impatient word at any fault of another. There could hardly be

The innocent blamed for the guilty.

be a severer test of temper and manners than the accidents of a theatre. The man who "sticks" seldom appears to the audience to be the offender, but the one who must wait for his cue. The scene shifter or the carpenter or the property man may blunder, but the sin is visited upon the actor. So there is often a sharp rebuke, couched in strong words, behind the scenes. Satisfied with the conscientious performance of his own duty, he left others to do theirs or not as they might, and avoided comment or reproach. No minister of state nor learned judge could have moved among his peers with more dignity, delicacy and reserve than *William Warren* in the bustling, busy throng of the little world behind the scenes.

Mr. Warren's dignity.

His pride in his profession.

I would not be understood to imply that there was the least withdrawal from the sympathy of his brethren. Born of actors' blood and with many illustrious ties to the stage which he adorned, he had that pride in his profession, and that quick and hearty concern in every member of it, small or great, which is one of its most honest characteristics.

It is well known how difficult it was before his retirement to persuade *Mr. Warren* to take part in social life. The innumerable efforts

efforts made to lure him into various parties of pleasure were almost invariably baffled.

"Concentration is the secret of strength. Friends, books, pictures, lower duties, talents, flatteries, hopes — all are distractions which cause oscillations in our giddy balloon and make a good poise and a straight course impossible. You must elect your work. You shall take what your brain can and drop all the rest," says *Emerson*, and he quotes instances in the lives of the greatest men to prove it. It was because *Mr. Warren* was an actor through and through, and would keep his energies unfettered for his great career, that he lived his life apart.

Concentration the secret of strength.

But what the stage has lost, society has gained and it is no longer an impossible pleasure now to meet the fine marked face and courtly figure in drawing room and dining room. Filled with anecdote and witty repartee, no wonder he is sought out. But he remains the same shrinking, sensitive man he ever was, and lionizing will not harm him, his own words the contrary notwithstanding. I saw him one night surrounded by a bevy of girls, who, in their æsthetic, clinging gowns and admiring attitudes, could not but remind me of the maidens in Pinafore, grouped around Bunthorn, and, in speaking to him afterward,

Mr. Warren in social life.

I told him he was the lion of the night. "Ah!" said *William Warren*, "I never heard of but one man who was not hurt by lionizing, and he was a Jew by the name of Daniel!"

The danger of lionizing.

Mr. Vinton's great portrait of Mr. Warren.

When *Mr. Vinton* was commissioned to paint his portrait he felt there was some barrier between him and his sitter which must be broken down before he could comprehend the character and temperament of his subject, as a successful artist must do. Here, he told me, he felt must be the complex mind, the creator of half a century of living pictures inspiring and controlling the features he was to limn, and yet, for all he could fathom, only childlike simplicity revealed itself. How was he to penetrate the secret and know the man? Little by little he began to feel that it *was* the man he knew, that the mimetic art had left no traces on the spirit, though it had furrowed the face with infinite lines of expression which he must take as he found them, leaving for their illumination the pure and gentle nature he had discovered.

Childlike simplicity of the actor.

It was, perhaps, fortunate that the committee relinquished the proposed scheme for his portrait in one of his famous characters, to give to his townsfolk and friends the likeness which *Mr. Vinton* has painted with such force and inspiration of the sound, true gentleman, *William Warren*. What

The sound, true gentleman.

What the Museum has achieved under its present manager, *Mr. R. M. Field,* everybody knows, but it is its highest praise that it has developed those lines of progress which the manager of the past instituted, with greatly increased facilities and a liberal expenditure. Cramped for space to a degree I have never witnessed the equipment inadequate for a first-class theatre (we had not even a call boy) *Mr. Keach* placed the establishment in the front rank and the Museum productions of the Colleen Bawn and Jeanie Deans would have been creditable to any stage. He killed himself with work, for he had an unusually nervous temperament, and the blade wore out the scabbard in three years. I remember his characteristic way of pulling his whiskers as he stood directing the rehearsals of a new play until the left side grew perceptibly thinner. He was a painstaking actor, and I fancy the employment was an actual rest in his cares as a manager. Even to the last, when the illness that slowly undermined his strength left him so weak that he could only get up the theatre stairs by the help of the hand

Mr. Field's management.

Colleen Bawn and Jeanie Deans, produced by Mr. Keach.

hand rail, his acting lost none of its life and spirit. I have seen him come off the stage with a burst of laughter which his part required and fall fainting in the entrance from sheer exhaustion. And in the minuet in the Belle's Strategem, one night he asked me to let him hold my hand to save him from falling. This whispered appeal was the more pathetic since I knew how reluctantly he turned to a woman's help, like any other of his sex. After this he broke through a natural reserve, told me of his proposed journey to Baltimore, and how he hoped it might benefit him, because he wanted to come back strong enough to play in Rosedale. He went south, but returned hurriedly for the rehearsal of Ticket-of-Leave-Man, that he might not be anticipated by *Mrs. Barrow's* production of the same piece, worse for the anxiety and the fatigue of the journey, but again at his post. In fact, he only left his work a week before his death.

Fainting at the side scenes.

The dying manager at his post.

Among the daring successes of his management with the limited conditions at his command, my Boston readers will recall, besides Jeanie Deans and Colleen Bawn, The Enchantress, Pauvrette, The Angel of Midnight, Faust and Marguerite, The Octoroon, and many others, well mounted and generally

Museum productions.

generally well cast. The company was re-enforced by special engagements. *Mrs. Barrow*, in the first season, was obtained for the part of Effie Deans.

Mr. and Mrs. Barrow.

Mr. and *Mrs. Jacob Barrow* were here familiar and favorite figures in their respective spheres for many years. She led that brilliant galaxy which illuminated the Boston Theatre in its opening season. He was known as a hospitable good fellow, who, with many ups and downs of fortune always succeeded in living luxuriously. After the Museum engagement, they tried their fortunes in a little theatre which *Mrs. Barrow* established in the hall opening from the Music Hall entrance, but it had a short and disastrous season. They faded away from the scene, and finally returned to England. Few actresses were ever more finished and satisfactory, if somewhat artificial, than *Julia Bennett Barrow*, and she was a graceful and beautiful woman. The exquisite *Oberon*, the most charming *Viola*

Viola and Oberon.

Viola lingered on, and still, I believe, lingers a paralyzed invalid.

Miss Bateman.

Miss Bateman, as she afterwards became in English fashion; *Miss Kate Bateman*, in the more friendly American style, played with us. She was a dear good girl, pure as a lily, and as fair, but she never would have achieved her wonderful success without the absolute admiration for her which *Papa Bateman* felt to the roots of his being! We do not convert others unless we believe ourselves, and if to family affection there is united a sincere admiration, it is very certain to conquer. So Mahomet found it easy to overcome the world when that most incredulous element, his own family, became his disciples. *Mr. Bateman* believed his daughter to be the greatest actress of her day, and in his intercourse with the leaders of public opinion, they came to believe so too. When he started the applause, his great hands resounded loudly and his face expressed the sense of rousing the audience to their duty. When Evangeline slept upon the stage, while the moving panorama behind gave the effect of motion to the boat

Mr. Bateman's belief in his daughter.

A paternal claqueur.

boat upon which the heroine is travelling, as the house broke into applause at some triumphs of the painter in the passing scene *Papa Bateman* saw only his child, and with a burst of joyous enthusiasm, he turned gratefully to an applauding neighbor with, "No woman can sleep upon a bench like my daughter," and joined with all his might in the tribute which his parental solicitude interpreted so naively. *Ellen* and *Kate Bateman* had been infant prodigies, and used to play the Young Couple together when they were four and six. Marriage early lost *Ellen Bateman* to the stage, and it was a serious loss, for she had very brilliant promise. Her sister lacked her power and sympathy, but she had elegance and dignity and classic beauty.

Applause for the panorama taken for Miss Bateman.

Ellen Bateman.

People talk of "stage beauty" as though it were something coarser and less rare than the beauty of a ballroom, whereas there are points of outline, motion, expression indispensable on the stage, the want of which is unnoticed in a room. Many actresses use paint and pencil as though shading and coloring must be enormously exaggerated for stage effect, but a theatre is full of opera glasses, and the slight touches of art which the footlights do require must be used as delicately as the not unknown embellishments of a woman of society.

Stage beauty must be real.

Mistakes in making up.

ciety. Even in *Sarah Bernhardt's* company there were faces that looked like clowns, and in which the paint disguised the expression like a mask. *Miss Bateman's* fair loveliness would have been still more admired anywhere else, and, together with her lifelong training in her art, won her not pardon only, but indulgence in parts far above her real power.

A mad Ophelia.

There are many strange tales of mad actors, perhaps the most famous that which *Mrs. Bellamy* relates of one who having been a celebrated Ophelia, eluded her attendants, and, making her way to the theatre, forced herself upon the stage before the actress playing the character, and gave the mad scene with horrible truthfulness, to the amazement of the performers as well as the audience. I have had much experience with these afflicted folk, though never any more painful than for a few hours on the stage of the Museum.

