

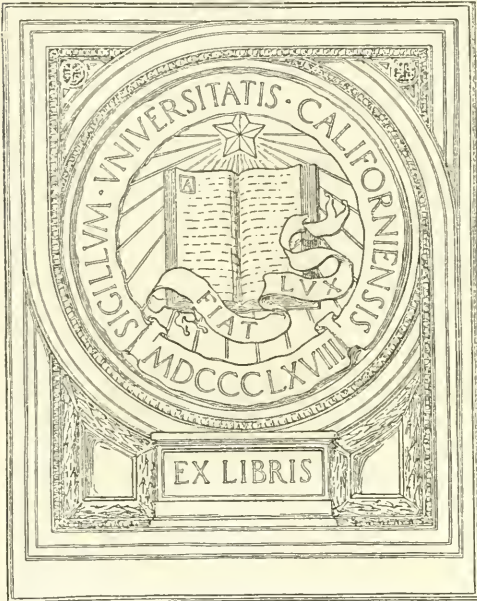


# OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS



KATE RYAN

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
AT LOS ANGELES



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OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS









Kate Ryan. *Frontispiece*

OLD  
BOSTON MUSEUM  
DAYS

BY  
KATE RYAN

*WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS  
FROM PHOTOGRAPHS*



BOSTON  
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY  
1915

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Published, October, 1915.

Norwood Press

Set up and electrotyped by J. S. Cushing Co., Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

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I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE BOOK  
TO MY GRANDCHILDREN

KATHERINE AND WALTON McDANIEL

BUT FOR WHOSE EARNEST ENCOURAGEMENT IT  
WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN WRITTEN. I AM  
DEEPLY GRATEFUL FOR THEIR  
INSPIRING INTEREST

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## FOREWORD

IN writing this little volume, I have lived over again the days of the Old Museum, and as I recalled the faces and forms that peopled the stage of that famous old playhouse, I must confess to moments of sorrow recompensed by hours of joy. I doubt that even the most philosophical spirit, with never a tear or a regret for the past, could delve into its recesses as I have done, without a longing for the Old Museum days that are gone. Yet the memory of those days will leave, for all time, something of value to remember and cherish.

I have no desire to pass dramatic criticism on the individual merits of my associates, whose labors dignified either tragedy or comedy, nor to draw comparison between the past and present. I wish merely to express a few loving

## FOREWORD

thoughts as I feel them. I wish to send forth as “a song in the rain” the glad message that there still exists in the hearts of old Bostonians tender memories of that golden time—Old Boston Museum days of our fathers and our forefathers.

In the preparation of this volume, I wish gratefully to acknowledge thanks to Mr. James Burrows and Mr. John Bouvé Clapp for their kindly assistance, and also to Mr. Robert Gould Shaw for the use of many photographs.

KATE RYAN.

AUGUST, 1915.



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# OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY HISTORY OF THE BOSTON MUSEUM

**M**R. MOSES KIMBALL, founder of the Boston Museum, was for fifty years a familiar and picturesque figure in the life of Boston. Born in Newburyport, Massachusetts, in 1809, he came of good, old, Puritanical stock, and at the age of fourteen went to Boston to seek his fortune and enter upon the active scenes of life. He had his ups and downs, winning and losing, and passing through many vicissitudes. When about thirty years of age, with the aid of his brother David, he bought

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

the greater part of the collections of the old New England Museum on Court Street which was then breaking up. As he was about to have the curiosities moved to another building, then in course of erection on the corner of Bromfield and Tremont Streets, the contractor failed, work on the structure stopped, and the building remained roofless for nearly a year. In the meantime, Mr. Kimball took his curiosities to Lowell, Massachusetts. The following year the new building was completed, so he brought his collections back to Boston, and the Boston Museum and Gallery of Fine Arts, as it was called in the early days, opened its doors for the first time on June 14, 1841.

The structure was modest in design. The Auditorium was at the top of the building, and was reached by two flights of rickety, break-neck stairs. The entire lighting was by oil lamps. At the door was placed a huge stump of a tree, concaved on top, to form a receptacle for programs, to which visitors helped them-

## EARLY HISTORY

selves. Rows of rude benches served the spectators for seats. There were no uniformed ushers, nor were there dainty maidens — save the mark — flitting up and down the aisles, to direct our grandsires to their places.

The form of entertainment was very simple in those days. Theatrical entertainments were not permitted there, so the Boston Museum and Gallery of Fine Arts was primarily a museum of curiosities, with a platform entertainment which all good people could go to see; if they wished, they could also stay and hear the musical olio, consisting of solos on glass bells, and birch-bark whistling. This form of entertainment was not considered ungodly, if taken as a side issue with performing elephants or trick canaries. All the stars of the vaudeville world of that day were connected with the platform entertainment at various times. In point of fact, the so-called vaudeville idea was Americanized at the Boston Museum. This showed the foresight of Moses

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

Kimball, and when I see the blaze of electricity in front of the theaters and amusement places of to-day, I can see where Mr. Kimball anticipated all that kind of advertising when he put the rows of white-globed lights in front of the Boston Museum.

The first dramatic entertainment given in the Boston Museum occurred in 1843, and it proved successful from the start. The audience grew so rapidly that the old Museum was not adequate, so in 1846, the famous play-house that many of us remember as the joy of our childhood was erected on Tremont Street, between School and Court Streets, and from that time it became a Boston institution.

It was carried on successfully, without a break, for nearly fifty years, often against powerful competition. I doubt if any other theater in this country existed with such un-deviating prosperity for such a long period of time. Think of it! A stock company system for nearly fifty years! A meeting-place where





The Boston Museum in 1876



Copyright, 1903, by N. L. Stebbins.

The Boston Museum in 1903



## EARLY HISTORY

those who did not wish to be regarded as theatergoers could visit without a blush,—many of the regular habitués of the Boston Museum, even after it had become much more of a theater than a museum, fondly believed they were not attending a regular playhouse.

William H. Smith, the first stage manager, was an able, scholarly, and sterling actor. The members of the Company at that time were Mr. and Mrs. Thoman, Mr. and Mrs. Germon, Thomas Comer, C. W. Hunt, G. H. Wyeth, C. H. Saunders, and Adelaide Phillips, who began her career as a child dancer, doing nautical hornpipes between the acts. She was billed as “The Child of Avon” and was then nine years old.

Very careful attention was given to the selection of plays. The moral feature of the play was largely advertised on the bill, which contained also an offer of one hundred dollars for the best moral drama adapted to the uses of the Museum Stock Company.

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

About that time "The Drunkard," or "The Fallen Saved" was produced with great success. Mrs. Germon in an interview said that she played the wife of the "drunkard" for one hundred consecutive nights, and on one occasion, when there was a vigorous, temperance demonstration in town, the play was given five times in one day.

The dramatic entertainment, with selections between the acts, and the instructive exhibition in the Curio Halls, was offered to the public for twenty-five cents, "without age or distinction," according to the program.

Mr. Kimball practically retired from managerial duties in 1860, because of his interest in State affairs,—he was a member of the Legislature. His most important services to the city were on the various boards of charitable and kindred societies. In 1879 he commissioned the sculptor, Thomas Ball, to make a replica of his bronze group emblematic of Emancipation, which had been set up in

## EARLY HISTORY

Washington. Mr. Kimball presented this duplicate to the city of Boston, and it was placed in Park Square.

Among the notable artists appearing at the Boston Museum from 1850 to 1872 were Charlotte Cushman, Mrs. E. L. Davenport, Barry Sullivan, James W. Wallack, George Vandenhoff, Mrs. Farren, Eliza Logan, Mr. and Mrs. Waller, Edwin Adams, the elder Booth, and his son Edwin Booth — who made his *début* at the Museum in 1849, playing Tressel to his father's Richard III, — Mathilda Heron, Kate Reynolds, Josie Orton, Agnes Robertson, wife of Dion Boucicault, L. R. Shewell, Walter Montgomery, Rose Skerritt, Mrs. Judah, C. W. Couldock, Mr. and Mrs. Conway, E. F. Keach, Mrs. George H. Barrett, Mrs. Barrow, Peter and Caroline Richings, John Wilson, husband of Mrs. Vincent, Kate Denin, Charlotte Thompson, Mrs. John Drew, — all shining lights whom I regret to say I never had the pleasure of hearing or meeting.

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

Until a few years before his death, Moses Kimball retained proprietorship and control of the Boston Museum. The management of its affairs was in the able hands of Mr. R. M. Field, but always under the vigilant supervision of Mr. Kimball, who was energetic and vigorous till the end. He died at the age of eighty-six, in the year 1895, at his home in Brookline, Massachusetts.



Moses Kimball



Manager R. M. Field





## CHAPTER II

### MY FIRST VISIT TO THE BOSTON MUSEUM

**I** BEGAN my career at the Boston Museum in 1872, and from that time until its close, in 1893, remained a member of the Company. I am forced from now on to talk about myself, so that I may bring the reader more intimately into touch with the distinguished men and women with whom I was associated for more than twenty years.

My own stage life has been comparatively uneventful as my entire theatrical career, with the exception of occasional short engagements, has been in Boston. I was born on Hanover Street, at the North End, right around the corner from the Cushman School, and by a happy chance, on Shakespeare's birthday, April 23, 1857.

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

My family did not approve of the playhouse, and before I made my first appearance, they knew very little of the "make-believe" world. My first recollection of plays of any kind is of a Punch and Judy show, given on Boston Common. Before I went on the stage, I had been inside a theater just once; that, curiously enough, was the Boston Museum, and the first play I saw was "The School for Scandal." It was in this play that I made my first appearance the following season.

It was merely by chance that I went to the theater that single time. I started out one evening to go to a Sunday School concert at Horticultural Hall with one of the teachers. We were late and, as she was either too proud or too diffident to go in after the concert had begun, she played truant, and took me to the Boston Museum. My mother, who never failed to attend affairs connected with the church, was unable to go on that evening, else I should not have had that delightful experience.

## FIRST VISIT TO BOSTON MUSEUM

It was all so beautiful! Even the large blue pasteboard ticket, marked fifteen cents, which admitted me to the gallery! And the orchestra! I can almost hear it now. Never was music like it since! Oh! it was all so joyous. And the curtain! How I enjoyed the picture. It represented a little black boy perched on a wall, and he seemed to be grinning and nodding at me, and I grinned back and nodded my head and kicked my feet in time with the music. Electric lights never will be so bright as were those brilliant gas lights on that night.

I remember I sat far, far up in the gallery, and the whole performance was as unreal as a dream. Mrs. Vincent, who played Mrs. Candour, I remember, struck me as being very funny; she seemed like a lovely, chubby doll. Then, too, the scandal scene amused me exceedingly. When the actors laughed on the stage, I laughed also. When I saw the Punch and Judy show, I realized that the characters were marionettes, and I looked for the strings

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

by which these actors were worked. But when it was explained to me that these actors were real people, I was seriously impressed. From that moment I was stage-struck.

You may remember the Sir Peter and Lady Teazle scene in the school reading-books of that time? At once I learned the scene by heart and, barricaded in my bedroom, with a sheet for a train, and a large palm-leaf fan in my hand, I recited and acted, — playing both parts with wonderful satisfaction to myself. I could think of nothing else but the theater. It became an obsession. I saw nothing but a brilliant career ahead of me.

One day, a short time after that, with a throbbing heart, I mounted the long flight of stairs leading to the box office of the Museum, and there I made known my ambition to become an actress. The situation being somewhat novel, the ticket-seller was amused and, seeing an opportunity for a joke, he sent me in pursuit of the manager, R. M. Field, who was

## FIRST VISIT TO BOSTON MUSEUM

superintending the renovation of the theater at the time.

I shall never forget my perilous effort in trying to reach him. Skipping over dug-up floors, through a hopeless chaos of débris, at last I reached the man. I can tell you I was very much in earnest. I know I said a number of things before he realized I was there, and not until I tugged at his coat sleeve and had made known my desire to become an actress, did he evince any interest in my fifteen-year-old self. I remember his attitude was not a bit encouraging.

“Can you sing?” he asked.

“No, sir,” I said, “but I can learn.”

“Can you dance?”

“No, sir, but I can learn.”

He wasn't much impressed with my willingness, and concluded that there was no place for me in the Museum, and hurriedly disappeared. But my heart was set on being an actress, and I followed him into his private

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

office, resuming again my earnest appeal, and impressing upon him the fact that I should remain until he granted my request! My persistency was rewarded, and he said I might report for rehearsal the next Thursday morning, the opening of the season. Mr. Field was so dignified and autocratic that my childish persistency and pursuit of him I have always remembered as a funny incident. Let me tell you that later I avoided him as diligently as I that day pursued him.

At last the great day of the rehearsal came, and I appeared on the scene an hour too early for the appointment! To pass the time, I decided to roam through the corridors, and I shall never forget the childhood joy of my first peep into the wonders of the cases that lined the corridors of the Boston Museum. I especially admired the case where Gulliver and his Lilliputian tormentors were, and I must confess that long after I had become a grown-up, I longed to linger before that group.

## FIRST VISIT TO BOSTON MUSEUM

At last I found myself mounting the stairs to the Wax Gallery. There were very few people about, and I recall even now the thrills of pleasure and horror I experienced as I looked into the cases. The schoolroom amused and interested me. The wax schoolmaster was so funny; and the scholars had such little, distorted, wax faces; and the dunce, with his cap of wax, looked so absurd in the corner! Oh! the creepy feeling of horror that came over me as I looked into the Pirates' Cabin! And the different chambers where the ghastly stages of intemperance were displayed! And the massacre of poor Jane McCrae by the Indians! Poor Jane looked very real, besmeared with sealing-wax blood!

After that I was delighted to look upon jolly, fat Daniel Lambert, sitting so comfortably in his big easy-chair, with a foaming mug of ale. But — I remember that the cotton batting foam on the ale was very dusty.

I have been told that the best of the natural

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

history specimens were sent to the Natural History Society, but no one really knows what has become of the wax figures. I heard that the more serious groups were bought by a speculative showman. I never knew of their being exhibited, but I can't help wondering where poor Jane McCrae is.