Mr. Frank Whitman.

Mr. Frank Whitman was a very useful member of the company — the Danny Mann of the Colleen Bawn. In all the apparent violence which he has to use toward his victim he was careful and gentle. Many an inferior actor loses his head and in the excitement of such a scene gives needless bruises.

His courtesy.

He was always delicately courteous to me, and I felt real sorrow when tales of his strange words and

and actions began to be whispered about the theatre and his companions said that he was "queer." At last one night when we were playing Jeanie Deans, it was suddenly told me: "*Whitman* is mad." He had the little part of the jailor. In the scene where Jeanie visits her sister Effie in prison after her condemnation, *Mrs. Barrow*, who was Effie, should have turned away from me, but stood, instead, looking before her with a strained, astonished expression, which led me to follow her gaze. There was poor *Mr. Whitman*, down by the footlights, combing his hair with a pocket comb! The dull face, the vacant stare and the measured action, ludicrous as the situation was, only called forth a thrill of horror. A long silence finally aroused the poor fellow, a second jailor entered and coaxed him off the stage. The same evening I was told his regard for me had developed into something like aversion.

Madness in the theatre.

A strange scene.

He went about complaining of my eyes — "they snapped at him." It was his duty to arrest my sister, and if my eyes "snapped" at him when he did it as they had done the night before, he had a pistol and meant to "put her away." Every one was on the watch to secure the pistol, but it was not a comfortable performance. His friends, it seemed, had been aware

Dangerous disposition.

aware of his condition but had hoped it would improve.

He never came to the theatre again. I was told that the next day, when he was removed to the asylum, he thought the carriage had come to take him thither, and he wrapped himself in the plaidie, ready for the Scotch play, and so passed to the "last scene of all that ends this strange eventful history."

John Wilkes Booth.

Another madman — and I do not say it from sentimental charity, but from the distinct memory of that sensation which the near approach to those of unhinged minds communicates — was *John Wilkes Booth*, a star or a comet of the Museum season. It is my earnest belief that if there was ever an irresponsible person, it was this sad-faced, handsome, passionate boy. As an actor he had more of the native fire and fury of his great father than any of his family, but he was as undisciplined on the stage as off. When he fought, it was no stage fight. If his antagonist did not strain his nerve and skill, he would either be forced over the stage into the orchestra as happened, I believe, once or twice; or cut and hurt, as almost always happened.

Furious stage fights.

happened. He told me that he generally slept smothered in steak or oysters to cure his own bruises after Richard the Third, because he necessarily got as good as he gave, — in fact more, for though an excellent swordsman, in his blind passion he constantly cut himself. How he threw me about! once even knocked me down, picking me up again with a regret as quick as his dramatic impulse had been vehement. In Othello, when, with fiery remorse, he rushed to the bed of Desdemona after the murder, I used to gather myself together and hold my breath, lest the bang his cimeter gave when he threw himself at me should force me back to life with a shriek.

Othello's rush at Desdemona.

The sharp dagger seemed so dangerous an implement in the hands of such a desperado that I lent him my own — a spring dagger, with a blunt edge, which is forced back into its handle if it is actually struck against an object. In the last scene of Romeo and Juliet, one night, I vividly recall how the buttons at his cuff caught my hair, and in trying to tear them out he trod on my dress and rent it so as to make it utterly useless afterward; and in his last struggle literally shook me out of my shoes! The curtain fell on Romeo with a sprained thumb, a good deal of hair on his

A ragged Juliet.

A damaged Romeo.

his sleeve, Juliet in rags and two white satin shoes lying in the corner of the stage!

Misfortunes of John Wilkes Booth's career.

The stage door was always blocked with silly women waiting to catch a glimpse, as he passed, of his superb face and figure. He was ever spoiled and petted, and left to his unrestrained will. He succeeded in gaining position by flashes of genius, and the necessity of ordinary study had not been borne in upon him. No life could have been worse for such a character than that of an actor. It is doubtful if aught could have counteracted the effects of inheritance and the lack of early education; but, even if crime had been their outcome, it would, under other conditions, have hardly taken the vain form of his awful deed, with the mock heroism of its "*Sic semper tyrannis*" and its tawdry tragedy.

CHAPTER VIII.

Boston Museum, continued.

THERE are some people who can never grow old. Their years may number fourscore, but they are possessed of an innocent freshness, a true guilelessness that they have brought straight through from childhood. They know themselves to be true and cannot mistrust another; contact with the world has not made them worldly. They have trodden the beaten path with the rest of us, and escaped defilement,—for the fault is in our own coat if it attract the burrs. One of these rare people is *Mrs. Vincent.* Nobody has anything but good to say of her, unless it be those devoted friends who have constituted themselves her guardians, to take care of her money, so that she may not spend every penny she earns. One of these

Grown up children.

Mrs. Vincent.

A faithful trustee.

these faithful wardens was promptly on hand after her semi-centennial benefit in 1886, and politely accompanied her to the box office, where he pocketed the receipts, and left her to sign for the same. "All right, dear," said *Mrs. Vincent*, "but don't invest it all; I want a trifle for myself," and she was provided for accordingly, as in the after part of the day the good friend again made his appearance. "You said you wanted a trifle; here it is. I banked the even dollars and brought you the odd cents." Well he knew if she once laid her hands on that money the order of things would be reversed. The bank might have had the cents, but every dollar would be spent on rent for the homeless, shoes and stockings for the cold, and Thanksgiving cheer for those that could not buy it for themselves — not to speak of the "merry Christmas" for every child she knew. The girls get everything they can think of, and the boys everything — and more too, because she does "love boys so."

Where her money goes.

Our friend Mrs. Vincent.

It is not as an actress *Mrs. Vincent* is loved in Boston. No one thinks of her as this character or that, however well she may play it. It's not Sheelah, with her huge mob cap and Irish brogue — it's *Mrs. Vincent* the children

children laugh at when she runs round with the tea kettle spilling the "hot wather" as she goes. She is the children's friend and they are hers. As with the young, so with the old. Mrs. Vincent's early career.

But her dramatic career has been successful and laborious. She played the nurse in Romeo and Juliet at sixteen years of age, and as an actress, *Mr. Forrest* paid her one of the greatest compliments when he sent for her to take the "call" with Pauline and Claude after the fourth act of the Lady of Lyons. To this unheard of request the Widow Melnotte modestly demurred, but *Mr. Forrest* gruffly replied: "It's as much for you as for us, madam." Mr. Forrest's endorsement.

I began by saying I knew nothing but good of her, and there are not a few who will say the same. The first revelation to me of her kind heart was, in finding hot coffee brought to her every night after the performance, which she drank, I discovered, to keep her awake for a sick room where a man and his wife were both dying. Nurses were not then so easy to come by as now, and there was a bitter prejudice in the minds of some people, who thought only of Sairey Gamp when they were mentioned, so for these poor souls who had known better days and fallen — oh! A kind nurse.

—oh! the sorrows of all such—*Mrs. Vincent* gave up her rest, as long as they needed a loving presence in the dark hours from twelve until seven, making day, not night, out of the dreaded gloom. It need hardly be said that she too provided, either in money or interest for doctors and medicine and every comfort. Has she forgotten those three weeks? I have never heard her mention them. *Mrs. Vincent* herself has the greatest confidence in medical men, the most sincere regard for their opinions, and never fails to send for them at the proper times. She gets their prescriptions immediately made up, but never takes them, having a simple horror of medicine as applied to her own system. Not long ago she was expressing herself in grateful terms to the doctor who had been with her through rather a critical period and knew her peculiarity. In perfect earnestness, she turned to her friends, saying; "The pain has nearly gone. It was those pills of his. Oh! if you ever have such an attack, do just try them." "You did take them, then?" said the doubting Æsculapius. "Doctor dear," whispered the patient, "no I did not really take them, but I put the pills in my upper drawer, and they did do me a world of good." In

A disobedient patient.

The benefit of pills in a drawer.

In her own home, *Mrs. Vincent* was ever the soul of hospitality. Every stranger she shakes by the hand is made welcome there, and to some that home has proved a blessed retreat. One young seamstress who worked for me I may cite. She was very delicate, unfit for constant application, in need of better food and a physician's care. *Mrs. Vincent* had her for a day's sewing, and a year afterward she was still there, rent free, with plenty of nourishment, a doctor, who kindly visited her, out of regard for the hostess, who refused to let the young seamstress work more than a part of the time, though she paid her for all. The care taken of her and the freedom from anxiety had cured the dying girl. Mrs. Vincent at home.

This home was filled with dumb friends too, sumptuously fed and tended. The family of black cats was a wonderful group of feline beauty. A visitor to *Mrs. Vincent* of a nervous temperament, one of those who cannot abide that "harmless necessary" animal, had a bad quarter of an hour in awaiting her in the parlor one day. The room was dark and the house quiet. After a little space, the door was pushed stealthily open, and a great glossy black puss, with tail erect and gleaming eyes, slowly entered. After a minute, a second A family of cats.

second followed the first, with bushy tail, red eyes and bristling fur, then another, and another, and another, until there were five! They drew closer, circling round the victim, with tails now switching with emotion, their eager looks flashing fire, while she sat paralyzed with terror in the midst. It was a great relief when the hostess bustled in, calling "William Warren," "Smithy," and so on, for all had the names of the principal members of the Museum company, and the animals were driven out of the room. No, not driven. Noblesse oblige! William Warren, a majestic old fellow, as dignified as his sponsor, stalked out of the door, followed one by one by his comrades, as they had entered. Another pet of *Mrs. Vincent's* was a tiny black-and-tan dog that a friend had given her. This, of course, demanded all the care of a child, and it had it. Her great love for Dot and the creature's dependence upon her were not thrown away upon the quick-witted boys of the West end. There came a time when this pet was always getting lost, in spite of her mistress's vigilance. She could not put it out of her hand to trot by her side for a minute but it was gone. If she sat down on the Common with Dot sporting around her feet for

A dignified exit.

A pet dog and its enemies.

for exercise, while she turned to look admiringly at a baby carriage, the dog was nowhere to be seen. Even from her own doorstep it disappeared. The first time a reward of five dollars was offered, and paid so gladly, with such tearful recognition of the comfort that had been restored, that Dot was found missing again within the week, and this time five dollars brought no response. She raised it to ten dollars. Dot was brought home sick with fretting. Double watchfulness was observed by the mistress, and Dot on her part seemed suspicious of every one else, and more than ever an inseparable part of her best friend, but she went all the same, and as the bereaved owner thought of their last parting, she grieved for the animal more than for herself, and resolved on a quick return. "She'll ruin me," sobbed *Mrs. Vincent*, "but I shall die without the dear little thing; she loves me so, and is such a blessing;" so this time Dot was advertised at fifteen dollars, and so on to the end of the chapter. Fortunately, that dog did not live to be very old, or even the watchful guardians could not have succeeded in keeping a bank account for her owner.

Rewards have to be increased.

Mr. Keach was a most autocratic manager. He

Mr. Keach an arbitrary manager.

He made no concessions, suffered no infringement of rules; always nervous and prompt himself, he demanded absolute obedience to orders in others and this came hard all round, under the circumstances. Not only had some members of the company been under a very easy rein during the previous management, but associated as fellow actors with *Mr. Keach* himself, who had formerly liked a joke as well as anybody. They did not approve of the martinet rule, and there was a slight threatening of general rebellion in the camp, which made *Mr. Keach* only the more irascible. All this did not affect me,

No "call boy."

but the want of a "call boy" did. This was my special grievance. I never had elsewhere to look out for my own entrances, and with every desire to be correct for my own sake, I could not in a hurried change of dress make speed, and be listening to the words on the stage at the same time. Moreover, between the acts even — up went the curtain when *Mr. Keach* saw the stage ready: not "a call" nor word of warning for those concerned. This I really resented, since it was without precedent. I had just left *Dion Boucicault* in New York, who had shown me every courtesy and ordered the call to be made at my dressing

dressing room for every entrance, so that *Mr. Keach's* system seemed most arbitrary and ungracious. It was a terrible sensation to hear "Stage waiting!" and then find a flight of stairs between you and your entrance. One night they told me the "wait" was five minutes, and I only wonder I ever went on at all, for I was so frightened that I felt like running off and out of the building rather than *on* to face a strange audience who only saw the error without understanding the cause. I told my unrelenting manager it was a gross injustice, not to me only but the public, and begged, sooner than suffer the same risk again, I might be allowed to pay for the extra service, but it was denied. *Mr. Keach* did finally introduce the common usage of his own motion the next season. It was purely accidental, therefore, one afternoon when the time came for the ringing up of the curtain that it was discovered *Mrs. Vincent* had not arrived. As she was to appear early in the piece, messengers were dispatched to explore the neighborhood. She was found on the corner of Tremont Row and Pemberton Square, surrounded by a crowd, haranguing a teamster who was driving a lame horse. Her fervent denunciations, pointed by her umbrella, were scarcely

Anguish of a stage wait.

Mrs. Vincent missing.

A lecture on cruelty to animals.

scarcely to be interrupted by the urgent reminder that the stage was waiting. As she was dragged away and hurried up the stairs of the Museum, we heard her panting for breath and brokenly exclaiming in anything but a tone of penitence: "Well, I don't care if the stage is waiting, and I don't care for *Mr. Keach* nor twenty like him. I won't see a brute driving a horse on three legs without speaking my mind."

Mr. Keach's self-possession.

In turning from my memories of *Mr. Keach's* management, I recall an incident illustrating his courage and self-possession. I was dressing one night for The Jealous Wife in my little room above the stage about an hour before the play began, when in the stillness (and it always seemed to me there is nothing so still as a silent theatre) I heard a man coming up the stairs in strange haste. Of course, one grows to know all everyday sounds, and this startled me; it was unusual. I called out: "What's the matter?" There was no reply, but the flying feet still ascended, and I flung open my door. The draught brought a forked flame literally down the stairway into my face. As I learned afterward, while the "border lights," were being lighted, which is done with the aid

Fire.

of

of a long pole from the stage; the current of air, purposely made as great as possible to cool off the building, blew one of these same "borders" into the gas. I could not exaggerate the rapidity with which the flames spread, and it can only be realized by remembering the inflammable substances with which a stage is filled — the heated wood, the dry canvas that has been soaked in turpentine, the straight surfaces which the flames lick up and across without let or hindrance. In less time than I am telling it, and, before I could assume presentable clothing, everything looked ablaze, as indeed it was, for from the borders the "wings" had caught. In dressing sack and dishevelled hair, I flew to the stage. There was *Mr. Keach* summoning his forces as if by magic. At his word of command the pump was at work, the hose playing upon the flames — men on ladders handing buckets to those above, who cut the ropes and let drop the burning canvas and timber, while in the centre of all, as it seemed, literally enveloped in flame and drenched with water, stood the "Captain," never seen to so much advantage as in this hour of real danger, never so thoughtful for others that they might not be injured by the falling pieces, never

The rapid spread of the flames.

Energetic measures.

The Captain.

never so calm as when, almost before the flames were really out, he turned to give the order that "no danger" was to be reported in the galleries, whither the audience had retired. The musicians had brought their instruments, and all crowded about the door of egress, but not a soul left the building. *Mr. Keach* stood fearlessly; his men worked bravely. They promptly obeyed every order, and in the well appointed theatre everything was in working order for the crisis. The lookers on, though ready for flight, gathered presence of mind from the example on the stage, and stood quietly waiting. Before the smoke had cleared away the orchestra was ordered "in." To the question "Is there to be a performance?" the answer "Certainly!" was snapped back sharply, and fifteen minutes after the regular time the stage had been mopped up, a carpet put down, which, though it hid the wet to the eye, left it so moist that I put on rubbers over a pair of pink silk boots. The scenery was streaked with water too, the furniture soaked, and the place so cold and damp, that in spite of being wrapped up in shawls and opera cloaks, we were coughing and sneezing for the next week. But we did play the comedy. Everybody was inspired

The play proceeds.

An animated performance.

spired to make additional effort, and the audience was in the best and most appreciative of humors. I question if, without the promptness, resource and exertion of *Mr. Keach,* the Museum would not have been burned to the ground, like many other theatres where a similar accident has occurred, with great loss of property, if not of life.

The elder *Wallack* told *Mr. Keach* in the latter's second season, when the company was largely re-enforced, that, while its men were good, its galaxy of female attraction could not be equalled in his own or any other company. Certainly it would have been hard to find four girls more beautiful and clever than *Josephine Orton, Annie Clarke, Oriana Marshall* and *Lizzie Baker.* Of the two of these who are "actors of yesterday," *Oriana Marshall* died at seventeen years of age, and *Miss Orton* unfortunately, lives in retirement. She was an immense favorite in Boston and Philadelphia, and made a tour through the country with the *Warren* combination, winning

Four beautiful girls.

Miss Oriana Marshall.

Miss Josephine Orton.

winning new laurels, which she justly earned. Young as she was, there was a passion and a life and a fire in her which filled the stage. Her comedy was pure, frank, rollicking fun, without an artificial touch or tone, while in the more serious parts her magnificent black eyes glowed with expression and her vivid movements were Rachelesque. She was of the stuff from which true artists are made, and yet, with all these natural advantages, a constant student, living in her profession and entirely absorbed by it. We stood side by side often in opposite parts and I honestly shared the admiration of the audience for her.

A true artist.

If the actor's labor is only to shape the image of snow, I should like to assure a sister that hers remains crystalized for a lifetime in my memory!

An evening at the Howard Athenæum.