By the time the hour had arrived for my appointment I had reached the stage door. After I entered, my first real shock came from the lack of regal splendor. I expected to find red velvet carpets and gold decorations. It was like a tomb! I remember the stage doorkeeper was very surly on that occasion, and the first realization of my own unimportance came through him.

Following his brusque directions, I wedged myself through aisles of dusty scenery, disarranging, to my disgust, my specially prepared toilet. There is something in the feminine nature which makes us always remember what we wore on any eventful occasion of our lives,



## FIRST VISIT TO BOSTON MUSEUM

and my personal appearance on this first visit is still vividly pictured in my mind.

My hair, brown and curly, was unusually frizzed for that occasion. I know I must have looked like an Albino. I wore my very best starched piqué dress, bunched out with layers and layers of starched petticoats, reaching to the tops of my adored bronze boots with tassels. Just at that time a popular song, "Tassels on Her Boots," was being sung.

"Tassels on her boots,  
That's the style that suits  
The Boston girl with her hair in curls  
And tassels on her boots."

Finally I reached the stage. My first rehearsal seemed like a peep into fairyland. It was all too wonderful to be true. The actors were gathered about the stage in groups for the entire Company had been called to report that morning after a summer vacation. They all seemed very merry and glad to begin work. The play was "The School for Scan-

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

dal," and I made my first appearance as a court lady, one of the guests in the scandal scene.

My first stage gown gave me much serious thought. My mother assisted me in the making of it, despite her Puritanical prejudice, and when the gown was completed, she declared it was too handsome to be worn in the playhouse. It was composed of cretonne beautifully flowered (supposed to be brocade), with an elaborate court train over a quilted petticoat of (satin finished) cambric. The colors were pale blue and coral pink, and the whole costume was beautifully trimmed with spangles. It had a decidedly pointed bodice, stiffly boned, a V-neck, elbow sleeves, lace frills, powdered wig, and patches, with black velvet at the throat. To complete the costume, many jewels made of colored tinsel were worn. I carried a dainty fan of swansdown, with silver paper appliquéd to represent a vanity mirror, as was used on fans of that period; my shoes had buckles to

## FIRST VISIT TO BOSTON MUSEUM

match. The costume was absolutely correct as to detail, and its memory is still beautiful to me.

Miss Annie Clarke was very kind and helpful to me as a beginner. I remember she told me many stories of her own early struggles. She said she also made her first Lady Teazle gown herself, cutting it out after the matinée on a Saturday. It was finished after she reached home at night (the old-fashioned, straight breadths of brocaded satin were easily stitched on the machine), polished off on Monday morning, and worn on Monday night. She said that often she sat up two or three hours after getting home from the play at night, to put in fresh laces or to alter a gown for the next night's performance. At that time it was a common thing to change the bill daily, but the stage costuming was much simpler than now. The heroines in old comedies did well to display one fine gown in a play; nor did they even dream of three fine gowns, such as many actresses are called upon to wear nowadays.

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

No one ever secured an engagement before or since, I am sure, who was so entirely ignorant of everything pertaining to the stage. I remember "Richard III" was to be played, and I, who was to be one of the pages, was told to provide myself with a pair of trunks. I was much distressed. One trunk, I thought perhaps I could get, but a couple of them was a deal too much to ask. Dear Annie Clarke took me aside and explained that trunks were a part of the costume, and advised me to get a couple of yards of brown cambric, costing ten cents, and she would devise the garment. A very much distressed girl was thus made happy. Miss Clarke was always doing some such kindly thing.

I was an awful nuisance. I failed to attend rehearsals; I thought any time would do. And when I was sharply reprimanded and asked where I was, I meekly answered, "Oh, just at home."

"But why not at the theater?"



Kate Ryan in 1872



Kate Ryan in 1886



## FIRST VISIT TO BOSTON MUSEUM

“Well, I didn’t hear anybody tell me to be there.”

“But the rehearsal was down on the call. Why didn’t you look at the call board?”

I didn’t know what a call board meant, or that all actors, before leaving the theater, are supposed to look thereat for announcements.

Mr. Fred Williams was stage manager at that time, and I shall always remember him with gratefulness. He overlooked so many of my faults, and he treated those of us who were in the ranks with courtesy and consideration.

Mr. Field, a dignified, autocratic gentleman, was rarely in evidence. He never interfered with stage directions, yet nothing escaped his ever-vigilant eye. He was quick to perceive merit, and never failed to show appreciation. Often an actor would find an extra bill in his pay envelope, when he had played a part at short notice.

Mr. Moses Kimball, the founder of the Museum, had a striking personality. He im-

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

pressed me as being very fatherly and kind and, with his long beard, he looked like a patriarch. I remember speaking to him just once. Shortly after joining the Company, I met him in the corridor, and he said :

“Well, little maiden, I suppose you expect to be an actress some day?”

I was somewhat surprised, and said: “Oh, sir, I am one now.”

He laughed good-naturedly, and merely said :  
“So?”

The members in the Company, when I joined it in August, of 1872, included: William Warren, Mrs. J. R. Vincent, Annie Clarke, Charles Barron, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Williams, Frank Hardenberg, Fanny Marsh, R. F. McClannin, his wife, Fanny Skerritt, James Nolan, J. A. Smith, J. H. Ring, James Burrows, E. N. Catlin, J. R. Pitman, Nate Salsbury, Frank Carlos, R. H. Lucas, H. N. Wilson, W. S. Mason, Amy Ames, Margaret Parker, Nellie Downing, Josie Wright. Miss Watkins, Miss Bowne, Miss



## FIRST VISIT TO BOSTON MUSEUM

Marden, and myself were utility ladies, beginners in the ranks.

It was splendid training to grow up in the theater where the standard plays were done over and over again; it had a great many advantages, among which was a thorough knowledge of what was played, root and branch. Only a newcomer, one who had the limited experience of playing one part, could make the mistake of the youth in Booth's company, who asked, when "Hamlet" was in preparation, whether it was to be done from manuscript or printed book. As the old, experienced actors retired, there were players in the ranks equipped for the emergencies and ready to fill the gap. Many of those who began at the Museum remained twenty-five and thirty years. Think what so long a professional life in a single theater means, in comparison to these days of constantly rising stars and shifting satellites. Does not the fact that they could retain the favor of their audiences for

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

so long speak volumes for the brilliancy of their work?

All honor and praise is due to that quartet of artists who did more than any of their contemporaries to establish the Boston Museum in that eminent position among American theaters which is so creditable to it and so gratifying to local pride — Charles Barron, Annie Clarke, Mrs. Vincent, and William Warren! With how many of the memories and the traditions of the city are those four names identified.

## CHAPTER III

### WILLIAM WARREN

**W**ILLIAM WARREN — gentleman, scholar, and actor! And what an actor he was! The mere mention of his name recalls to old theatergoers his surprising versatility. We who remember him as the dignified Sir Peter Teazle, Tony Lumpkin, Doctor Primrose, Jesse Rural in “Old Heads and Young Hearts”, Doctor Pangloss in “Heir-at-Law”, Jefferson Scattering Batkins in “The Silver Spoon”, Triplet in “Masks and Faces”, Dogberry, Touchstone, Polonius, Jacques Faurel, Papa Péricchon, Poor Pillicoddy, “Box and Cox,” and so on, name after name, marvel at the series of characterizations, and the wonder of his natural blending of humor with pathos. He is said to have studied seven hundred rôles.

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

William Warren was born in Philadelphia, November 17, 1812, on Sansom Street. He came of a player family, was given an excellent education, and was intended for a commercial career; but before plans were matured, his father died, leaving the family in straitened circumstances. Young William, feeling his responsibility as the chief support of the family, soon decided to follow his father's profession. The opportunity offered itself when some of his father's friends arranged a benefit for the family, and William made his *début* at the Arch Street Theater, in 1832, as young Norval in the play of "Douglas", which, by a curious chance, was the first part that his father played. For nearly nine years he led the life of a strolling player, wandering through remote regions of the West, acting in barns, log houses, sheds, and schoolhouses, but under all conditions with sincerity of purpose.

Mr. Warren's first appearance in Boston was at the Howard Athenæum in 1846, in "The

## WILLIAM WARREN

Rivals", in which he played the part of Sir Lucius O'Trigger. On August 27, 1847, he joined the Boston Museum Stock Company, playing Billy Lackaday in "Sweethearts and Wives." Mr. Charles W. Hunt, a popular comedian at the Boston Museum in those days, left the Company because of some misunderstanding with the management, and William Warren stepped into his place. Mr. Hunt had been such a favorite that everybody felt his place could not be filled, and that failure was ahead for the Boston Museum. But it was not long before Mr. Warren had endeared himself to the public, and for thirty-six years, barring one season when he starred with his own company, he was identified with that famous old playhouse.

The break of one year occurred in 1864-1865. While his starring venture, under the name of the Warren-Orton Combination, was a great success, he preferred to return to the Boston Museum, that had become his home. The

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

members of the Combination were Miss Josie Orton, Charles Barron, and Emily Mestayer. Mr. Warren always disliked traveling and its discomforts. I have more than once heard him refer to that nomadic season as a time of miserable unhappiness and utter homesickness. I remember once, when a younger member of the company was complaining of a change of bills and hard study, Mr. Warren said in his inimitable way: "Take my word for it, it is preferable to one-night stands in Oshkosh, Peoria, or Skowhegan." Traveling and hotels were not especially luxurious in those days, and I imagine that the "welcome of the inn" was not so graciously extended to the strolling player fifty years ago as to the actor of reputation to-day.

Mr. Warren made his reappearance as Doctor Pangloss in the "Heir-at-Law." I have been told that never was an actor more heartily welcomed. They applauded him on every entrance, so eager were they to show their

## WILLIAM WARREN

appreciation of his worth and his loyalty to the Museum and its patrons, to whom he had become endeared. He remained at the Museum to the end of his career, playing all kinds of parts.

Up to 1880, farces were always on the theatrical menu, as many as five sometimes being given in one night. There was rarely a program of a serious character that was not preceded by a farce. The Morton farces, "Betsey Baker", "Poor Pillicoddy", etc., were most popular in those days. Their faults were indeed evident, but they gave great pleasure to theatergoers. Who that has seen William Warren in "Box and Cox" and "Poor Pillicoddy" will ever forget those evenings of wholesome, happy laughter that began with the rising of the curtain and lasted till it fell?

It was when Mr. Warren was playing Pillicoddy that a young Irishman, fresh from the sod, sitting in the gallery, was heard to shriek out, through a gale of laughter, "Warren,

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

Warren, for the love of man, hould up, or I'll niver be able to go to me wurk in the mornin'." How delightful to Irish hearts was his playing of Dennis O'Rourke and the charm of his Father Doolan in "The Shaugh-raun."

Dickens' characters were his special joy. He reveled in Micawber. I never saw him as Joe Gargery in "Great Expectations", but Miss Clarke told me that in her early youth she played the boy part "Pip", and speaking of Mr. Warren's acting, she said, "*What* a Gargery he was!"

Many of his famous characters come vividly to my mind. The memory of his rendition of Jefferson Scattering Batkins in "The Silver Spoon" will bring forth a laugh from Warren lovers even to-day. At one time I played the part of Abbie Bacon in that play, and in the scene where Batkins encountered the sardines for the first time, I had great difficulty in restraining my mirth.





William Warren



Warren as "Jefferson Scattering Batkins"



## WILLIAM WARREN

Those who have seen him in the part cannot fail to again enjoy these lines :

BATKINS. Then this luncheon is for me, Abbie? What's them in the tin box?

ABBIE. Sardines, they call them.

BATKINS. Sour beans! What do they do with the critters?

ABBIE. Eat um.

BATKINS. Eat um! What, raw? They got ile all over them, lamp ile! Abbie, they smell like fishes.

ABBIE. Well, they be fishes.

BATKINS. Well, sit down and take a little bite along with me. Ain't you hungry?

ABBIE. No, Mr. Batkins. If I was, I know my place. It's not for me, a poor servant girl, to set down and eat with you. You are a great man, — a captain in the legislature.

BATKINS. We're all born free and equil. Abbie, there's a great responsibility on

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

me. (*He sits down, tucks a napkin under his chin.*) So I must eat those little fishes biled in ile, eh, with crackers and lemons mixed? Did you ever eat any on um, Abbie?

ABBIE. No, sir.

BATKINS. I should like to see somebody do it first. (*He makes unsuccessful efforts to pick one out.*) Why, the tails ain't strong enough to hold um.

ABBIE. Use the fork, sir.

BATKINS. Oh, that's the way, is it? (*He picks one up on the fork, offering it to Abbie.*) Abbie, you try one. You dassent. Come, Abbie, let's see you do it.

ABBIE. They're for the gentlemen, sir.

BATKINS. Well, I s'pose I must eat um.

ABBIE. Just as you please, sir.

BATKINS. Set down, Abbie.

ABBIE. No, sir, I'm here to wait upon you.  
(*After some difficulty he manages to swallow a fish and makes faces as though nauseated.*)

## WILLIAM WARREN

BATKINS. I can't go sardines; they won't stay down, by Jonah.

ABBIE. The gentlefolks drink some of that stuff in the bottle when they swim in their stomachs.

BATKINS. Swim! Why, ain't the fishes dead?  
*(He becomes very much nauseated.)*

ABBIE. Take a drink from the bottle, sir; perhaps it will help to keep um down.  
*(He drinks and smacks his lips.)*

BATKINS. Well, that does go to the right spot, by Jonah.

This play of "The Silver Spoon" in which Mr. Warren presented Jefferson Scattering Batkins, Member of the Massachusetts Legislature from Cranberry Center, never failed to pack the house. The play held the stage for more than twenty years and it was always customary to put it on a week every year, at the assembling of the General Court.

His performance of Herr Weigel in "My

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Son" was a masterpiece and wonderfully true to life. I played Marie, the young girl whom his son betrayed, and when the father (Herr Weigel) discovers the situation, a stormy scene takes place between father and son. I was supposed to faint at the close of the scene. I had never fainted on the stage and was very nervous, but on the night of the performance, Mr. Warren's acting was so real that I gave way to the situation and was completely overpowered, and fell helplessly to the ground without any effort. I received much flattering praise for the artistic effect of that fall, but I can assure you there was no effect premeditated. I was simply swayed by emotion, and dropped to the ground unconscious of my surroundings.