My first Saturday evening in Boston was spent at the Howard Athenæum, then under the management of *E. L. Davenport.* We did not play at the Museum that night of the week, so as Thackeray observes of idle actors, we were to be found looking on at those that did. A tall,

Miss Annie Clarke.

tall, elegant girl appeared, dressed in a frock of simple make, soft, clinging and exquisitely graceful, while every one else wore hoops of enormous amplitude, and ruffles and flounces, according to the fashion. I was as delighted with the modest refinement of the actress, who was only a "walking lady," as I was with her dress, and prophesied she would be one of the best leading actresses within five years. A Boston public was called upon to verify my prophecy, and I leave it to say if the full bloom has not fulfilled the promise of the bud in *Annie Clarke.*

A nameless heroine.

I have spoken before in a general way of those not in the front rank of the profession. As hers was among the first faces I met on the Museum stage, let me now speak in particular of one of my humbler heroines. As I sat ready for the discovery of Lydia Languish at rehearsal, I saw the beautiful outline of a female who was standing sewing where she could best catch the light upon her work. She was a mature woman, looking about thirty years of age, with a superb figure, soft nut brown skin of the richest gipsy coloring I ever beheld, strikingly handsome features, gleaming teeth, lustrous, fascinating eyes, with long fringed lashes, raven hair that waved in its bands, and

and still left glossy curls peeping out in natural disorder after the hasty toilet and the hurried walk. Above all, the expression of joyous life and health made a picture of the sunny face that, after twenty-five years I think of with admiration. Differently placed, artists would have raved over her. In society, I have never seen an approach to her type of beauty, and yet there she was, unconsciously, modestly plying her task, respectable and respected, a widow struggling to keep two children, which, with infinite economy and the occasional aid of her needle, she succeeded in doing on a salary of four dollars a week! Honor be to all such. In the Great Review may they be ordered up into the front rank.

Life and health and cheerfulness.

Four dollars a week

There is nothing I used to like better than to mount the stairs of the Museum with a party of children and to share the rapture which begins with Gulliver on the first floor and reaches its climax in the fearsome delight of the wax figures on the last. The little ones' pleasure is infectious, and sympathy rolls away the burden of years. In this way I went thither after a long absence, and — not finding the face of one I had never failed to see in the days of auld lang syne; a quaint being, who had been a sentiment to me, as a passionate

The wax figures.

Their zealous guardian.

passionate enthusiast, the lover and preserver of the wax figures — I asked for him, and was told he was dead!

After I had been in Boston about six weeks, I saw, as I stood in the dim entrance, a little bent old man watching me. He came forward and asked, did I not like wax figures, would I not come and look at his? After the rehearsal he conducted me to the upper gallery. There was a confiding yet startled air which was almost furtive and suggested fear and suspicion. I could not but believe that, engrossed with his dumb companions, when he sought human fellowship, the eyes that moved, the lips that spoke, half terrified him! However, being a silent person, I was taken the rounds, and every perfection pointed out to me. Was I not smitten with the belief that Chang and Eng were before me? These Siamese, were they not real? He spoke with solemn earnestness of *Miss McCrea's* need of a clean gown. She should have it yet. But the school — the school. Look at it! Every face, he told me, had been wiped, every collar washed, every shoe brushed. The schoolmaster, was I not deceived by him? The scholar with the dunce's cap? Wax? No! It was life! He spoke with the most touching pathos of the neglect

Sympathy with a lonely enthusiast.

Neglect of the wax figures.

neglect of his idols now as compared with the times gone by. He kept up his constant brushing and combing and dusting, but all to no purpose. I could see he was too much hurt to speak to the old members of the company. They who had known them in better days treated them with cold indifference. He must speak to somebody — so he confided all to me, a stranger?

It is a fact I never even knew his name, but I understood and pitied him, which seemed enough. He had trusted me. I never betrayed that trust by mentioning his grief. About twice a year as long as I was attached to the Museum, and always when I returned for starring engagements, we went on the little pilgrimage together to see the renovations in his beloved family. He still dwelt upon the fact that they had once been praised so highly, but now all was different. Even those that did come to look at the upper gallery spoke with discriminating severity, and the change was more than he could endure.

My friend and I visit the gallery.

An eerie place

The ghastly tragedy of the drunkard's history, the verisimilitude of the sealing-wax blood of poor *Miss McCrea*, stark staring *Santa Anna*, were always things terrible to me, but as I think now of the pale moon-

light

light falling on those awful spectres, I have an eerie feeling that the little old man still creeps about the gallery fulfilling his faithful task! The children would be bidden to run up that last flight alone. Nothing could take me there again!

Living memories.

Surely a memory preserved in bare fact of date and circumstance is like a waxen effigy or the barbarous Egyptian mummy. Oblivion were often better. In these trifling recollections of dear friends and companions I have at least tried to set down my remembrance of the kind thoughts, noble impulses and good deeds of yesterday, which are the undying part of to-morrow as well.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER IX.

Travel in America.

Safety of a woman travelling in America.

I have always felt happily secure in travelling alone, especially in America, where a woman finds officials generally helpful, respectful and obliging. I scarcely remember meeting with a single exception anywhere. Still, when one journeys thousands of miles for five seasons — by the law of chances, some unusual experiences must happen to the traveller. Having been, for the summer of 1857, in Montreal with *Mr. Belton*, in returning, I was to meet my mother at Albany. The geography of the country had not yet been mastered by me — the points of the compass never will be. It was a natural instinct in changing cars to follow the crowd, and not until the train had really started did it occur to me that it might be as well

well to ask if I was on the right road, so turning to a person in the next seat I inquired, "Is this the train for Albany?" The man pedantically replied, "This is the New York train." Of course, I understood it was the wrong one! My mother's anxiety, if I failed to arrive in Albany, was my only thought. Without an instant's hesitation I rushed to the door and sprang off the train! When I came to my senses it was to find myself lying on a seat in the waiting room and to hear the words: "She's got a life preserver on the back of her head!" It appeared that my hair, which was enormously thick and long, being coiled at the back, had really been sufficent to serve as a sort of cushion, and probably did save my life. But the blow was serious enough to stun me for several hours, and leave bloodshot eyes and aching bones for many days. Worse than this was the distress of learning I had been on the right train which passed through Albany on its way to New York. It was now due there, and I pictured my mother almost beside herself at my absence—especially if, as some one suggested, she should be told by the officials that a girl had jumped off. They knew nothing of my condition, and, being so near the station, did not "back," knowing I should be seen and attended to. My

A stupid mistake.

A life preserver.

The right train after all.

My mother had only arranged to meet me in Albany on our way to St. Louis. I had no address, and therefore could only wait in a state of real fever and frenzy until the next New York train started. After, as it seemed, an endless journey, I was literally carried out of my seat, where my mother found me, too ill to look for her.

A serious accident.

This was only a personal injury, however. I have been in several general disasters, one in the West, where two people behind me were both killed. Our train was late, the express had made unusual time, and it ran into us, producing a "telescope" accident. I escaped with a dislocated shoulder, but it was an awful moment, that I never can forget, when that deafening, blinding, crushing horror swept me up and away. It was night, and we were left in darkness. The voice of the conductor was heard amid the groans and cries almost instantaneously, telling us to keep still, lights were coming and when the lanterns were brought the wreck presented a sickening sight too ghastly to describe.

The broken bridge.

Another incident was perfectly harmless, even ludicrous, as it seems now. It was no laughing matter at the time. The train came to a stop about five o'clock on a cold January morning,

morning, and the kind conductor knocked at the door of my compartment to say: "Bridge broken—cars waiting for us on the other side." And so they were, but we must cross the bridge on foot, walking on the sleepers: so with the good fellow's help my wraps were all bundled on, and then I was taken, as others were, a guard on either side, across the icy track, and told to look up, not down. When we had safely accomplished the tight-rope feat and for the first time I glanced into the yawning depth, I felt grateful for the inherited military obedience which enabled me to do promptly what I was bidden.

An unpleasant walk across the river.

One night I left Buffalo at twelve o'clock, after a performance. The getting off with a great deal of baggage made me rather a conspicuous figure, and I chanced to have considerable money about me. There was no compartment with a door, to be had; therefore I took one with curtains, and, being very tired, fell into a sound sleep, from which I aroused to a consciousness that some one was holding ether to my mouth. I felt the burning on my lips, and half awoke to see the curtain flying and some men scuttling to the end of the car, but I fell into a stupor at once from the anæsthetic. The next morning

Sleeping car robbed.

Attempt to etherize me.

I heard the porter, as he put up the berths, telling a gentleman the train had been boarded last night by robbers. "Did they steal anything?" "No," said the porter, "nothing was found upon them but the tickets from the head of that lady's berth," "that lady" being myself. I held my own counsel, as I had lost nothing, and as this was before the days when pseudo robberies of artistes were a recognized form of advertising.

My tickets recovered.

About this time I spent a week in a place called Oil City, Pennsylvania. The snow was two feet deep, and I ordered a sleigh to take me to the theatre. They placed a regular Cleopatra barge at my service. I could not believe it was all for me, but they explained that it was the only thing on runners in town. Packed tight, as I saw it once, with thirty people holding on to one another, it was as much as they could do to keep in, and what it was to me in the twenty-four rides I made in it, up hill and down dale, in those drifts of snow, who can tell? I finally had a buffalo robe set in the midst, on the floor, and I started on that, but before we reached our destination the robe was jolted from under me, and only by clutching with both hands was I left anywhere at all inside the barge. There was a funny incident at the conclusion

Oil City in winter.

I ride in a barge.

conclusion of the play in Oil City. At the point where there is generally an uprising on the part of the audience I heard an unusual scraping, and for an instant thought of fire, but it was simply a preparation for a long trudge to their homes in the dark. Every man provided himself with a lamp, and they went through a sort of drill inasmuch as it was done methodically and in unison. All stretched under their seats, each for his lantern, all struck a match together, all illuminated at the same moment, and from the stage this manœuvre had a decidedly novel effect.

Preparations for leaving the theatre.

People used to inveigh against *Charles Dickens* for the severity of his American Notes, but if Cairo was, as I have been told, his Eden, he could not exaggerate its horrors, as I remember it. A stay there of seven hours cost me nearly four hundred dollars. The boat stuck in about three feet of water on a mud bottom, a ricketty plank walk took us from the deck to the supposed shore, which was a continuation of the mud bank, and in which one sank as in a quagmire. I reached the hotel, and waited three hours for one trunk, which was plainly marked, as I indicated, number three. The next morning I went on my way. It was some few days before I opened

Cairo.

A disagreeable landing.

opened the last of my baggage. Meanwhile a damp, mouldy smell pervaded my room, and as I was always making some such discovery, and travelled with corks for the apertures of the washing basins, deodorizer to throw underneath, camphor to besprinkle the pillows, wax to drop around the pipes — every remedy was applied. Still the odor remained. I never suspected my own trunks, until opening number three the mystery was revealed. On my return to Cairo, the porter acknowledged it did fall into the water, but the old colored man felt positively indignant at my ingratitude in entering a complaint after he "fished and speared and done gone everything and couldn't get that yar saretogy up out of de ribber, no how." It appeared, after a discussion among the gang, as it was agreed "*Julius*" dropped it into the river, "*Julius*" must "fotch it out;" but, instead of bringing up the trunk, he began to disappear himself, which made him howl with fright. The others threw him ropes, one of which he passed through the handle of the "saretogy," and another round his own body, and, by the aid of these, his comrades succeeded in hauling both on to the plank. After all this, that I should come back to bewail my loss was apparently most unlooked for. "Well," I said,

A mysterious smell.

My wet trunk.

How it was rescued from the river.

said, "it was an accident, and I only complain of your not telling me at the time, and why not as well then as now?" "Cos," said the old man, "I'se feeling more better 'bout it now, but whatever yer got in that thar saretogy, it's not feathers; golly, it's heavy as cannon balls, and that night, Missy, that night, when I stuck in the mud, I 'spected I was a going right straight down to the very debble, and I was that sore with de weight of my old bones a hanging on to that yar rope; it wasn't the saretogy that I thought of, but *Julius*, and I tell ye what it is, Missy, if I'd a said a word it would ha' been to ask a hundred dollar for my damages, and I ain't got right round over it now."

Who is to claim damages?

In an old memorandum book I find one or two brief jottings that revive some wayside memories. In the summer of 1863 I made a tour of a few New England towns with a very modest company as regards numbers, for the selection of pieces was only intended for a midsummer night's amusement and consisted of such plays as Delicate Ground, Antony and Cleopatra, and A Conjugal Lesson. These little comedies only called for three men, but they were of the best. In the cold, unmovable, exquisitely mannered Sangfroid, I have never seen *Owen Marlowe's* artistic "letting of

A New England tour.

Three admirable actors.

of acting alone," equalled. Those who remember the ring of *Stuart Robson's* voice know how originally, quizzically droll he is. And last, not least, came gentlemanly *George Becks*, always perfect, always equipped, fit for a drawing room. They were worthy of their manager *E. P. Hingston*, a most thoroughly educated, large souled man, and a most indefatigable agent. The "Irrepressible" was the title well bestowed upon him. He took us to Portland for two nights. We remained two weeks. The company was slightly increased for the last performances, and *William Warren* made his first appearance in Portland — an unprecedented event out of Boston in those days. His entrance into the city was through by-ways and back streets. Coming on foot into the square, *Mr. Warren* found *Hingston*, who was jack-of-all-trades, showman as well as literateur, mounted upon a scaffold, painting on an enormous board, in letters three feet long: "*William Warren*, America's Giant of Fun!" My modest friend, accustomed only to the quiet advertising of his theatrical home, refused to pass the spot where the painter was surrounded by a crowd of men and boys; so turned and fled, gaining admittance by a side door to the hotel, where I was waiting to receive him.

E. P. Hingston.

Mr. Warren's first appearance in Portland.

America's "Giant of Fun."

Southern

Southern railway travel after the war had always the excitement of uncertainty. Accidents were frequent, but the speed was so slow on the poorly reconstructed roads that the mischief was comparatively small. I remember a journey of fourteen miles that took eight hours, in consequence of the fuel giving out. After each start the speed gradually slackened, the train came to a standstill, engineer, stoker and brakeman fell to and picked up such wood as was available by the roadside to feed the feeble engine, and presently it slowly puffed forward only to wheeze and stagger again to a halt. So it went on; the men among the passengers finally jumping off to help forage for fuel with the unfailing cheerfulness and patience of American travellers. We gave out altogether an eighth of a mile from our destination and but for the name of the thing, might as well have walked all the way.

Southern railway travel.

A slow train.

It is a contrast to this snail's-paced train to think of a kind of "ride for life" I once made with a company to Canada on a special train running "wild," and given to me only on a solemn agreement that I should hold the railway free of any claim for accident. We were to open in Montreal Easter Monday with *Mr. John Buckland*, who, together with his lovely wife,

A ride for life.

wife, was among my kindest friends. Because of a misunderstanding of my usually accurate agent, *Mr. E. M. Leslie*, we found that, having neglected to leave the town of Rutland Saturday night after the performance, we could get no farther than the frontier on Sunday, and, owing to the suspension of all trains on that day in Her Majesty's dominions, could not reach Montreal until late Monday night. *Mr. Leslie* got no comfort from the railway officials, but the special train was finally granted to my own intercession with the president, after the most solemn warnings of the risk we were running. Beside the danger of unguarded grade crossings, he said the directors had that morning been surveying the road, and there were doubtless hand cars, perhaps an engine, left obstructing the tracks, and to reach Montreal in time for the performance we must make dangerous speed. The sense of responsibility to the public which an actor or manager feels may be imagined, when at a cost which more than swallowed up the profits of the night's performance, and without warning my troupe, in which there might have been nervous members, I gathered up, as it were, these lives into my hand, and we started. Such a breathless journey, a reeling train of one car and the engine,

The special train.

Danger.

A breathless journey.

engine, strange shrieks and unusual signals, abrupt stops, surprised people waving at us as we passed, a growing sense of the risk for others; at last a rush through the long bridge and into the station, a gallop to the theatre, trunks torn open, and on the stage only five minutes late! Of course, *Mr. Buckland* had been telegraphed by the way, and our greeting in that little theatre, where the generous audience sat awaiting us, was a welcome I need nothing to remind me of. Montreal people were among my first friends, and helped to encourage my very early efforts.

A warm reception.

Two nights I have had of terror, one certainly just, while that of the other, a friend, looking over my diary of those days, calls somewhat imaginary. It may seem so to the reader, but the impressions of both were equally real to me, and their memories as vividly painful. This is one.

Two bad nights.

I was on my way to Mobile (a dear old place I wish I might see again) and had to spend a night at Meridian. It was just after the war, when that part of the country was absolutely desolate, only a house left standing here and there. We arrived late on a dreary winter evening, got into a vehicle resembling a "Black Maria" and bumped along a rough corduroy road which led to a so-called

Meridian.

A hotel interior.

so-called hotel. In the waiting room were only a few wooden seats and a table, and on the uncovered floor, asleep, an emigrant family were huddled together in a corner. The air was heavy with suggestions of apples, kerosene, and a "poor smell" of the worst description. A colored woman with an inch of dirty candle, led me past a bar to the chamber assigned me. From this place came a chorus of brutal voices raised in angry dispute, as if with "not a finger touch of God left whole on them." I could not distinctly see the face of my guide but there was something so unpleasant about it as to make me shrink in taking the candle from her. This room was of a piece with the other, lacking even a fireplace — a chair without a back, a tin basin set on it, a broken piece of looking-glass held upon the wall by tacks, an unclean tumbled bed; and bitterly cold, by reason of the panes being half broken out of the window, draped with an old brown rag of a curtain that waved solemnly to and fro. Another moment and I might have been left in ignorance of the worst, but the woman stopped to apologize for the look of the bed, which had been uncared for, owing to all having been down with "black smallpox!" I asked if there was no place where I could get a more comfortable lodging, and as she pointed

My sleeping chamber.