I remember standing in the wings with Miss Clarke one night when Mr. Warren was playing Jacques Faurel in "One Hundred Years Old." In the moment of his most exquisite pathos, some boor in the audience laughed. Mr.

## WILLIAM WARREN

Warren's face flushed, and his lips trembled. Miss Clarke's eyes overflowed with tears of rage and compassion. That laughter would have fared ill if any member of our Company could have laid hands on him.

How often we have laughed or wept with him almost in the same breath. His own nature, genuine and sincere, was shown in his acting. As I remember Mr. Warren, I feel that age depends much on the way one carries it. He always maintained his delight in youth. He was never heard speaking of the good old times, as some people call them, but was always expecting greater things of those growing up, in all of whom he was ever deeply interested.

Mr. Warren never married. For forty years he lived in a quaint, old-fashioned house on Bulfinch Place. His hostess was Miss Amelia Fisher, a life-honored friend. Mr. Warren was the first boarder, and those select few who had the happiness of being admitted later to this haven of rest were fortunate indeed. Among

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

them were Joseph Jefferson, Henry Irving, and Fechter. Mr. Warren was the only guest permitted the use of a latchkey, and it was said that Miss Fisher never retired until all her guests were safely in.

The players met in the kitchen for their supper after the evening's labor — and what a dear little kitchen it was! The colored, braided mats on the floor, the flour-barrel dressed in flowered chintz, the shining dish covers hanging on the wall, the highly polished stove that might well serve as a mirror — and the kettle boiling and singing as an interlude to the merry jests and brilliant interchange of ideas! What a restful joy to the poor wayfarers!

Mr. Warren was given a golden jubilee on his fiftieth anniversary as an actor. Afternoon and evening performances were arranged, — “The Heir-at-Law” in the afternoon and “The School for Scandal” in the evening, — with Mr. Warren appearing as Doctor Pangloss and Sir Peter Teazle.



## WILLIAM WARREN

The interior of the theater was beautifully decorated, and the foyer was transformed into a veritable garden. The boxes were festooned with laurel leaves and smilax, interspersed with gorgeous-hued autumn leaves and bright flowers. At the foot of the stairs, in the inner lobby, was a portrait of Mr. Warren painted by Frederick P. Vinton, by the order of many Bostonians who wished to retain for all time in this city the living likeness of our greatest comedian. The orchestra was banished from its original place, and a life-sized bust of Mr. Warren placed in its stead.

A more brilliantly attired audience was never seen in Boston; indeed, the term "brilliant" is inadequate to express the appearance of the great gathering. Prominent representatives of all professions, the clergy not excepted, were present. Every available space was filled, more than seventeen hundred people attending in the evening, and more than eleven hundred in the afternoon. The world of fashion and

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society, and more humble admirers as well, were all there to pay homage to the actor.

The applause was tumultuous on the appearance of Mr. Warren, who was greatly affected by his reception. His voice trembled, and his eyes were filled with tears. He was deluged with flowers, gold and silver gifts, messages from all over the world. At the close of the screen scene, he came forward to receive a greeting as hearty as that which met him on his first entrance.

Mr. Warren avoided intimacy with the audience in his work on the stage, and I never knew him to address an audience in his own words, but this was a signal occasion. He gracefully acknowledged the compliment and then spoke as follows :

“Ladies and Gentlemen, perhaps on such an occasion as this, I may be permitted to come nearer to you and address you as patrons and friends. It may be a questionable matter whether the fiftieth anniversary of the year of any man’s life should be a matter of congratulation rather

## WILLIAM WARREN

than perhaps one of sympathy or condolence. You seem, however, most emphatically to rank it with the former, and certainly I have no cause to class it with the latter. To have lived in this city of Boston happily for more than five and thirty years, engaged in so good and successful a theater as this and cheered always by your favor, and then to have that residence crowned by such an assemblage as I see before me, is glory enough for one poor player. My humble efforts have never gained for me any of the great prizes of my profession until now, but failing to reach the summit of Parnassus, it is something to have found so snug a nook in the mountain side. I came here to thank you and I do thank you from the very bottom of my heart. I have some grateful acknowledgments to make to others—to the gentlemen of the committee of arrangements, as well as to those who presented the painting by the artist; to the gentlemen of the press, to the manager of this theater, and to the ladies and gentlemen engaged in it. Also, I should name several distinguished volunteers, — Mr. Barnabee, who was the first to offer his services, Edwin Booth, Lester Wallack, John McCullough, Lawrence Barrett and last, but not least, Miss Mary Anderson, and Mrs. John Drew. And now, ladies and gentlemen, I wish that all present within the sound of my voice may by some event in life be made as happy as you have made me to-day by this event in mine.”

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At the conclusion of the act, a chorus of fifty ladies and gentlemen who, unknown to Mr. Warren, had volunteered their services, and were stationed behind the scenes, sang "Auld Lang Syne" till the curtain fell, shutting out from view the grand old actor. It was very impressive, and there were many tear-dimmed eyes in the audience.

Another pleasant surprise awaited Mr. Warren at his home in Bulfinch Place, — a beautiful loving-cup made of beaten silver and lined with gold, an exquisite work of art, bearing the following inscription :

"To WILLIAM WARREN, on the completion of his fiftieth year on the stage, October 27, 1882, from Joseph Jefferson, Edwin Booth, Mary Anderson, John McCullough, and Lawrence Barrett."

The committee which had charge of the gift included Mr. William Winter of the *New York Tribune*, Mr. James R. Osgood, Captain Nathan Appleton, Mr. F. P. Vinton, the artist,

## WILLIAM WARREN

Manager R. M. Field, and Mr. T. R. Sullivan.  
The presentation speech was made by Mr.  
Winter.

Each member of the Company was presented  
with a personal letter as follows :

To the Ladies and Gentlemen  
of  
The Boston Museum Company  
of 1882-3.

It is with mingled feelings of pride and  
pleasure that I acknowledge the beautiful gifts  
of gold, silver, and flowers, presented to me on  
this, my seventieth birthday.

Coming from my professional associates, who  
know me best, they were received with a double  
zest, and will always be cherished through my  
remaining years with the liveliest sense of  
gratitude towards you, the liberal donors.

That all happiness, success and prosperity  
may attend you is the sincere wish of

Yours most respectfully,

WILLIAM WARREN

I have seen Mr. Warren play Sir Peter many,  
many times, but never have I seen him give  
such a performance as on that evening. He  
seemed inspired. I was fortunate in being

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cast for Lady Sneerwell in "The School for Scandal", and the memory of that occasion will be forever cherished in my mind. How proud his associates were! How we honored and respected him, and yet, after all that adulation of his golden jubilee, he appeared among us at the next rehearsal and resumed his work with the simplicity of manner that was characteristic of that great man. As a guide in dramatic art, he was an inspiration.

The last part he played was Old Eccles in "Caste." It always seemed a pity to me that he could not have finished his career with something more worthy of him, when one remembers his splendid rendition of Jacques Faurel, Doctor Primrose, or Jesse Rural, either one of which would have been a much more delightful memory for us to retain for all time.

He retired in May, 1883, after more than half a century of honest, faithful work. There were no farewell speeches, no flourishes. He

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retired as he lived among us, a modest, unassuming gentleman, and he never visited the Museum again. He spent the last five years of his life in the home he loved, surrounded by friends and his books. His was a familiar figure on Boston streets. Every one knew him, and each face he met was the face of a friend.

Mr. Warren died September 21, 1888, at his home on Bulfinch Place, after a short illness, and was buried at Mt. Auburn Cemetery. The funeral services were held at Trinity Church, Reverend Phillips Brooks officiating.

The longer I live, the more I appreciate my humble association with William Warren, — gentleman, scholar, and actor.

## CHAPTER IV

MRS. J. R. VINCENT

**D**EAR, kindly Mrs. Vincent, beloved by all, — a name never to be forgotten! Who that remember her but recall the jolly, chubby, little figure, the bobbing curls, the inimitable, trippy walk, and the gasping, pleasant voice, all suggestive of mirth and merriment. Her appearance on the stage was a signal for a rousing reception, and she had an amusing little trick of speaking outside before she appeared, which prepared the audience for her coming. How irresistible was her quaint curtsyng! She would pick up her skirt at both sides and bob first to one side and then to the other, with that merry little twinkle in her eye that never failed to captivate her audience. She was adored by the Boston public.



## MRS. J. R. VINCENT

Mrs. Vincent was born in Portland, England, September 18, 1818. Her maiden name was Mary Ann Farley. Her father was an Irishman, and held a good position in the navy department of England.

She had a natural fondness for the stage, and at sixteen made her first appearance as Lucy in "The Review." When she was seventeen, she married J. R. Vincent, and together they played through England, Ireland, and Scotland. She used to tell many interesting stories of their hardships in the early forties. They did not use conveyances; traveling meant footing it; and they were real barnstormers. But they were a happy couple, and when they came to America, in 1846, they were able to enjoy a home life for the first time.

Mrs. Vincent would often speak of her arrival in America. She was very homesick, and loathed America and its customs. She confessed later that this was largely due to the tempestuous voyage that had lasted seventeen

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

days, and it took her some time to get her sea legs adjusted. Their first Boston appearance was at the old National Theater, November 11, 1846, under the management of William Pelby, in Buckstone's "Popping the Question." They both played here successfully until 1850, when Mr. Vincent died very suddenly. Mrs. Vincent remained as a member of the Company until the burning of the theater, April 22, 1852. She joined the Museum Company the same year, appearing as Mrs. Pontifex in "Naval Engagements", and from that date until her death in the fall of 1887, she was absent but one period, — the year 1861-1862, when she played at the Holliday Street Theater, Baltimore, and also in the support of Edwin Forrest. In 1853, at the age of thirty-five, she married John Wilson, but the marriage was not a happy one. Mr. Wilson died in 1881.

Mrs. Vincent was at the Boston Museum thirty-five years. She told me that in the early days her salary was twelve dollars a week

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and a couple of "bones." These "bones" were good for two seats at the Museum, and could be exchanged with the butcher or grocer for household supplies.

She also told me with what joy she hailed the advent of the horse-car. Her daily traveling hitherto was mostly by Mr. Murphy's omnibus that stopped at the Museum for passengers, and left at ten o'clock, Mr. Murphy announcing, "Visitors, visitors, step lively! This bus goes on down through Washington Street, on off up through Roxbury! Fare twelve and a half cents."

Mrs. Vincent was very domestic, and her love of home was perhaps stronger because of her early struggles in the barnstorming days. She was the soul of hospitality, and those who were fortunate enough to be her guests were well fed and entertained by the good lady. The culinary department was her special pleasure. Each year mincemeat, pickles, jellies, and jams were put up by her own fair hands

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and generously shared with members of the Company. Her plum puddings were renowned.

I recall one Christmas when we were playing in a very gloomy town in New England. We were stopping at a boarding-house, as there was no available hotel in the place, and Oh! it was cold with no furnace or steam-heat, and only an air-tight stove in the parlor — or “Drawing Room” — as was printed in large type on the door. I never knew till then that stoves were named, but I shall never forget that special brand — Air-tight!

We were to give a *matinée* and evening performance on that Christmas Day, and at the *matinée* there was a very small audience, which helped make us less philosophical, as we returned to the Drawing Room after the *matinée*, and huddled about the “air-tight.” But after all, what did it matter? We would eat the boarding-house turkey and hurry back to the theater. We were a merry lot, and I remember Mr. Warren and Mrs. Vincent were

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in jolly good spirits, and while the dinner was awful, the gayety was all the more enjoyable. We had a private table, and when the turkey appeared, very pallid, Mr. Warren carved it, exclaiming, "Ah! a rare bird!" At dessert, lo and behold, was served one of Mrs. Vincent's plum puddings she had brought on for the occasion. It was a cheery sight, — like a crouching porcupine covered with blanched almonds all ablaze. There was a general clapping of hands, and the saying "actors never eat" was disproved.

For years we made a short tour each season through New England, going as far as Montreal. It was a regular holiday for us, usually coming in the spring or apple-blossom time, and we always played to packed houses. While we were absent, some company or star occupied the Museum stage, the members of our company who were not traveling, supporting them. George W. Blatchford had charge of our traveling tours, and everything possible was done for our comfort. I can see our merry party headed

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for the train. There were William Warren, Charles Barron, Mrs. Vincent, accompanied by her companion, Mrs. Hart (Hartie), with whom she lived during her last days, Miss Clarke and her mother, George Wilson, "Barney" Nolan, my husband (christened Barney by his associates because of playing the title part in "Barney, the Baron" so successfully for a long run), J. H. Ring, James Burrows, and James R. Pitman.

We traveled in the best possible way. Our rooms at the hotel were secured in advance. Carriages were provided for the ladies to and from the theater at night, and a special supper always awaited us after the play. A bottle of Bass's ale was always provided for Mr. Warren and Mrs. Vincent, in deference to their English tastes. Even the little pet dogs, Mrs. Vincent's Dot, Miss Clarke's Pansy and Jip, were looked after, and their menu, consisting of liver, milk, and biscuits, was discussed with other hotel arrangements.

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We were relieved from expense and responsibility entirely, when traveling on the road, the management providing everything. Alas! all good things end; so ended this! Just because of lack of appreciation, we lost our perquisites, and it came about in this way. A "jeune premier", very popular with the audience and the Company as well, but very much of a spoiled child, thought he ought to be allowed a bottle of Bass's ale for supper every night, so he wrote home to the management. Manager R. M. Field replied at once, saying that the arrangement was a courtesy extended by the management, and very shortly after that, we all, excepting Mr. Warren and Mrs. Vincent, were put on an allowance of a dollar and a half *per diem* for general expenses.

Mrs. Vincent was always full of fun on these trips, and the mirth-maker of the party. She loved to play practical jokes. I remember she was dreadfully scared of mice, and we always knew when she reached the theater, for she

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would stamp her little feet and “sssh”, “sssh” through the dark corridor to her dressing-room.