Black smallpox.

pointed to some lights up the hill I seized my satchel and ran to find I had only escaped the frying pan to get into the fire; for, whereas, by the woman's account in the first house the inmates had recovered, in the second they were at the worst of the loathsome disease. So back I turned my steps, for in a drizzling sleet I could not spend the night out of doors, through the fetid atmosphere of the emigrants' apartment, now more dense than ever, up to the windowless chamber where, at least, I had the advantage of fresh air. Spreading a large blanket shawl over the bed, with the resolve to leave it behind me on my departure, so shocking was the unwashed linen, — enveloped in a waterproof, I sat myself up against the headboard for the night. When the disorderly sounds from the bar at last subsided, I began to find some comfort in the anticipation of having "black smallpox" in the hospital all by myself at least, without risk to those at home, and, as I watched the funereal old rag curtain in its solemn undulations, I even dozed!

Another family sick.

Preparations for the night.

This was one experience; now for the other. In a remote part of the West, my baggage having gone forward, I missed a connection one Saturday afternoon. I felt vastly

A missed connection.

vastly relieved, however, upon learning from the landlord of the hotel that a "mixed" train passed through the town at ten o'clock at night, upon which I could go twenty miles on a branch line. So, never heeding the black sky, with its lurid flashes and distant rolling thunder, the station was reached. The whistle of the engine gave warning of its approach; in an instant it was steaming before me, I was hurried into the train and in as brief a time as I am telling it, we moved off, out of the station into the awful storm—one other passenger and myself.

Out into the storm.

There are times when exclusiveness is a luxury, but we always experience a certain security in numbers and under the present circumstances I felt I would have infinitely preferred them to having this rough, desperate looking man my only companion. It was a relief when the conductor came in and talked to him, but a relief of short duration, for in a few moments the conductor came to me, and after some commonplace remarks about the storm, asked me where I should go when the cars reached their destination. To this I responded quietly enough, "Oh! I shall go to a hotel and wait for the train." He laughingly replied: "That will give you some trouble, since the hotel is two miles off." "Then," I said,

An unpleasant companion.

said, "I will sit in the waiting room." But in this instance it appeared there was none. It was only the smallest of way stations; the village was two miles off and the old shelter for passengers and trains had been pulled down within the last few days to put up a new building. "But cannot I take a carriage and drive somewhere?" I inquired. In a very brusque manner I was told "no such thing as a passenger wanting a carriage stopped over there—in fact, being Saturday night, no one except that gentleman is on the cars," and, picking up his lantern, he left me to my own frightened thoughts.

The hotel two miles off.

No waiting room.

No carriage.

The feelings of a young woman in this situation may be better imagined than expressed. Just as a few tears were silently blinding me—for it did seem as if my heart were too full for anything but a good cry—my fellow-passenger came from his seat and sat down by me. The tears froze to my cheeks and my heart beat until it seemed to me the man must hear it, see it; my hands were rendered powerless, except to rise and fall with the strengthened palpitation, which was not lessened by the bad eyes looking into mine and the coarse voice saying: "I'll take care of you, so cheer up. There is one house near by and that's mine."

An unpleasant position.

This

This was worse than the increasing storm, which, under any circumstances, would have sent the pale flag into my frightened face. However, I summoned courage to refuse his hospitality and, after making one or two endeavors to overcome, as he said, my "crazy scruples," he returned to his seat and once again I began to think what would become of me. The hours from twelve to five must be bridged over and I doubt if many an older and stouter heart would not have quailed, as mine did, at the black prospect. My odious companion, however, seemed silenced for a time. When the official came again into the car and after a short conversation announced that we were just there, I made one final appeal, Was there nothing he could do to help me? But, no;—The storm was awful and he and the one man on the engine had a long tramp to their homes; there was nothing for me, but to sit in the car until morning. I caught at this and at the time I felt as if that were shelter and safety; consequently, when the moment came for them to leave the train it was with a wonderful sensation of relief I began to make my plans for the night. The conductor asked me if there was anything he could do for me. I answered him "Nothing, only please leave me

Five dreary hours.

I must be left alone.

me another light, as I want to read." He objected to this, saying "It is safest to put the light out altogether." The question arose, "Why safest? I could not sit in the dark — what danger?" After some hesitation, the man replied: "It is a risky thing to sit here all night. There is no knowing who might be wandering around and seeing a girl alone — well, it isn't what I'd like for my women folk." His advice was, however, that I should put out the light and go to sleep quietly. But no; his words had terrified me and, bring what it might, I would not be left in darkness. He pointed to a man with a lantern outside: "He's watchman here and if the storm holds up any way, he'll be round once an hour. I'll see if he can get the keys and lock you in." After putting out the lamp and leaving his own lantern by my side, he murmured a good night, left me abruptly and, as he stepped off the platform, I heard him say: "It wouldn't snrprise me to find that girl murdered before morning."

Light would be dangerous.

Locked in.

As their steps died away, for the first time I realized the situation and that there was now no help for it — nothing to do but brave the danger and pray for Heaven's protection. Why had I not gone with them in spite of storm and distance? I looked at my watch.

Over

Four hours to endure.

Over four hours — four hours of solitude, four hours before the train arrives — four hours; did ever prospect appear so long? * * *

Nervous apprehensions.

The storm was over and the silence that followed was even worse, for the slightest movement of the car produced by the night wind, the rushing of the wind itself, neither of which would have been perceptible in broad day but at night, with this maddening sense of fear straining every nerve, the dull thumping of the heart, that like an unwound clock seemed to get slower and fainter until it must stop altogether; in this highly wrought fame of mind, these trifles were earthquakes and thunderbolts, and to faint or to die seemed all that was left. The power of speech had completely deserted me when the conductor's good night was spoken; I only knew he had secured the doors. He and the engineer were gone and I was alone. * * * Surely I had sat an hour since. * * * I was trying to be patient and would prove my courage to myself, by not watching the time more than upon any other occasion and so I remained, not daring to peer into the darkness outside, fearful of turning to right or left and at last, having as I supposed proved my bravery as my watch should testify,

tify,—I cautiously raised the face to the light. Was it a dream? It had not stopped, for the ticking seemed as loud as a mill in full operation; no, no, it had not stopped, but the hands had only moved *five minutes!* A long five minutes.

I made a vain effort to read. But as I opened the book, the rustling of the leaves made my heart flutter in my throat. The word "Murdered" was written all over the page. With a convulsive cry, I dropped the volume and seized a little manual that I had put into my bag. I tried to kneel, but my limbs were cold and stiff; I tried to pray, but my tongue seemed paralyzed and my eyes saw only blood in the drops of speechless agony that fell from my face upon the psalm. Terror.

A feeling of faintness was creeping through my veins, when I heard the yelp of a dog in the distance and, as I listened, it seemed, too, the sound of a human voice. Who should it be but the watchman? Perhaps some thief or tramp that the conductor had in mind who was to be found with a poor girl's murder on his soul before morning! With one last effort I extinguished the lamp. The storm was drifting away and I had just time to crouch down upon the floor, when a dog bounded over the platform. The car rocked Sounds in the distance.

My alarming companion again.

rocked upon its springs like a cradle. A face stopped at the window over my head and at that instant the moon sent one bright gleam through the quickly chasing clouds that enabled me to recognize my fellow-passenger! My torture was at its worst. I tried to hold back my breath and still the beating of my heart, as I watched the wicked face move from the window to the door, where I suppose the watchman's lantern was visible in the distance; which, together with the doubt as to my whereabouts, probably decided him, for, with a whistle to his dog, he passed from my sight and unconsciousness came to my relief.

Relief.

After suffering.

I awoke as from some frightful nightmare, to find myself in cold, pain and darkness. I have heard that under severe pressure the blessing of sleep will come whether we would or no; but never was rest so completely banished from my eyes, which remained persistently open, not only that night, but for twenty-four hours after. Nevertheless, time passed at last. Morning dawned, and with it fresh life and courage. For as soon as one streak appeared in the darkness, I shook off my terror and succeeded eventually in getting into the connecting train.

In these few hours I had grown gray with fright.

fright. They are coming thick and fast now, I do not care to talk about them, but my first white hairs were laughingly plucked from their darker associates after my memorable journey of only a night.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER X.

Canada and England.

Some few words in conclusion of these reminiscences — about actors and acting, in England and Canada, may be worth setting down.

Canada, a foreign country.