Speaking of mice reminds me that before the renovation of the theater, we had many rats. They never feared our intrusion, and I believe they knew each member of the company; Mrs. Vincent’s stamping and “ssshing” didn’t dismay them in the least. Miss Clarke declared that one old fellow always came down the stairs to witness every first-night performance. Her dressing-room in those days was up one flight from the stage, and rickety old stairs they were! Miss Clarke said she could hear him majestically thudding over those stairs and back again. I saw him once; he was very grizzled and gray. He was most considerate and would always step aside, — slowly, not hurriedly. Although I didn’t exactly fear him, yet somehow I didn’t enjoy meeting him, and was glad when he and his kind passed out with the ramshackle stairs and the old dressing-rooms.



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Every theater possesses a stage cat, and the Museum cat, not unlike her kind, made her début and many unexpected reappearances, usually selecting the time during an emotional scene. She would take the center of the stage, blink her approval of the audience, and then proceed to wash her face; or at other times, she would stalk on cautiously, and then make a sudden dash for an exit that was not an exit. I hardly know which method the audience enjoyed most; but I am quite sure the actor who happened to be on the stage at the time suffered much discomfort. But regardless of this, the cat would reach a place of safety and there remain, despite the efforts of the stage hands, who made appealing calls to lure her from the spot. Even the rats could not disturb Puss's equilibrium. She was well fed, a favorite with the stage hands as well as the actors, and Mrs. Vincent's special charge.

One time we were playing in New Bedford when the elder Sothern came from Boston to

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spend the day with Mrs. Vincent. They were real, oldtime friends, and were always playing practical jokes on each other. That night, when Mrs. Vincent entered her dressing-room, after the usual scampering and "ssshing", we heard an awful shriek. We rushed to her assistance and found the poor, dear lady panic-stricken. Sothern had put a rubber mouse in her dressing-room — the most real looking mouse I ever saw — attached by a rubber string to the gas-burner, and when she turned the gas on, the mouse jumped about in a vividly natural way. Poor soul! When she realized it was a joke, she laughed till she almost cried, and every time she would think of it during the evening, she would say: "Oh! that awful Neddy. Just wait till I fix him."

She told us many funny stories about Sothern. A favorite one was about his going to an undertaker and ordering in a lavish manner everything necessary for a funeral. No expense must be spared; the preparations

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must be worthy of a deceased royal prince. The undertaker, concealing his delight, at once proceeded to carry out orders. Mr. Sothern would drop in to see how arrangements were progressing, and on his final visit said, "When can I have the body?"

"The body? What do you mean?" cried the undertaker.

"Why, of course you provide the body?"

The undertaker was unable to speak. He stood amazed, with open mouth, when Sothern solemnly produced a card, exclaiming, "Why, do you not say here, 'All things necessary for funerals promptly supplied'? Is not a body the very first necessity?"

I remember well a joke that he played on Sadie Martinot and myself. We had planned to have our lunch in the theater after the *matinée*. Our luncheon consisted of hard-boiled eggs, cream-of-tartar biscuits, doughnuts, pickled limes, and homemade molasses candy. Mr. Sothern was waiting to take Mrs. Vincent

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home after the matinée. When he learned of our menu, he was very much amused, and suggested sending us something more substantial, from the chop-house opposite the Museum, famous for its chop-steaks and salads (Atwood's).

We were quite satisfied with our luncheon at first, but Miss Martinot decided that a lobster salad and ice cream would be delicious additions. Mr. Sothern jokingly suggested a glass of milk and some nice sardines. However, in due time, the waiter appeared with a most attractive tray, bearing a luscious lobster salad and ice cream. When Miss Martinot served the salad, she discovered that it was composed of sawdust, artistically decorated with lettuce, olives, and mayonnaise, and the ice cream was a block of wood, with a thin layer of ice cream on top. We hardly minded the disappointment, because it was such a joke, but after we had scolded and laughed in the same breath, a knock was heard at the door, and the waiter appeared with a real salad and real ice cream.

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We forgave and loved dear Sothern, even as Mrs. Vincent forgave him for the mouse trick.

Just before Christmas, each year, Mr. Sothern sent a check of one hundred dollars to Mrs. Vincent for her poor people, and she called it "The Sothern Fund."

Mrs. Vincent devoted much of her time to costuming. For years, she costumed the Harvard plays for the "Pudding" and "Dickey" theatricals. The boys were very much endeared to the dear old lady, and fine friendships were then formed which existed till the end of her life. She delighted in collecting rare bits of lace and brocades, and had a wonderful collection of paste jewels and buckles. I shall never forget my husband's joy, when he succeeded in obtaining a pair of those much-coveted buckles. He at once sought out his old friend Burrows, who had so often hoped to inveigle her into parting with a pair, and said to him: "Now, Jim, now is the accepted time!" Burrows then succeeded in getting a pair.

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Mrs. Vincent's home was filled with dumb animals. She had a wonderful family of black cats, each named after a prominent member of the Company. William Warren was a majestic old fellow and as dignified as his namesake, and I remember Smithy was an unusually attractive cat and very fastidious. There was also a naughty little parrot who embarrassed her mistress at most inopportune times by saying: "Mother, Mother, shut up, Mother! Go t'ell! Tired Mother! Nice Mother!" Then there was Dot, a black-and-tan dog who demanded all the care of a child and got it. She was Mrs. Vincent's favorite and constant companion, and never was the lady seen without Dot. If she put the dog down for a moment, it would disappear, instantly spirited away by the boys of the neighborhood; but when a reward was offered, it was always returned safely to its mistress. Dot finally died, and the naughty boys were very sorry; but it was a real grief to his mistress.



Mrs. J. R. Vincent





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Her love and kindness were not confined to dumb animals, but extended to many unfortunate human beings who have to thank her for care and help.

On New Year's Day, a short time ago, a little parcel was sent to E. A. Sothern, which contained the fan used by her for so many years. Her oldtime friend, Judge Richardson, who had charge of many of Mrs. Vincent's belongings, presented it to Mr. Sothern as a fitting souvenir of his dear friend.

Who can ever forget her delightful Mrs. Candour in "The School for Scandal", when she used that fan as she spoke the lines :

"Tale-bearers are just as bad as the tale-makers, and they do say, — ahem —" ?

Never have I heard the lines spoken with the same unction. And her Mrs. Malaprop, with the wonderful furbelows and remarkable *faux-pas!* She was so irresistibly funny that one couldn't realize that her people were not real.

Mrs. Vincent's fiftieth anniversary as an

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actress was celebrated at the Boston Museum, April 25, 1885. The program for the afternoon was "She Stoops to Conquer", — Mrs. Vincent was Mrs. Hardcastle, — and in the evening, "The Rivals", with Mrs. Vincent as Mrs. Malaprop. The house was crowded afternoon and evening, with friends both outside and in the theatrical profession, who joined to do her honor. At the close of the performance, she received an ovation, and responded in a few words, expressing her deep pleasure and gratitude.

She played hundreds of parts and every line of character. I am powerless to describe her humor and charm as she impressed me. How delightful she was in Irish plays! Conn's mother in the "Shaughraun", and Shiela Mann in the "Colleen Bawn", were a delight to the children as well as to the grown-ups. It has been said that Mrs. Vincent in her youth excelled equally in emotional as well as in comedy parts. I know she delighted in emotional rôles,

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such as the Mother in "Article 47", and the Widow Melnotte in the "Lady of Lyons." She told me these were her "pet parts." At one time, when she played the Widow Melnotte with Edwin Forrest, Mr. Forrest sent for her to take a curtain call with Pauline and Claude, after the fourth act. When she modestly demurred, he assured her that her work was deservedly appreciated, and that she must take the call.

Her last part was in "The Dominic's Daughter." She was feeling ill at the theater on Wednesday, but on Thursday was much better. Then, on Sunday morning, September 7, 1887, she died. It was a great shock to us. I understudied so many of her parts in the old days that I felt it with especial keenness. She was always conscientious, and even when she was so ill that it was almost impossible for her to get dressed for her parts, she would go on and play even better than usual, if possible, and perhaps collapse at the end of the play. I

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was very ambitious in those days, but I didn't dare suggest my willingness to play in her stead. I only hoped for the chance. I have been told that I imitated Mrs. Vincent, and even in later days, when friends have said I reminded them of her, I am flattered. Why shouldn't it be so? She was my model, and inspired me in my girlhood.

I haven't spoken very much of her acting, for it is not only as an actress Boston idolized Mrs. Vincent, but as a lovable, charitable, Christian woman. She left as a monument the Vincent Hospital for Women, which, as a tribute to its founder, is being supported by her many friends and admirers.

## CHAPTER V

### MISS ANNIE M. CLARKE

**A**NNIE M. CLARKE made her entrée on life's stage on Christmas Day, in the year 1846, at South Boston. Her father died when she was less than two years old, and to help her mother eke out an existence, little Annie was carried on the stage in baby parts. When she was six years old, she appeared as one of the tiny pickaninnies in "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

In the same play were William Warren and Mrs. Vincent. From that time on, the little child-actress became their special charge, and the warmth of that friendship never waned. Another child's part that brought her in close touch with these two was in "The Silver Spoon", produced in the year 1852. Miss

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Clarke was announced on the bills as "Little Polly." The play afforded Mr. Warren one of his most famous characters, Jefferson Scattering Batkins, and Mrs. Vincent was inimitable as Hannah Partridge. "The Silver Spoon" was presented annually for thirty years, but the child's part was eliminated after a time, so was played only by "Little Polly."

Miss Clarke went to the Boston Theater in 1857, appearing as one of the fairies in "Midsummer Night's Dream." Later she played two seasons at the Howard Athenæum under the management of E. L. Davenport. Finally, in the season of 1861-1862, she drifted back to the Boston Museum, having become a grown-up, — that is, having grown from girlhood into comparatively long dresses. Her reappearance was as Euphemia Cholmondeley in the play "Men of the Day." She was engaged as "walking lady", and jokingly said it was lucky she was playing "walking" parts, for she found herself walking out of her frocks at an appalling

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rate. Fortunately, the dress worn by the "walking lady" of that day was usually a simple muslin made up with tucks and deep hems that could be let down as emergencies demanded.

She labored on steadily, making the most of her opportunities, always ready for any emergency, and because of her faithfulness, soon becoming invaluable to the management. She made her way so surely, indeed, that when Miss Josie Orton left the Company, Miss Clarke was instantly put in her place. There was no question of her ability to play seconds and juveniles to Miss Kate Reignolds, who was leading woman at the Boston Museum at that time. Shortly after that, Miss Kate Denin became the leading woman, and at her somewhat abrupt departure, Miss Clarke was promoted to the position, which she retained for more than twenty years. She told me that in her salad days she aspired to be a soubrette, but she shot up so rapidly that she decidedly outgrew that line of characters; in fact, however,

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she was not limited to any one class of work. She played all kinds of parts well. In her early youth she was splendid in boys' parts, — Oliver Twist, and Pip in "Great Expectations" being especially praiseworthy.

She acted in all the Shakespearean plays that are commonly produced, excepting "Cymbeline" and "Twelfth Night." She was to have played Viola in "Twelfth Night" for her benefit, and had carefully studied the part, but on the week before, Adelaide Neilson came to Boston and appeared in the same play, so Miss Clarke put the book away in her desk and never played Viola. Her one great ambition was to play Hamlet. She had played Romeo to the Juliet of Louisa Meyers, Kate Reignolds, and Carlotta LeClerq, and received flattering praise from both public and press. She had made a study of Hamlet, but somehow the great opportunity never presented itself. It seemed a pity; I think she would have been an ideal Hamlet.





Annie M. Clarke as "Peg Woffington" and George W. Wilson as "Triplet"



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The plays that she loved best were those she had grown up in. Peg Woffington in "Masks and Faces" was a favorite part. In that play she appeared as Roxanna (Triplet's child), Kitty Clive, Mabel Vane, and we know how delightful was her Peg. She played Maria in "The School for Scandal" long before she played Lady Teazle, and in "Oliver Twist" she was in turn Oliver, Rose Maylie, and Nancy Sykes.

Robertson's "Caste" was entwined with fond memories of what she called the great days of the Museum and her golden years. Those were the years, she said, when Boston had two famous stock companies, the Boston Museum and Selwyn's. There was great rivalry between the two houses, and when "Caste" was first announced for a reading, the manager said to the Company (that was on Thursday morning), "Can we play this play on Monday night?" The entire Company, as if one voice, said "We will", so "Caste" was produced at the Museum the following Monday night, and scored

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one of the most phenomenal successes of the house.

She said there was another rush when "Frou Frou" was brought out. It was learned that Selwyn's Company had the manuscript, intending to have the honor of the first production in Boston. Mr. Fred Williams, who was the stage manager, secured a copy of the French play, and, setting to work at once, rushed out a translation. The parts were given out piecemeal. One act of the play was being rehearsed while the last one was being written, and in a week it was produced, again getting ahead of Selwyn's Company.

Those were no doubt exciting days, for a little competition is a great spur to endeavor, and when the players were imbued with the feeling that they were playing for the record of the Boston Museum as against its rival, such an incentive merged individual ambition into a greater and better thing. It was the success of the production that they were working for,

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—not individual hits. The work was hard, but the certainty of mutual help made it seem light, and, too, the general spirit of the members must have been very like that of college boys who are trying to win the race for their Alma Mater. Such feeling is a great fosterer of *esprit de corps*, and Miss Clarke, ever loyal to the management, never lost that spirit.

What delightful memories cluster about the parts in which Miss Clarke excelled! Countess Zicka in "Diplomacy" — how full of splendid defiance! Olivia in "The Vicar of Wakefield", Lady Gay Spanker in "London Assurance", — has that part ever been so well played by any other actress?

Miss Clarke's work in the old comedies long will be remembered, and nobody who saw her as Lady Teazle will ever forget the elegance and dignity and the grand manner of her coming on the stage. Suzanne in "A Scrap of Paper" was also a favorite part of Miss Clarke's. She

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told me how much she regretted, when the play was first brought out in Boston, that she was not able to play Suzanne. Miss Clarke and Mr. Barron were to play the leading characters, but Mr. Barron unfortunately fell ill with pneumonia, and at the very time the news of his illness reached the theater, Miss Clarke narrowly escaped death. She was standing on the stage with Mr. Hardenberg and Mr. Pitman, running over the lines of "Heir-at-Law", when suddenly a heavy curtain-roller fell from its position, and in its plunge to the stage struck all three actors. No one was dangerously injured, but the effect upon Miss Clarke would have been serious, so the doctor said, had not Mr. Warren, in assisting her to her dressing room, by chance pressed back the bone in her neck which had been dislocated. It was this accident which prevented Miss Clarke from appearing at the initial performance.

Miss Clarke greatly missed Mr. Warren and Mrs. Vincent, with whom she was associated

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all her life. Her dressing room overlooked Court Square, and in a cozy nook in the corner was Mrs. Vincent's old rocking-chair, which stood for so many years in her dressing room, and after her death was placed in her god-child's room. The arm-chair bore the same linen cover and the same cushions in its old-fashioned but comfortable frame as when the dear old lady was wont to take little naps between the acts. In speaking once of Mr. Warren, Miss Clarke said the words of the old plays spoke to her not in the new voices but in the old. She said :

“I was going to my dressing room. I found myself pausing by the door of the room that had been Mr. Warren's as I used to pause for that never-failing ‘Good evening, Anna’, which always so heartened me for my work, and then in a moment there came over me such a rush of homesickness and loneliness, and the world was a place of chills and shadows, and nothing was real but what has *ceased* to be.

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“No one can know, who was not acquainted with the full loveliness and nobility of Mr. Warren’s character, his sensitive tenderness of heart, his beautiful courtesy. I used to look forward to matinée days as to high holidays, for then for years I shared the lunch of Mr. Warren and Mrs. Vincent.”

Again Miss Clarke has said: “I may say I was fore-ordained to the footlights from my christening, by the godmother who did promise for me. Dear Mrs. Vincent was my godmother. I was christened Anna, but Mr. Barrow, the manager, thought Annie looked better on the bill, so he rechristened me. Of course I had nothing to do but submit. He assured me that it sounded much better, especially as it was the fashion at that time. Yet I never liked the name so much as Anna. Mr. Warren till the end of his life called me Anna.”

Dear Annie Clarke was, without exception, the most womanly woman I have ever met, — a wholesome, noble character. She was a



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great lover of nature, and I remember that she used to scatter bits of worsted about the lawn of her pretty Needham home to assist the birds in nest building. She was above all a devoted daughter. Her charities were many, but she gave as unostentatiously as she lived.

Realizing in her prime that the younger generation was knocking at the door, she retired from the Museum stage and the position of leading woman that she had occupied for twenty years, and took a farewell benefit on February 27, 1886. Not until 1892 did the Boston public realize her permanent retirement. Then some of the most prominent citizens took the matter in hand, and arranged a testimonial, to give Bostonians a chance to show their appreciation of Annie Clarke as an actress and a woman. The testimonial was arranged for May 26, 1892, and was to be given independent of the management of the Museum. A committee of prominent citizens rented the theater for that purpose.

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The following correspondence explains itself :

MISS ANNIE CLARKE :

DEAR MADAM : — I have been intrusted with the following request from some of your hosts of friends, and shall be glad to consult with you at any time you may appoint. Pray let me add that on all sides I hear deep regrets at the prospect of losing you from the Museum, where we have derived so much enjoyment at your hands, and where we had hoped you might continue a link in the chain which binds us older patrons to the past. The enclosed petition should have been made as long as Bunker Hill monument, but the present names will, we hope, appeal to you as earnestly as if indefinitely prolonged.

Very Truly Yours,  
HENRY S. RUSSELL.

MISS ANNIE CLARKE :

MADAM — In view of your proposed retirement from the Boston stage, your friends will be glad of an opportunity to express to you their appreciation of admirable work which for so many years has identified you with the Museum's success, and hope that you will appoint an early day on which they may arrange the necessary details, in deference to your convenience.

Yours truly,  
HENRY LEE.  
FREDERICK AMES.

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HENRY S. RUSSELL.  
CHARLES FAIRCHILD.  
E. ROLLINS MORSE.  
ROBERT H. STEVENSON.  
OLIVER W. PEABODY.  
ARTHUR HUNNEWELL.  
ROBERT G. SHAW.  
HENRY G. PARKER.  
FRANCIS H. APPLETON.  
FRANCIS PARKMAN.  
THOS. L. LIVERMORE.  
H. L. HIGGINSON.  
JOHN H. HOLMES.  
CHARLES H. TAYLOR.  
CURTIS GUILD.

COL. HENRY S. RUSSELL:

DEAR SIR, — In response to your flattering note of April 22nd. enclosing me the petition requesting me to accept a benefit as a mark of the appreciation in which my Boston friends are so kind to hold me, let me express to you and the gentlemen whose names are affixed to the petition, my heart-felt gratitude, assuring them that of all the pleasant recollections of my service at the Museum none will remain more deeply impressed on my memory than the gracious compliment which will close my career there.

Sincerely,  
ANNIE M. CLARKE.

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The plays selected were "Masks and Faces", "A Scrap of Paper", and "Sweethearts." Jack Mason, who had been very popular with Museum audiences, came over from New York to play the part of Spreadbrow. Many artists volunteered their services, and among those who appeared were Henry Dixey, Alexander Salvini, William Seymour, Mary Shaw, Marie Jansen, and Marion Manola. I deeply regretted not being able to take part, but Mr. Field had loaned my services to Mr. Lewis Morrison to play Martha in "Faust", and May Robson played my part of Mrs. Triplet in "Masks and Faces."

The testimonial was a great success, artistically, financially, and socially. Miss Clarke was very much touched by the demonstration given her by that great assemblage. There are tears and tears. Those shed at the Museum that afternoon were as warm as June raindrops, and came welling up from hearts full of tender regard for Boston's one and only Annie Clarke.

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The familiar lines of the tag of "Masks and Faces" seemed to be peculiarly adapted to the occasion, and Miss Clarke read them as if they came from the bottom of her heart, as they doubtless did.

As she finished, Miss Mary Shaw stepped forward on the stage, followed by the entire company, and spoke a short epilogue written for the occasion, at the conclusion presenting Miss Clarke with a laurel wreath. The poem was by Miss Louise Imogene Guiney, and seemed so fitting for the occasion that its reproduction here is given for memory's sake.

"Nay, all's not over. As we see you clad  
In womanhood your great forerunner had,  
(Who, if her gracious portraits speak her true,  
Looked, moved, indeed, dear Peg of ours, like  
you.)

O, stay awhile. The bell that sounds to-night  
Intones a little knell for old delight,  
And from this painted heaven many a thing  
Sweetly with you must vanish, wing to wing.  
Too bright a spot it is to breathe 'good-bye',  
Where long beneath a patch of playhouse sky,  
Our modern Boston (who'll believe it?) stood  
All happy, all intelligent, all good:

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Where amid welcomes, fellowship, applause,  
And mutual wit, and worth that wins her cause,  
And kind dead faces, tender memories,  
Rang your own voice that passes not with these.

“Honor is due you. How your orbit lay  
In quiet paths of home and yesterday,  
Bringing the dull uncivil time’s extreme,  
The sly fine dames of our grandsires’ dream;  
How you lent truth to sorrow, fire to scorn,  
To hatefulness a something nobly born;  
How no least task to you could ever fall  
But full perfection crowned it: how in all  
Naught cheap or common touched you, and  
your part  
Seemed often but to hide too high a heart,  
Let men hereafter tell. For what we owe,  
Our thanks do hang the head. Where’er you  
go  
The town shall follow, Peg; and since in truth  
You gave us here your genius and your youth,  
Take from this trysting place of thirty years  
Health, luck, godspeed and love too proud for  
tears.”

Then followed a more touching incident when Mr. Burrows stepped forward and presented Miss Clarke with a gold locket set with diamonds, from the members of the Company. His speech was impromptu, spoken with sin-

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cerity and true feeling. Mr. Burrows was selected because of his long association with the Museum. He played that evening the part of Snarl, the same part he played with Miss Clarke when she made her *début* in 1867, in the rôle of Peg.

Miss Clarke later joined the Julia Marlowe Company, where she remained until her death, May 22, 1902, which occurred in Chicago, after a short illness.

It is, alas, the fate of the actor to be admired in life and soon forgotten, but dear Annie Clarke has sown seeds in the hearts of her friends that will bloom till the end of time.

## CHAPTER VI

### CHARLES BARRON

CHARLES BARRON, who was Charles Brown in private life, the name Barron having been assumed for professional purposes, was born in Boston, January 22, 1840. He saw all of the plays and players of that period, and was a true Boston boy in all that the words imply. Educated in Boston, he passed his boyhood and early manhood here, and finally decided to take to the stage. Of course his family objected, as any staid family rejoicing in the eminently respectable name of Brown would have been expected to do. But Young America would have his fling, and Mr. Barron made his first appearance on any stage at Portland, Maine, August 20, 1860. An extract from the program reads thus :



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“First Appearance of Mr. C. Barron, who will appear as the Stage-Struck Barber with imitations of celebrated actors.”

The performance opened with Miss Susan Denin in the tragedy of “Ion, the Foundling”, and concluded with “The Widow’s Victim”, cast as follows :

Jeremiah Clip (with imitations)	Mr. C. Barron
Mr. Twitter	Mr. F. A. Chaplin
Pelham Podge	Mr. W. Cappell
Mrs. Rattleton	Mrs. F. S. Kent
Jane Chatterly	Jessie Macfarland
Mrs. Twitter	Min LeClaire

Mr. Barron had attained much prominence in Buffalo before joining the Museum Company. In 1867 he was tendered a grand complimentary benefit by the mayor and citizens of that city and was billed as the “Popular Young American Tragedian.”

On the twenty-eighth of January, 1869, “a well graced actor” played Mercutio in “Romeo and Juliet” at the Boston Museum. Those who noted a new face on that stage glanced at

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their play-bills and saw the name of Charles Barron. They witnessed a very fine performance of the part that night, and no doubt some of them secretly wished that this splendidly equipped actor might be added to the list of those they were wont to see in that dear old house. The withdrawal of Mr. L. R. Shewell soon made this wish a fact, and Charles Barron became a regular member of the Company, bringing his splendid personality and indescribable talent to this new field. What a field it was! And what an admirable exponent of the art of acting this virile, handsome man became, when he took his place in the midst of his peers on that famous stage! Comedy and characters were already in good hands, but here came a new "Knight of The Sock and Buskin", who could add to the already well equipped Company the highest walk of the drama — Tragedy.

If I were to attempt to detail his many triumphs, it would include practically all of

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the plays in which he appeared. He was light and fanciful in the comedies from the French and superb in the tragedies of Shakespeare. His advent made it possible to inaugurate the custom of playing Saturday nights, which, up to that time, had not been practised at the Museum. A series of classic plays was tried on Saturday evenings, with so much success that it soon became the regular policy of the house.

Charles Barron was the most versatile actor of his time, — I may say the very best actor who attempted such a large number of dissimilar parts. When I think of him as Charles Surface, Richelieu, Hugh de Bras, Jean Renaud, Dei Franchi, Ruy Blas, Sir Edward Mortimer, Sir Giles Overreach, Rover, Young Marlowe, Salem Scudder, Charles Cashmore, Richard III, Shylock, Macbeth, Bill Sykes, Shaun, the Post, Danny Mann, and scores of other rôles, I am simply lost in wonder that this man could have played them all, from night to

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night, and played them so well. What a capacity he had to memorize all those lines! He was never known to need the aid of the prompter, and was always ready to give the word to a companion in the scene with him. One can hardly estimate the value of such a man in giving strength and smoothness to a scene that without him might perhaps go haltingly.

I recall his performance of Dick Arkwright in Tom Taylor's play "Arkwright's Wife." Mr. Barron was an excellent Dick Arkwright, bright and lively in the first act, honest, manly, and true in the second, and sadly pathetic in the last. An amusing *contretemps* occurred in the last act, which was hugely relished by the audience. A festival is given in honor of the recently knighted Sir Richard Arkwright on his return from London, and as he enters he is supposed to be greeted with shouts and cheers from the enthusiastic populace. On this occasion the populace forgot to shout, and

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after waiting some time, Mr. Barron's voice was heard behind the scenes in a loud whisper, saying, "Shout! Shout! Why don't you shout?" Whereupon one lone man, with a shrill, falsetto voice, piped out "Welcome, Sir Knight", and Mr. Barron dashed on, beaming and bowing acknowledgment right and left, saying, "Ah! kind friends, you overwhelm me." The audience appreciated the situation, and he was given a hearty welcome.

Perhaps the most striking portrayal Mr. Barron essayed during his long career at the Museum was that of Jean Renaud in "A Celebrated Case." Never have I seen more powerful acting. In the play he was mistakenly accused and convicted of the murder of his wife by the testimony of his own little daughter, and sentenced for life as a galley slave. If this situation were to happen in real life, one can easily imagine what a strain it would be upon the heartstrings of an innocent man. The child was then six years old, and

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was adopted later by the Duke and Duchess D'Aubterre (played by Mr. Burrows and myself). After twelve years, the young girl, while on a visit of mercy among the prisoners, was attracted by the sadness and hopelessness of one of the men, and from his story learned that he was her own father. I shall never forget the intense power of his acting. I was then witnessing something absolutely real. I forgot my own mission there, and sobbed aloud on the stage.

Mr. Barron's portrayal of the unfortunate man was vigorous throughout, and was characterized by a temperance of expression that was in every way commendable. His make-up as a French convict was a triumph, and most effectively concealed his personality. One of the finest bits of acting ever seen on this stage was his parting with the child. He evidently felt the situation in every fiber of his body, and the tears which coursed down his cheeks showed that for the time being, the

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scene was to him a reality. He never did anything better during his entire career, and it is to be doubted if any actor on the American stage at that or any other time could have so completely identified himself with the rôle.