While nothing is so dreary as journeying alone, I know of nothing more delightful than the results of travel, the re-creation of new scenes, fresh faces and strange tongues. Canada was always a delightful place to visit. No sea change could give one a more absolute contrast without the perils and discomforts of a voyage. My first trip thither was under the care of *Mrs. John Buckland*, when I was about sixteen years of age, to play in Montreal. My last, a happy halcyon month in fascinating far away Quebec, hospitably entertained by *Consul Howells* and his pleasant family. A wanderer in America finds

finds many places, of course, with certain characteristics. Boston, it is needless to say, is very British and many of her men might walk down Regent street and pass for natives any day, while the infusion grows weaker as we go South and West and gradually fades into different types. But Canada is surprising for its abrupt variety and originality. Halifax is English, Toronto Scotch, Montreal polyglot and Quebec French of the sixteenth century. While New England erects statues to those she burned two hundred years ago, while new theologies have shattered old dogmas, and the manners and morals of their descendants have come to be much like those from which the Puritans fled to New England; only seventeen hours' journey away in the fertile valleys of the St. Lawrence the peasants dance in their sabots before the church door on Sunday after mass, the faithful make pilgrimages to holy places and the shrine of the good St. Anne is hung with the offerings of her grateful worshippers as of yore. The religious prejudices of the people have their effect upon the conduct of the stage. A priest might not be represented at one time without the risk of giving offence. In Montreal I was cautioned not to wear the orange satin gown I had chosen for my dress and in passing

Variety of national types.

Unchangeable Canadians of the St. Lawrence.

Orange symbols to be avoided.

passing from one city to another the temper of different nationalities must be carefully consulted. The French element, where it predominates, as everywhere, makes a delightful, sympathetic and discriminating audience, but the English military, when they were garrisoned in Canada, were the most valuable patrons of the theatre. The officers, for instance, in Montreal had private theatricals all the winter, under *Mr. Buckland's* management, which naturally placed them on the most friendly terms with him, so that in his summer season they strolled into his box or his office and had the entrée behind the scenes. *Mr. E. A. Sothern* and *Mr. Jacob Barrow* in Halifax had the same pleasant relations with the military. At one time when I was in Montreal, both the famous Guards regiments had their quarters at St. Lawrence Hall, and half the mess were men of title.

The military patrons of the theatre.

It was always with rejoicing I went to Her Majesty's dominions and with sincere regret that I came away. As a soldier's daughter, grand-daughter, and niece, I never failed to find some acquaintance or comrade of my relatives who recognized the uncommon spelling of my name and met me with outstretched hand. A benefit night under "patronage" was a pretty sight; red coats in the pit, officers

A soldier's child.

Military benefit night.

officers in the boxes; English women looking as only English women do in full dress, and the band of the regiment massed in the orchestra.

Dingy Canadian theatres.

The Canadian theatres were generally fusty places, in out-of-the-way streets. The "pit," what the word describes, a dark hole, with benches, mere boards without backs, and the cheapest part of the house. As air ascends, the arrangement is unfortunate for the rest of the audience, and the "gods" are far better elevated to the gallery, but the effect certainly heightened the brilliancy of the first tier. The season *Mr.* and *Mrs. Barrow* went to Halifax I went with them for two weeks. In a note book of that summer I find, August 3, "Repeat Peg Woffington for *Lord* and *Lady Mulgrave* and *Prince Alfred*," the "Sailor Prince," whose ship was then in harbor. The next entry, under August 8—"First played Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady at the theatre, then went to sing the duet of 'Hear me, Norma,' with *Mme. Anna Bishop* at a concert." I was paid for this what appears an extravagant sum, half of which was given

Prince Alfred, Lord and Lady Muigrave.

Madame Anna Bishop.

Patronage of Lady Mulgrave.

given to *Mr. Barrow*, which accounts for my being allowed to do it. *Mme. Bishop* was then over fifty, but her voice, though worn, was still remarkable. On Saturday, August 10, I find "Benefit under patronage of *Countess of Mulgrave*—band of the Sixty-second Regiment played for me." I copy this, since with it comes back the memory of a morning visit to this same little lady who, free from manner, had the sweetest manners, and was, without question, one of the most simple, cordial hospitable people I ever met.

Visit to the Halifax Lunatic Asylum.

During this stay in Halifax I was asked by a friend to sing at the Lunatic Asylum. The director and his wife, *Dr.* and *Mrs. Wolfe*, received us, and, after a cordial greeting, I was requested to submit a choice of music to them, and we repaired to a long, narrow hall, where about two hundred apparently ordinary people were seated. As I passed up the room to the grand piano at the farther end, the only thing in the least unusual was a line of nurses flanked against the wall. Some of the ladies and gentlemen were brought up and introduced, but the various solicitations for favorite songs I evaded, unless indorsed by an urgent word from *Mrs. Wolfe*. In this way the concert had nearly reached a prosperous conclusion, when a lady asked me

A concert in the Asylum.

to

to sing "Home, Sweet Home." She was standing by the doctor, who seconded her request, and feeling it was wrong, but also, as *Mrs. Wolfe* probably did, that it was difficult to assume forgetfulness of either words or music, I began my ballad, but before I had concluded one verse it came to a woful end. One wail from the back of the room seemed to arouse the demon of madness in the whole two hundred, and before my hands were off the keys, the air was rent with shrill cries, and the scene was like the struggle of a battle field — the solemn line of nurses, by force of arms, carried the day, and the patients were gradually taken from our sight. This separated us for a time from host and hostess, and we were left to wander through the corridors, where we met more than one figure representing a sadder state of insanity than those in the hall. One poor soul, watching from a door, seized me by the shoulder with a chilling clutch, and thrust a large package of scrawled newspapers under my mantle. I turned, to find a woman of perhaps fifty-five years of age, well dressed, wearing a cap of black lace, who spoke in an educated tone, as she besought me to put those papers into the Queen's hands. "Don't trust to any one; they will only deceive you as they have

"Home, sweet home," causes a disturbance.

Wandering through the corridors.

Petition to the Queen.

have me. Let the Queen know the truth." "Oh," she said, "don't fear me; I am not mad. Those papers will tell you who I am, and all my history. I will reward you if money can do it; you and your brother there shall have £5000 apiece — anything, only get me out of this place." *Dr. Wolfe* came up, and after pressing refreshments upon us, we left in a boat he had prepared for our return. Four men rowed us across the bay. On the way our host spoke of my papers and told us it was that patient's custom, if not supplied with sufficient writing material, to amuse herself by scribbling on the margins of newspapers or anything else she could find. It was so greasy and disagreeable a bundle, he begged me to let him throw it overboard, but I said no, I would keep it as a souvenir. He laughingly added, under his breath, "They all have hobbies which we try to humor, for many are as harmless as these poor fellows." We were just landing when the discovery was thus made that the boatmen were all four lunatics! Under the circumstances I was thankful to get home. But the impression of my visit to the Halifax asylum was deepened when I related my experiences to my landlady, a gentlewoman well acquainted with the affairs of the town. She recognized in the scraps of writing

Rowed by madmen.

Glad to be safe home.

writing I had brought away as a petition to Queen Victoria the story of a lady, doubtless now insane, but who had been unjustly treated and deprived of her property by grasping relatives. Poor soul, perhaps the little ray of hope with which she confided her case to me was a comfort in her dreary imprisonment, worth the burden it left on my heart for many days!

A story of unkindness.

I never even saw the inside of a London theatre untill my return to England, when I appeared at the Princess's in 1868. This famous house still enjoyed the favor won for it years before by the elaborate revivals of *Mr. Charles Kean*, but like all the English theatres, the auditorium seemed dingy and shabby beside those of America, fully compensated however by the more brilliant appearance of the audience. While I was in London, by the by, one of those checks occurred to the extreme of ladies' evening attire, which illustrates the social power of the queen in manners and morals. A personal rebuke was conveyed by Her Majesty to a lady at a drawing room for her style of dress. The very next night every neck was covered with tulle in the boxes of theatre and opera, and this continued the fashion for the season.

My appearance in London.

The Princess's.

The Queen's regulation of dress.

I had little leisure to see my fellow actors in

in London, for my engagement there was immediately followed by a tour in the provinces, but I saw *Fechter* at the Adelphi, then in his prime, the special protegé of *Charles Dickens* and the favorite of the town. The scenery, by *Mr. Grieve*, was most beautiful. Certainly in those days nothing in America equalled the perfection of the London stage. Applause is as freely given to the successes of the painter as the actor, and I was very much surprised to see a gentleman appear in full evening dress, after a burst of enthusiasm, and bow recognition. He was the scenic artist and was duly on hand for the first nights of the pieces.

Fechter.

Mr. Grieve's beautiful scenery.

Madge Robertson, now *Mrs. Kendal*, whose recent defence of the stage could have no more worthy author, was playing with *Mr. Sothern* at the Haymarket. It was only in a little part, but I recall the fresh, natural earnestness of her style, which indicated those qualities which have made her the most popular actress on the London boards.

Madge Robertson.

The handsomest theatre I saw was an East End house called the New National Standard, Shoreditch, built after the model of La Scala, elegantly fitted up, brilliantly lighted, and the best for sight and sound in the city. It was essentially a Bowery theatre as regards its location,

The Shoreditch Theatre.

cation, but with the location all resemblance to a second-class theatre ended. Of course, the patrons were neither elegant nor distinguished, but a more appreciative, critical, generous audience was never assembled within the walls of Drury Lane. The performance was deserving of all the attention and applause bestowed upon it. *Mr. Creswick* appeared in the first piece, supported by an excellent company. *Mr.* and *Mrs. Henri Drayton* wound up the performance. The lady, though a true artist, had only a small flute-like voice, and it was certainly most astonishing to hear an East End gallery listening breathlessly to a little operetta sung in true drawing room style. The prices of the West End were too high for the people to patronize, therefore *Webster* and his company, *Buckstone* and his company, *Sims Reeves* — in fact all the great artists in London — visited the Standard and gave by turns the best performances at East End prices, with mutual profit to audience and actor.

Excellent players at the East End.

Engagements to play in Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, Weymouth and Exeter followed my London appearance, and, of course, involved considerable experience of British railways. What a contrast in their methods to those of America! To get into a carriage at

Provincial engagements.

Railway travel in England.

at all, is often for men a matter of blows and elbows, and women are not unfrequently left standing on the platform for the next train. When you do get in, as a stranger to the stations, where are you to get out? No tickets are collected until you are off the train, and your neighbors either do not know themselves or, more likely, are too gruff to answer. Only at each stopping place the guard rushes to and fro in the noise and bustle, crying something in the unrecognizable manner of his class in all countries. Even a glass of water is only to be obtained by leaving the train, which includes the risk of not getting on again. Having occasion to do this once, I took the precaution of looking at the number of my carriage, — fifty-seven. As I was pitying a poor hatless fellow, who had seized a guard by the shoulder with a "Where's my wife?" I heard a plaintive voice in my ear saying: "Please will you show me fifty-seven?" On looking in the direction of the voice, I found one of a pair of interesting girls who had shared this mysterious number with me, standing with a glass of water in her hand. The train at this moment seemed about to start. No guard in sight to question ; the little maid herself looked faint. I seized her with one hand, the glass of

Danger of leaving the train.

of water with the other, spied fifty-six, and the door of the next carriage standing open, in I jumped, to find it was number eleven, occupied by two severely prim and astonished-looking old ladies, who immediately began calling, "Guard!" I too was in despair, having left my satchel in the other carriage. The girl began to cry for her sister, saying: "Oh! she will think I am left behind." So out once more on to the platform, spilling the water over one of the old ladies, who, in louder and more indignant tones, again called "Guard." I seconded her appeal, for it was evident that the numbers of the carriages, like the people, ran in every direction but the right. The by-standers joined in the hue and cry, and the guard finally arrived, found the carriage, which had been switched to another part of the train in our absence, pushed us in, united us respectively to lost bag and anxious sister, and banged the doors with an "all right," as the train moved off. But it was not all right, for a poor woman, who brought to my mind the typical Mrs. Brown, rushed to the guard as we left the station, screaming at the top of her voice: "Stop it—where's twenty-two—I can't find it; and there's my bird cage and my band-box inside!"

The wrong carriage.

Guard missing.

Not all right at last.

The

Provincial theatres.

The provincial theatres of Great Britain furnish no interesting points of description. They are mirrors and reproductions, as far as their conditions will allow, of the great metropolis, and of the actors who played with me I had only the ordinary professional experience, but of the two or three actors upon the larger stage of life that I met in England, a word or two.

Mr. Edward H. House.

Mr. Edward H. House, my kind friend, the gentle critic, brilliant author, courteous man of the world, was at home in London as he was in New York when I first knew him, and has since been in Yokohama. He presented me to *Mr. Charles Reade*, whose story of Griffith Gaunt I had dramatized, and to whose advice and suggestions I became deeply indebted. I have spoken elsewhere, and shall never cease to speak, of the great heart and loyal nature which were associated in this remarkable man with many weaknesses, crudities and faults of temper, for I believe no man ever united large gifts of genius with such childish purity and lofty purpose. Somehow he read in me a frankness which he courted. While he had an almost morbid distrust of contemporaneous criticism, the very inability to judge by the ordinary

Mr. Charles Reade.

His simplicity.

ordinary canons of taste seemed to inspire him with confidence in what he was pleased to call my intuitive judgment — the wisdom as it were of babes and sucklings. He was never tired of asking me, "How does this strike you? Is there not something the matter with that?" Never waiting to ask why or wherefore, but apparently delighted, however severe the stricture might be, to overcome my reluctance and get a simple instinctive opinion. *Mr. Reade* did me the great honor to suggest, what I was most absolutely obliged to decline, that I should prepare a sketch of his life from notes which he proposed to furnish me. It was a life illuminated by filial affection, deepened by warm, faithful friendship and enlarged by the most generous enthusiasm for humanity. Better than other English writers of greater gifts, he has grasped the delicate and shifting shades of the female character, and while it exhausts the ingenuity even of *Mrs. Jameson*, to give shape and reality to Shakespeare's women, I have always felt in reading or acting from *Charles Reade's* creations, that my humble efforts were inspired by the only modern author who has guaged the strength and weakness of our sex.

Mr. Reade seeks frank criticism.

A beautiful life.

Charles Reade's women.

Gustave Dore.

I met *Gustave Doré*, who was one of the season's lions. A handsome, dreamy, German face, like *Mr. Julius Eichberg's*, but with a figure so grotesque and suggestive of one of the personages in his own Juif Errant that I spontaneously interposed myself between him and the mirror, in which his image was reflected, with a fantastic notion that its oddity might offend his own eye.

George Peabody.

Another illustrious name on every lip was that of *George Peabody*, whose great gift had just been made to the poorer classes of London. I recall the puzzled air with which he told me he could not understand why people were so good to him. I saw afterward in a railway journey which I made in his company something of the tribute which all England was paying to the generosity of the great American. Every official touched his cap. British reserve gave way to cordial enthusiasm, the most comfortable seat was yielded to him. A white-headed old fellow asked for the honor of his hand, and the interest with which our companions listened to the simple story of his boyhood in his native Salem, and the hardships of his early days, dwelt on in contrast with the distinguished reception which the "good

General recognition of the philanthopist.

"good Queen" had just given him, was akin to reverence.

My tour in England was abruptly ended by an accident at Exeter. *Mr. Belton*, known in this country during the first seasons of the Boston Theatre, was the manager there, when I met with a severe fall. This fall was the cause of my return home, for, although my injuries were not so alarming as at first feared, the spine was struck and left me with a nervous affection that will never be forgotten. I was playing Nobody's Daughter, a piece dramatized from *Miss Braddon's* novel by *Chandos Fulton* and *Frederic Maeder*, that I had played in New York and elsewhere. The staging of a bridge which I crossed was insecurely built, and in rushing hastily upon it the whole structure fell. I remember the sensation perfectly to-day. The curtain dropped at once. I was, after a brief examination, swathed tightly up and taken to my lodgings by the doctors, for although no broken bones had been discovered, they made sure there must be some internal injury. The first report killed me outright, the second sent me dying to a hospital but the truth was, I only kept my bed a few days.

My accident in Exeter.

An insecure bridge.

A narrow escape.

While

Mistaken friends.

While I was gathering strength for the sea voyage in the care of my relations I was beset with letters from a class of persons to whom these random memories might be a revelation; for their only value is the testimony they bear to the purity, charity and honor of my profession, while these worthy people seemed to think the accident was a judgment upon my mode of life which should not fail to be improved! Ladies called with tracts, and "Warnings to the Wicked" were mailed to me. One of the epistles I received ended: "Poor sinner, you have never thought before, take this time to repent!" I trust that this and all other lessons of pain and sorrow may not have been wasted, but I fear that no such chastisement will make me as patient and strong in faith, as many I have known, loved and respected behind the scenes of the theatre.

Noble characters in the theatre.

In reading the recent memoirs of an actress, for whose distinguished talents I have a profound respect, I take a decided issue with the author, and feel a conspicuous defect, because of the contemptuous tone to her fellow-actors and the failure to recognize their characteristic virtues. Saints and sinners there are behind, as before, the curtain, but the stage

stage in my day needed not to fear the truth.

Venturing to paraphrase, as I have done for my own, the happy title of Fields's charming recollections of authors, I borrow another word of the large-hearted poet:— The Truth.

"'Paint me as I am,' said Cromwell,
'Rough with age and gashed with wars,
Show my visage as you find it;
Less than truth my soul abhors.'"

A Girl's Letters from the Far West.

LETTERS FROM SURPRISE LAND

BY E. G. H.

In one volume, tastefully printed and elegantly bound. 16mo. folded covers, uncut edges. Price 75 cents.

"It is a mighty touchy, lively and sensible girl who writes these letters."	Bost. HERALD.
"The little volume is a pleasant contribution to descriptive literature."	TRAVELLER.
"The letters are hearty, wholesome and unpretentious."	THE BEACON.
"This little volume is really delightful."	ADVERTISER
"The book is thoroughly readable."	GAZETTE.
"They are bright and chatty"	TRANSCRIPT.
"Elders will find in it the charm and freshness of young enjoyment."	SUND. RECORD.

For sale by all booksellers, or mailed, postage paid, on receipt of price.

BOSTON
CUPPLES AND COMPANY,
94 Boylston Street
1887