A fine example of Mr. Barron in his lighter efforts was offered by the part of Charles Cashmore in "My Uncle's Will." He was the originator of this rôle in the United States, and played it so many times at the Museum that it became a classic in its way. Miss Annie Clarke was equally brilliant as Florence, so that their combined efforts created an impression that lasted long after they had ceased to be members of the Museum Company.

I recall one occasion at the Boston Theater when that lofty temple was crowded as it had never been before since Patti's *first farewell*. All Boston had come that day to attend the "Press Club Benefit." It has often been said that the labors of an active newspaper man are not appreciated by the general public as much

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as they deserve to be. No doubt there are many members of the Boston Press who believe this, and for them it must have been a most agreeable surprise to see the host of friends who had braved the storm to help along the success of their first attempt at giving a public entertainment.

There were attractions from all of the theaters, but probably the most interesting feature of the program was "My Uncle's Will", given by the trio who had made this comedietta so famous: Mr. Charles Barron, Mr. James Burrows, and Miss Annie Clarke. It was unlikely that these three would ever again act together, and this fact, of course, added greatly to the interest of the production. It was a unanimous verdict that never had the comedy been acted so well. Miss Clarke had never looked more charming, and one could not help feeling a personal regret that she had left our stage. The two gentlemen fairly outdid themselves. Such a reception as they received must have been most agreeable. The applause





Charles Barron



Annie M. Clarke



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was so unrestrained that it was several minutes after the appearance of Mr. Barron and Miss Clarke before they were able to speak.

Mr. Barron was usually cast for long and exacting leading rôles, so that when he had an opportunity for a little frolic in trifles like Hugh deBras, he let himself loose like a mettlesome colt. He fairly reveled in this light comedy part, and was surely unrivaled in it.

When he left the Museum to travel with Mr. John McCullough, it was to play almost the same line of exacting parts he had been presenting with us, alternating with Mr. McCullough in "Othello" and "Iago", and giving his same splendid impersonation of Edgar in "King Lear" that we had all seen many times with Mr. Edwin Booth at the Museum.

He created a veritable sensation at Wallack's Theater in New York when "Clarissa Harlowe" was produced, and really carried off the honors, even with such actors as Charles and Rose Coghlan in the cast. We were not surprised

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at this, for we had seen him emerge triumphantly from so many trying situations that we had come to feel that "In his vocabulary there was no such word as fail."

Mr. Barron has been retired for years, and lives a comfortably secluded life with his family in Roxbury, Massachusetts. He has two granddaughters who have followed the footsteps of their illustrious grandfather. Their stage names are Beverly West and Madeleine Moore.

## CHAPTER VII

### SALAD DAYS

I AM sure that in my salad days I was the cause of much mental disturbance to the management. I remember one incident that occurred at the beginning of my career. It happened on a holiday, and there was a crowded house. Some of my schoolmates, when they learned I had become an actress (!), formed a theater-party and occupied the front row, planning to surprise me. I can only remember that it was a spectacular play, and I was selected to represent a cupbearer. At the rise of the curtain, I was discovered standing on a pedestal, gorgeously displayed in tinsel, a golden goblet held in one hand, in the other, a golden pitcher gracefully poised. I was overjoyed at seeing my friends, and bowed

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and smiled and waved my pitcher at them. During the various transformation scenes, as the curtain rose and fell, I was still seen waving the pitcher, bowing and smiling.

The final curtain descended, and poor Mr. Williams, rushing wildly on the stage, shouted, "Don't you ever DARE to do that again!" No danger, I can tell you; I never did! The only thing that surprises me now is that I was not forced to a farewell appearance.

My first speaking part was in the "Road to Ruin," in which I was cast for the part of a maid with a single line, "Precisely at nine, Ma'am." I studied the speech, putting the emphasis first on one word and then on the other, had dress rehearsals all by myself, and at last concluded I was letter perfect and artistically correct. The night of the performance arrived. I was ready and waiting at the entrance for my cue, but when it came, I was powerless to move. The stage manager thrust me on, and I stood there speechless. I could

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hear him hoarsely begging me to come off. I don't know how I managed to obey, but I did.

"Why didn't you speak the line?" demanded the irate stage manager.

I said, "I thought I did," and there is a doubt in my mind even now as to the certainty of that spoken line.

At one time I was ambitious to become a ballet dancer. The idea presented itself after seeing the Rigl Sisters dance, and on my way home, I saw stage dancing advertised at fifty cents a lesson. After considering the matter carefully, I decided to make the plunge, and invested one dollar in two lessons. During the interview a pair of spangled red shoes was presented to my view; for another dollar I might possess them. Though they were much worn, — though carefully darned, — and my feet were somewhat cramped in them, nevertheless they were little red shoes with spangles. To me they were very beautiful, — and for one dollar they would be my very own! On my next visit I

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bought them, but I had some difficulty in enjoying my little red shoes, as my family were not aware of my ambition to become a ballet dancer. After retiring to my room at night, I would place them first on a chair near my bed, so I could admire them by lamplight, then tie them on the bedpost, and often even get out of bed after I had put out my light, and strike a match in order again to admire them. Several falls in the seclusion of my chamber and a real heart-to-heart talk with Manager Williams, however, convinced me that nature never intended me for a ballet dancer.

Another discouraging incident occurred while we were playing "Robert Macaire." During an old-fashioned country dance, we were dancing madly "All hands around", when my partner let go my hand. The scene closed, shutting me out, and I found myself sitting on the stage in full view of the audience, and alone. I was obliged to get up and make a hasty exit, which the audience enjoyed, if I



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didn't. I was heartbroken, and shed bitter tears on my way to the dressing room. I remember Mr. Harry Crisp, who was a handsome, splendid actor of that day and an adored "Matinée Idol" (he was a brother of the late Speaker Crisp of the United States House of Representatives), and Nate Salsbury tried to console me, but I was inconsolable. I felt that my career had come to an end.

Mr. Salsbury was a good actor and a good dreamer as well. It is told of him that in his sleep he saw visions of his future success. He was once heard to mutter in his dreams, "Who is Barnum?" "What are *three* rings? I'll have *five* in my show." And he did, in a measure, as the producer of "Black America." He became a partner of Buffalo Bill in the Wild West Show and made a fortune from that venture.

My recollection of the younger men of the Company is somewhat vague, for the reason, perhaps, that shortly after I joined the Com-

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pany, James Nolan attracted me, and so completely claimed my attention and spare moments that we were married, April 13, 1873, after a six months' courtship. To his fine character and dramatic discrimination I owe much.

Of the young actresses in the Company, those who claimed my admiration were Mary Cary, Laura Phillips, and Amy Ames. Mary Cary was a charming little actress with a most fascinating personality, both on and off the stage. She excelled in parts such as Poor Joe in "Bleak House" and Oliver Twist in the play of "Oliver Twist", and was one of the best ingénues of that day. She was adored by the members of the Company.

Collecting souvenirs was her delight. I remember when the old Elm on Boston Common was blown down, my husband, who was also a collector, managed to get a bit of the old tree, and when he reached the theater, asked me to take it to Mary's dressing room and show it to her. She was delighted, and thanking me profusely,

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locked it up in her dressing-case, and skipped on to the stage before I had a chance to explain. I was in a dilemma! I knew my husband would think me stupid, but I just couldn't ask her for it. I managed, however, to get another bit of the tree for him, and "All's well that ends well."

Mary lived just across the street from the Museum, where Houghton and Dutton's store is now. After the *matinée*, she accustomed herself to a little nap. One night when the curtain was about to rise, it was discovered that Mary was not in the theater, so a messenger was sent in great haste to her home. She was fast asleep, but it didn't take her long to get to the theater, and I rushed her into her costume so she was ready just in time. I remember her little pet dog, Gabby (she was called Gabby because she actually chattered), very much resented the excitement, and during the evening poor little Mary would say, "Oh, dear, I am so ashamed; aren't you, Gabby?"

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Charles Stevenson, a popular member of the company, was quite devoted to Mary Cary in those days. He was a member of the "Old Macaroni Club", which was composed of a select coterie of literary men and actors who gathered for their social meetings at the Parker House. After the club disbanded, the china, which was very choice, was presented to Mary Cary, as it was marked "M C", just as a token of their regard and admiration for the charming actress and their popular club member.

Miss Laura Phillips impressed me pleasantly. She was very jolly and good-natured, and a popular member of the Company.

Miss Amy Ames, the daughter of Joseph Ames, the celebrated portrait painter, played soubrette parts, and I remember that she was quite remarkable in Irish characters. She had had an Irish nurse, with whom much of her childhood was associated, and had acquired a natural brogue. She was delightfully pert in comedy characters. Miss Ames was very ac-

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complished. She possessed a splendid singing voice, and was a thorough musician and linguist.

A rumor arose that Miss Ames had passed on to the land where there are no rehearsals, and every one is letter-perfect. As a matter of fact she was living abroad, in the full enjoyment of health and happiness, and had the pleasure of reading her own obituary, also of sending it back to the newspaper that printed it, with a corrected copy to be rewritten for the next announcement.

My mind drifts to dear Margaret Parker. When I joined the Company, she had been a member for years, and had seen many changes. She said when she began her career, contracts were rarely used, — usually there was merely a letter, stating the amount of salary agreed upon (“if worth it”). The lines of business were more closely followed in those days. The young woman engaged for “respectable” utility parts must possess an evening gown, and the

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young man a dress suit, this being a full equipment for a respectable utility position. Miss Parker was an actress who always carried a handkerchief when on the stage, because she was always ill-at-ease unless she had something in her hand. She told me it was a habit formed as a beginner, and she warned me against the temptation. She was a whole-souled, good-natured woman, ever ready to give advice and share her costumes with a beginner. Unfortunately, she was not my size. That fact was impressed upon my mind because of the following incident :

We were playing "Clancarty." Miss Parker played an old Scotch woman, and one night she was not able to appear because of sudden illness. I was engaged in a "thinking part", and was selected to fill the gap. The costume she wore was impossible for me, for I was quite small in those days, and she was very tall. Fortunately I happened to have an Irish peasant costume, which I donned, and appeared upon

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the stage. I was of course very nervous, and played the part with a pronounced Irish brogue. The actors in the scene were very much amused, but I was almost heartbroken.

After the play that night, I went to the stage manager — Mr. Fred Williams — and tearfully explained the situation. He was very kind and encouraging, and praised me for playing the part, saying that he didn't see any reason why the character might not be an Irishwoman as well as a Scotchwoman, and asked me to play it as an Irish peasant during the run of the piece. I discovered that night that the brogans and the little Irish plaid shawl insisted upon their own Irish atmosphere.

Mrs. Fred Williams filled the position of what was called "Singing Chambermaid", and was very popular with the audiences of that day. The Williams family all were very attractive. Mr. Williams' sister, Aunt Belle, I recall as a dear soul, whose kindly spirit pervaded the household. There were two children, Fritz and

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Sallie, who were quite wonderful in musical studies. Fritz was carried on the stage when he was about six months old by Mr. Warren in the play of "Seeing Warren", it is said. At first he resented the familiarity of the players, and yelled lustily during the scene, but when there was a call at the end of the act, and Mr. Warren carried him on in his arms, he beamed at the audience and, waving his little hands "day-day", was repeatedly recalled. Mr. Warren, on returning the child to his fond mamma, said, "You have borne a good actor: he knows how to take a call." The Williamses always entertained on Sunday nights, and at their home might be found truly Bohemian spirits. Some of Boston's most prominent people in the artistic world, — painters, actors, writers, — and personages who visited Boston, eventually found their way to the Fred Williamses' Sunday nights.

When Mr. Williams left Boston, he became stage director for Mr. Daniel Frohman at the



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Lyceum Theater, and during Sothern's production of "Hamlet" he was taken ill. After an illness of less than three days, he died and, as he often expressed the wish, in harness. He was a gentleman of the old school, and a man of rare artistic sense.

William J. LeMoyné was another player of marked ability. His acting in the old comedies was of a rare kind, and his Sir Anthony Absolute never has been surpassed. He was indeed an actor of the Old School which, I fear, has passed out. He was so good-natured and fatherly that I often went to him for advice and to ask what the next week's play was to be, and if he thought there was a part in it for me. I remember on one occasion he said:

"Oh, yes, you will be in the next week's play; there's a nice little part for you, I think. You will play a little Irish pixie, and you carry a little pick-ax. Now, be sure and ask the 'property man' to make you a nice one."

So I rushed off at once and requested him to

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make me a nice little pick-ax. Failing to understand, the "property man" sent me to the stage manager,—and all the time Mr. LeMoyne was chuckling with glee in some dark corner. He enjoyed playing on me the usual tricks practised on the beginner. The favorite one is to send the novice for the key of the curtain. Another is to ask some aged member of the company for a box of wrinkles.

Dear Mr. LeMoyne! We missed him; he was always so sunny. Mr. LeMoyne and my husband were very congenial, both being lovers of old books. We spent many pleasant Sundays at his cozy home in Cambridge, where he lived in those days. I am the proud possessor of some rare old volumes presented to Mr. Nolan, autographed by him; also a very old photograph on which is written "A thing of beauty is a joy forever", signed "W. J. Le Moyne."

Reviving old memories brings to my mind dear Dan Maguinnis. Dan was a close friend



William J. Le Moyne



James Nolan



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of my husband, and he stood up with us when we were married in the little church of St. Joseph's at the West End. I remember how fine I felt in my new "Ashes of Roses" frock and a pale blue velvet bonnet, as I stood and waited at the window two long hours for my husband-to-be. Mr. Nolan, always punctual, was, of course, on time, but I had anticipated the hour. At last, he and Dan arrived, Dan in dress suit and silk hat, though it was mid-afternoon. That dress suit made a great impression upon me, and, though I assure you I didn't wish to exchange the men, I did wish the dress suit was on the bridegroom instead of on the best man. Dan was due to sing at a christening later, which explains his costume.

When we were first married, we lived out on the "Old Mill Dam." There were no cars, and we used to walk home after the play. To cover the long stretch of dreary road, we would often play horse, as children do, for amusement

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and to keep warm, using Mr. Nolan's long woolen muffler for reins. We didn't mind the journey after our long evening's toil for the reason that we were so healthy in mind and body. I was sixteen years old then, with dreams to come true, and at that age one is sure that dreams *will* come true.

My husband was an optimist, a lover of children and nature. Almost any afternoon he might be seen strolling along over the "Mill Dam", accompanied by our setter dog, Dash, and some of the children of the neighborhood. The children were very fond of him, and would often ring the door-bell and ask if the dog and the dog's father could come out.

When the old "Macaroni Club" was in existence he was one of the leading members. The club gathered for their social meetings on Sunday nights at the old Parker House. Joe Rammetti, a musician in the orchestra and connected with the Museum for years, was selected as "chef." I looked forward with delight

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to the Sunday club nights. My husband was an interesting story-teller, and would relate the happenings in his inimitable way; telling how Joe would instruct the guests in manipulating the macaroni from the plate to the mouth, his volatile movements and broken English causing much merriment. Joe never failed to put an orange and a nice red apple in my husband's coat pocket for me.

After the Macaroni Club had disbanded, a few of the choice spirits used to meet every Thursday night after the play at a little Bohemian restaurant. There were Sir Randal Roberts, Joe Bradford, John Boyle O'Reilly, Doctor Harris, Joe Shannon, and Mr. Nolan. I was the only feminine member of the party, and was allowed to accompany my husband. I rarely joined in the conversation; I was very young and they were very brilliant. After supper I would drop off to sleep and remain oblivious to brilliant wit and tobacco smoke till my husband waked me up, and we departed for home in the "wee

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sma' hours." How I should appreciate now an evening of such rare companionship and friendship!

Bostonians took great delight in Mr. Nolan's acting; he always received hearty receptions and special praise for his work. He was, as one of our best critics has said, a natural actor, and it will be long before the older generation of playgoers will forget him. Mr. John Bouvé Clapp, in one of his articles on the Boston Museum, writes: "A member who is recalled with great pleasure by Boston playgoers is James Nolan, who through his long career as a member of the stock company, acquired a sterling reputation as an actor of comedy characters. He was born in Boston. His education was obtained at the Dwight Grammar School. When he was fourteen he went to work in an architect's office. He applied for a position at the Boston Museum in 1858, appearing for the first time as one of the servants in 'The School for Scandal.'"



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Mr. Nolan's career was interrupted by the Civil War. When little more than a boy he enlisted as a volunteer, was dangerously wounded, and taken prisoner at Port Hudson. After his return from the war, he joined the Howard Athenæum Company, opening in the part of Jacob Twigg in "Black-Eyed Susan." For a while he was in the support of Edwin Forrest, and was also a member of the Laura Keane Company at one time.

He was for a season at the old National Theater, under Mr. Whitman's management. He made a pronounced hit that season in the part of Bettoni in "Cinderella", receiving many "scene" calls. The play was produced with a famous caste—including Fanny Davenport, Kitty Blanchard, James Lewis, and Dan Maguinnis. He retired from the National Theater at the end of that season and again rejoined the Boston Museum Company, where he remained until his retirement.

His success proved that he made no mistake

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when he gave up architecture for acting. He was indeed a natural actor and a conscientious one. The mellowness of his acting in such parts as Launcelot Gobbo in "Merchant of Venice", the apothecary in "Romeo and Juliet", and the grave-digger in "Hamlet" will long be remembered. There were certain Dickens' characters that he played with a wonderful fidelity to life; his Artful Dodger in "Oliver Twist" has never been excelled. Trip in "The School for Scandal" was another stage portrait. He could elaborate a bit into an important character. The importance of a character is not always valued by the length and the number of lines. He played all parts well and brought to prominence many a small part that in the hands of a commonplace actor would have been slighted and considered of little value. He was a thorough student and a conservative actor, spending much of his time in libraries and literary gatherings. He died on October 20, 1894.

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In this year of Our Lord, 1915, when the trenches in Belgium and France are filled with hundreds of brave English and French actors, opposed by as many equally determined German actors, my mind reverts to the time when my husband, who was a soldier in the Forty-eighth Massachusetts Regiment and fought at Port Hudson under General N. P. Banks (who was also at one time in the ranks of the player folk), used to tell me of his old comrades and fellow actors, several of whom were at the Museum at that time, among them James Burrows, who had fought in the Army of the Potomac all through the great Civil War; William J. LeMoyne, Nate Salsbury, a good soldier in the Fifty-ninth Illinois, and Lawrence Barrett, who was a major in the same company as LeMoyne. Harry Crisp, a handsome young actor, was with us in those days. He had been one of Stonewall Jackson's men, and had faced in battle the very Yankee regiment of which Burrows was a member. It

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was a great treat to hear those actors tell war stories in the greenroom. How we enjoyed their good-natured tilts! They were at all times the best of friends and bore not the least trace of resentment. Burrows would say to my husband:

“Barney, I wonder what ever became of that barefooted Reb we captured at the Battle of Malvern Hill? By the way, he belonged to your regiment, Harry.”

Crisp would flush a bit and say: “Oh! yes, Tenth Virginny! A bully little regiment! I hated to leave it! Well, they were simple farmer lads, but, oh! couldn’t they fight!”

My recollection of the War was very vague, but my husband insisted on my telling this little story about myself whenever reminiscences of the war were given. I remember I was playing in the schoolyard (Bennett School, North End), when the schoolmaster rushed into the yard and shouted excitedly: “Three cheers, children! Richmond is taken!”

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The children, the teachers, and the master cheered lustily, and I cheered too; but I knew little of the meaning of war. I was only familiar with Richmond Street, near where I lived. When I reached home, I told my mother: "Richmond Street is taken, and the children were so glad, and we all cheered three cheers."

Of those six gallant soldier boys then at the Museum, there is but one left to answer the roll-call — James Burrows — who has refreshed my memory and contributes the following account of our Confederate and Union soldier actors who appeared at the Museum from time to time.

"There was a wholesome, mutual respect for the fighting qualities of either side, so that when the Museum actors met at Philippi or on Bosworth Field, they fought as Romans or English, as the case might be, without any trace of bitterness as former actual foes on real fields of battle. There is a formidable list of

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names of men who fought on either side in the Civil War and afterwards met as fellow players on the Museum stage. William Harris was a captain in the Thirty-fourth Ohio, a regiment once commanded by no less a person than Rutherford B. Hayes, afterwards President of the United States. William J. LeMoyne was a gallant captain in the Twenty-eighth Massachusetts, and greatly distinguished himself at the Battle of South Mountain. Lawrence Barrett was a major in the Twenty-eighth Massachusetts; and W. E. Sheridan, a captain in the Sixth Ohio, became Chief Signal Officer on General George H. Thomas's staff. Major D. H. Harkins, who played with us as a member of Richard Mansfield's Company, had a distinguished career in the Fifth New York Cavalry. Harry Meredith was a bluejacket in the navy, as was also Joe Sullivan, who was Master of Properties for many years at the Museum and afterwards at the Boston Theater. When Charles Wyndham

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played his last engagement at the Boston Theater, Joe was told to set the stage for a rehearsal of 'My Uncle's Will.' He had done that for years at the Museum, and so could hardly wait for details from Wyndham's lips. He showed signs of familiarity with the situation which prompted Wyndham to ask if he had ever set the piece before.

"'Oh! About a hundred times, I think,' said Joe.

"'Where?' asked Wyndham.

"'At the Boston Museum, for Mr. Barron and Miss Clarke,' was Joe's reply. Wyndham concluded not to play a piece which had been seen so many times at another theater in Boston.

"J. J. Wallace, the most diminutive 'Heavy Man' I had ever seen, was a Confederate soldier in the Artillery. He was gifted with the biggest voice I ever heard from a small man. He was wont to build up his stature by means of special boots and shoes with very high heels, and in some measure made his figure conform

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to his voice. No doubt there are some theatergoers who are able to recall his performance of 'Meg Merrilies' which he played once for his benefit. It was said to rival that of Charlotte Cushman. It was surely a striking impersonation and not easily forgotten.

"Joseph Polk, who came to the Museum with his comedy of 'Mixed Pickles', was also a gallant Confederate soldier. I think that completes the list of actual soldiers who played with us from time to time.

"I am glad to have known many of those Museum soldier actors and doubly glad to testify to their worth. They were not the frivolous, light-headed, or as one may say, selfish beings that some people think them to have been, but men of courage, who had the stamina to fight for their convictions."



## CHAPTER VIII

### THREE COMEDIANS

**G**EORGE W. WILSON made his appearance at the Museum in 1877, appearing as Roderigo in "Othello", and from that time until the close of the Stock Company in 1894, played a variety of parts, grave and gay, that won for him the reputation of being one of the best character comedians in this country.

He was a Boston boy, educated at the Quincy School on Tyler Street, and his first position after leaving school was in the Suffolk Bank. He said that his spare time was occupied in reading playbooks. He managed to get into amateur theatricals, and was at one time a member of the Mercantile Amateur Association on Summer Street. From there he drifted to the Boston Theater, where he remained for four or five years.

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Mr. Wilson's first success at the Museum was in the part of Uriah Heep in "David Copperfield." Mr. LeMoyne had played the part many times in previous seasons, and was supposed to be unrivaled in the character, and indeed his portrayal was truly wonderful. Mr. Wilson gave an entirely different conception, however, and was equally successful in the rôle.

He was a student in his chosen profession, and made a very careful study of every character he portrayed. His make-ups were individual, and marvels of artistry. The characters most strongly impressed on my mind were Goldfinch, Bob Acres, and Tony Lumpkin. His playing of Bunthorne in "Patience" won for him another success on its first hearing, as did also his artistic performance of Sir Joseph Porter in "Pinafore." I think his portrayal of Crabtree in "The School for Scandal" the best I have ever seen.

He told me that when he first joined the Museum Company, the old comedies were new

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to him, and it was not unusual to have half a dozen parts to study within a week, including comedy, tragedy, and farce. One can easily understand there was little time for outside recreation. He said he lived directly opposite the Museum, over Papanti's Dancing Academy, and night in and night out the midnight oil continued burning until daybreak. Actors believe that to be able to retain Shakespearean lines they should be slept on. George Wilson disproved that rule, for during the first of his engagement at the Museum he had little chance for sleep.

Mr. Wilson's most famous and perhaps greatest success was as Old Macclesfield in "The Guv'nor." Memories of the old boatman and the expression he used through the play, "Yer 'and, Guv'nor, Yer 'and," will long live in the minds of its hearers.

Mrs. Vincent, too, as the dear old wife of the boatman, was true to life. I remember how much I enjoyed playing the character even

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at a disadvantage. Mrs. Vincent was taken ill at the theater and I was given her part. I had enjoyed the play and had watched it from the wings so often that I was nearly letter perfect, but going on without a rehearsal and plunging suddenly into the midst of the play, caused me to be seized with a very curious sort of nervousness, in the form of a twitching foot that insisted upon dancing about whenever I was seated. Do what I would, I couldn't stop it, but with Mr. Wilson's kindly assistance, I got through the evening very well. Mrs. Vincent recovered and was ready to play the next night, but on the way to her dressing room, she turned her ankle. Doctor Hofendahl, who was our physician in time of need, happened to be in the greenroom that evening and, after attending her, forbade her playing. The dear old soul wanted to play with a bandaged foot, but Doctor Hofendahl insisted upon taking her home in his carriage. After that I played the part for some time.

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The parents of George Wilson had intended him for the ministry, and their son's choice was regarded with much disfavor. When young George had really decided upon his career, his father took him aside and gravely said: "My son, now that you have chosen the path through the mire, remember there must be a barrier between us," and that barrier existed till the end of time. His parents never saw him in a play. After his father died, he tried to coax his mother to see him in a favorite part, but it was of no avail. She said: "No, my son; I never went to the theater when your father was alive, and I don't think he would care to have me go now."

Mr. Wilson has always stayed in harness, keeping abreast of the times, and is at present doing splendid work in Mr. Sothern's Company. He had many offers to accept stellar honors during his stay at the Museum, but he was content to remain in Boston among the people who so greatly appreciated his artistic efforts.

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J. A. Smith was born in Philadelphia in 1813. "Smithy" — as he was called by his associates — was an unusual actor of foppish characters, and assuredly the best dresser of stage fops I have ever seen, always correct and never exaggerated.

An amusing story is told of Mr. Smith's first engagement in Boston, where he was engaged to play at the National Theater. He sent his wardrobe on by freight, and he came on by train. When he arrived in Boston, he was very homesick, — the streets seemed so narrow and crooked, — and he was very lonely, so back he started for his home in Philadelphia, forgetting all about his wardrobe and without even calling on the manager. When he arrived home, his mother welcomed him with open arms. She was very much opposed to the theater, and "Smithy", who was a tailor as well as an actor, declared then and there that he would give up the stage. But alas, the best laid plans of mice and men, etc. ! The wily

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stage manager in Boston refused to send back his wardrobe, so "Smithy" was obliged to return and fill his engagement. Sir Benjamin Backbite in "The School for Scandal" and Jerome Splendidsilk in "The Silver Spoon" won for him great praise.

Mr. Smith was a devout Roman Catholic. During Lent, he never failed to attend Mass every morning; even when we were playing on the road, in the smallest towns, his first duty was to locate a church. I remember one dark morning Miriam O'Leary and myself accompanied him. It was in Plymouth town, and a very early Mass was held in the basement of the church. The stairs were steep and dark, and we had to grope our way. "Smithy" and Miriam landed in safety, while I slid down several steps, causing quite a commotion. They passed on, paying no attention whatever to me, leaving me to recover myself as best I could.

Mrs. Vincent and he were very dear friends and were continually playing practical jokes on

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one another. He used to call her Mary Ann.

Mr. Smith was a member of the Company for more than thirty years. He retired, and spent the last of his days at the Forrest Home for Actors. He made occasional visits to his friends in Boston, however. The city and its people whom he had grown to love owed him much for his share of entertainment, and he was very much endeared to all Bostonians.

“Uncle Jim Ring” came to the Museum in 1853, according to the “Chronological Record”, but he was a favorite comedian at the old National Theater on Portland Street many years before that date. I note his name and that of Mrs. Ring in a program of the National, bearing the date of November 11, 1846. This program also marked the first appearance of Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Vincent on any stage in this country. The bill for the evening was “The Wizard of the Wave” and “Popping the Question”, Mrs. Vincent appearing only in the farce.





J. A. Smith



James H. Ring



George W. Wilson



### THREE COMEDIANS

When I came to the Museum in 1872, "Uncle Jim" had been there so long that he seemed to me to be about a thousand years old. Not in appearance, for he was simply a cherub grown up and supplied with modern clothes. I do not think any one ever called him by any other name than "Uncle Jim." He stood in that relation to all of the company, old or young, and by his unfailing good nature and sunny disposition lived up to the title. He was very fond of "going a-fishing", and spent many of his leisure hours in that innocent pastime. It did not seem to matter much to him how few fish he might catch, so that he had a fine day in the boat or by the brookside. To be "bathed in green", as he expressed it, was his delight. No doubt this habit prolonged his life and kept him young at an advanced age.

He visited England and France when still a young man as a member of one of the first black-faced minstrel companies ever seen in those countries. He used to tell that one day,

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when he had gone just outside of London for a little fishing, he heard a voice calling to him from a bridge over his head, "Hullo! The last time I saw you, you were fishing on the Mill Dam in Boston." "Uncle Jim" dropped his rod and ran up the bank, only to find that his unknown friend, with true Boston reticence, had walked on without leaving his card.

"Uncle Jim" was fond of telling how he once called by request to see the mother of an actor friend, who occupied some kind of a position (housekeeper, I think) in a pretentious London house. He walked up the steps, in his free American manner, and rang the bell. A pompous footman came to the door, who, when he learned that the caller wished to see the housekeeper, gave him a look that was intended to wither the caller, and said, as he pointed to the area, "The hother door!" I can see "Uncle Jim" now as he leaned back in his chair and laughed, as he recalled the pompous flunky.

My husband was his dressing room mate,

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and was never so happy as when he had finished dressing for his part and made a place for Mr. Warren to come in and have his little chat and smoke before the curtain went up. Then "Uncle Jim" was at his best. He had just the tact needed to start Mr. Warren on one of his story-telling flights. If one could have taken those stories down, they would have been of rare interest to the people of this generation. There was never any bitterness or sting in those delightful talks about the men and events of that day. Unluckily my husband was not a Boswell, nor was there any one of that school in the old Museum, so the old tales — the flashes of wit and wisdom — passed out at the doors and windows, and were lost to the world.

I recall just one of Mr. Warren's sayings which may serve as a sample of his way of putting things. He had been out of the bill, and so had an opportunity to witness the performance of his cousin, Joseph Jefferson, in "The Rivals." We had played the piece al-

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most as Sheridan wrote it, but Mr. Jefferson had made many changes and transpositions to suit his ideas of a good vehicle for a star. "Uncle Jim" asked Mr. Warren how he liked "Joe." Mr. Warren took his pipe out of his mouth, and with a twinkle in his blue eyes, replied, "Well, it seemed to me to be 'The Rivals' with 'Sheridan twenty miles away.'"

"Uncle Jim" was the terror of the surly box-office man or the equally sour ticket-seller at a railroad ticket office. He hardly ever looked for gentle manners or even common courtesy at either place, so he had a little scene carefully rehearsed and always ready. He would start back and throw up his hands at the first gruff word and say, "Don't shoot! don't shoot!"

The man in the office would sulkily reply, "Who is going to shoot? What do you mean?"

And then "Uncle Jim" would say, "Well, I thought by your manner you might reach for a gun."

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Few actors had more or better friends than James H. Ring. He was such a favorite with the Boston public that his yearly benefit was a sure attraction. He was particularly good in such parts as Sam Gerridge in "Caste", or in almost any of the simple rustic characters of the English comedies. Of course he was successful in his black-face rôles, for that was one of the strong features of his early life.

I recall one occasion in "Uncle Tom's Cabin", where the slavedriver, Haley, was storming at him. The actor playing Haley had been furnished with a huge property dirk-knife. The knife had a tendency to tumble out of his pocket when he climbed over the set pieces in pursuit of George Harris, so he had sewed it into the pocket of his coat, not noticing that the ring he had fastened to his pocket was attached to the *handle* of the dirk and *not* to the scabbard. When he tried to draw the knife and make good his threat to cut the heart out of the poor black, the knife would not come out

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to "suit the action to the word." "Uncle Jim", to save the scene, looked at the angry Haley still tugging away at his knife, and said, "Don't hurry yo'se'f! Don't hurry yo'se'f!" The audience "caught on" at once and shouted with laughter.

It was said that Mrs. Stowe came to the Museum just once to see this version of her story, and left in high dudgeon when she had heard a few lines of Mr. Warren's part. He played an interpolated character, Penetrate Party-side, a broad Yankee part in Doctor J. S. Jones's best manner, but the matter was too much for Mrs. Stowe. Here are the lines that drove her out. Penetrate is prescribing a remedy for headache which was as follows :

"Hoss-huff parin's — they must be burnt into a pan till they frizzle and then sniffed tew. They must be sniffed tew strong and offen." Perhaps this caused Mrs. Stowe's head to ache, as she never came back to hear the rest of the play.



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The late John Boyle O'Reilly was a personal friend and great admirer of our genial comedian. Those who had the pleasure of sharing his little dressing room at the Museum heard at first hand many incidents of the escape from Australia and the things that lead up to O'Reilly's arrest, conviction, and transportation.

"Uncle Jim" lived up on the hill behind the State House, and was pretty sure to stop at the Revere House on his way home after the play. O'Reilly was something of a Bohemian, and delighted to make one of the little party of actors, authors, and horsemen usually to be found at the Revere House on Saturday nights. "Uncle Jim" was a good listener and heard things worth the hearing. I have been told that on one occasion, at least, after the company had stayed the limit of time at the Revere, "Uncle Jim" suggested that they adjourn to his house and see if Jule (Mrs. Ring) did not cook the best Boston baked beans they had ever eaten. Just think of that

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party of six stalwart men invading Mrs. Ring's kitchen at two o'clock in the morning. Of course the lady had retired, and did not know that her oven was being despoiled of its Sunday breakfast. The beans were all eaten and pronounced "the best ever", and "Uncle Jim" was called the "Prince of Hosts", but that did not still the conscience of at least one of the number. Frank Hardenberg said it was an outrage to eat up the family provisions like so many wild beasts, and he demanded a silver offering from each man to make good their work of destruction, saying, "Now, boys, don't hunt up the smallest coin you have, but just chip in the largest." That was what they did, and the result enabled Mrs. Ring to send out to the baker's on Sunday morning for all the beans needed to furnish the breakfast for her family, and left a little handful of silver for other things.

"Uncle Jim" was a good husband and a happy father, and a still more happy grand-

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father, if one may judge by the pride and delight he took in his winning and talented granddaughters. How he would have delighted in the success of Blanche Ring, if he could have lived to witness it. She has fulfilled the promise of her youth, and has shown to the people of this day a glimpse of the merry, light-hearted, sunny disposition that she surely inherited from her grandfather, our old comedian.

“Uncle Jim” was sometimes a little puzzling to visiting stars. He would watch a scene, and when the star made an exit near him, he would say: “I’m very much pleased with you.” The star might not understand that this was “Uncle Jim’s” way of paying a compliment, but before the engagement ended, he was sure to be put right, either by one of the Company or by the genial comedian himself. “Uncle Jim” was said to have tried this with Augustin Daly, but with what success may be inferred from the fact that he remained only one season at that theater.

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It is said that when Anderson, an eminent English actor, came to the National Theater to play his first engagement, "Uncle Jim" was the prompter. Mr. Anderson was late at rehearsal, and the manager dismissed the company, leaving "Uncle Jim" to explain to the star. Anderson came in, full of bustle, and seeing the empty stage asked, "Where is the company?"

"Gone to their farms," said "Uncle Jim."

"Gone to their farms? What do you mean, sir?" asked the surprised Anderson.

"Why, our people all own farms, and can't wait around for any star," was "Uncle Jim's" reply. Mr. Anderson was not late the next day.

"Uncle Jim" did not ask much of this world — just a few warm friends and a great many good books, for he was an omnivorous reader. I have seen the large collection of an old friend (a former member of the Museum Company), in which each and every book is marked with

### THREE COMEDIANS

the sign "lxl", which was the mark that "Uncle Jim" placed on all the books he had read and liked.

Perhaps "Uncle Jim" never played a part that fitted him better than that of Mr. Wilfer in "Gold Dust", a version of "Our Mutual Friend." In the words of Charles Dickens, "If the conventional cherub could ever grow up and be clothed, he might be photographed as a portrait of Wilfer." "Uncle Jim's" characterization of Wilfer was simply perfect. His chubby, smooth, innocent appearance fitted the part and made it seem like a picture out of the novel.

Mr. Ring was an American only by a mere chance. He was born in South Boston just three days after his parents landed from a British vessel, in the year 1820. He died at Manchester-by-the-Sea, June 13, 1883.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE TWO RELIABLES

**J**AMES R. PITMAN was born in New Zealand of English parentage, in 1842, and came to this country at an early age. He became a member of the Boston Museum Company in 1863, playing small parts and acting as captain of supernumeraries for some years. Finally, in 1869, he became prompter, a position he held until promoted to that of stage manager.

He was a most efficient prompter, a position of more importance under the old system of constant change in plays than can well be understood now. From his position in the corner of the proscenium on the right of the stage, he controlled all of the stage mechanism. He could signal by bells and raps to the man

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in the flies who raised and lowered the curtain, to the man who managed the borders, in fact, to all of the unseen workers who had anything to do with the various effects in use during the progress of a play. Thunder, lightning, rain, hail, snow, sunshine, and shadow were at his command. He was an adept at simulating the barking of dogs and the crying of babies. If a carriage seemed to be driving up at the back of the scene, it was Pitman pushing a long pole over the rough boards of the stage, across the grain of the wood. He made the sound of horses coming or going, as the case might be, with the shells of cocoanuts split in halves and emptied of their meat. He sent armies on with a wave of his hand and marched them off again with a crack of his finger. He controlled the orchestra, in the matter of incidental music, by the flash of the footlights. In fact, every movement of his had a meaning for some one.

He was a slave to duty, and was absolutely

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

just in all his dealings with his fellows. He did not shield the delinquent nor attempt to curry favor with those in high places. Actors sometimes tried to shield themselves and blame each other for any failure to speak at the proper time. It was useless for the guilty one to appeal to Pitman. He would say, "No, Sir, you are at fault. Didn't I hold the book?"

The prompt book was the law from which there was no appeal. Pitman would give the word at first in a loud, penetrating whisper, but if that did not start the dramatic wheels, he would shout it in a tone that would reach the back row in the gallery. I have heard of an old prompter who let his mind wander from the book, so that if a word were needed, he sometimes could not tell what had been spoken. At such times he would venture to whisper "Notwithstanding." James R. Pitman was not of that kind. He knew just where the dialogue had halted, and who had stopped the play.



## THE TWO RELIABLES

But Homer was said to nod at times, and even Pitman met his fate. "Speed the Plow" was being played for a single night. It had not been very well prepared, and some of the actors were not easy in their lines. In those days the greenroom was in a little triangular space just behind the prompt corner on the right of the stage. Frank Hardenberg, an excellent character actor, was standing in the greenroom door just behind the prompter. Pitman heard *breakers ahead*, as the voices of the actors on the stage ceased, but he knew who was wanted. He turned from his chair in the corner without rising from his stooping position, glanced into the greenroom, and not seeing the person he was after, turned and bolted down-stairs to the dressing rooms. Meanwhile Hardenberg still stood looking at the stage, saying, as he coolly surveyed the scene, "Three of them! All sticking!" until poor Pitman came rushing back, saying, "It's you! It's you! Go on!"

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

Woe betide the poor actor who complained that Pitman gave the word too loud, or was too abrupt and excited when he came down to the dressing room and shouted, "Mr. —, the stage is waiting for you." Pitman had an exquisite revenge the next time that actor made a wait. He would appear at the dressing room door and say in a low, casual tone, "Mr. —, the stage has been waiting for you for five minutes." Stage waits were not common, so we remember the few times they did happen.

In 1875, Genevieve Rogers was playing a big star engagement at the Museum. In the opening scene of her play, Georgia Tyler and Laura Phillips were talking, each seated at a table on opposite sides of the stage. One of the ladies needed the word, and Mr. Pitman gave it promptly. Neither lady would speak, so he gave it again in a loud tone. Still no response from the obstinate ladies on the stage. Finally, Miss Phillips arose from her table, sauntered up to the center door, and attempted

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to bring on the next character (Mr. O. H. Barr), saying, "Here comes Sir George!" Barr, standing upon his dignity, refused to come on, and instead of entering, said in a voice that could be heard all over the theater, "Not on your sweet life." Mr. Pitman had no alternative except to ring down the curtain and start the play all over again.

This was the same Ollie Barr who, at the close of John McCullough's engagement that same season, had studied and played eleven parts in two weeks, — many of them new to him. The twelfth play was "Metamora", new to the entire Company. Barr was almost mad from lack of sleep and worry over his hard rôles. At the first rehearsal, he was about to enter at a cue he was to receive from Mr. Burrows. Barr is seen off stage and some one asks, "Who comes yonder?" to which Mr. Burrows replies, "A moody youth somewhat o'erworn with study." The lines were so applicable to poor Barr that all the people on the

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stage set up a roar of laughter. This startled and vexed McCullough, who said, "What's the matter? I didn't know there were any comedy lines in this scene." We saw the comedy of the situation all the same!

The most careful man will sometimes make mistakes. Mr. Pitman hardly ever failed to inspect the stage before ringing up the curtain, thus making sure that actors, scenes, and properties were in their correct positions. He failed once in all the years that I knew him! The play was a little domestic comedy, "The Chimney Corner." It had been given all the week, so vigilance was relaxed. Mr. Robert McClannin, a splendid actor of old men's parts, was to be discovered sleeping in a chair by the fireside. Up went the curtain—he was not there! Mr. Pitman tried to persuade him to go on and take his place in the chair. He could have done so without attracting the attention of one person in the audience, but his dignity as an actor was at stake, and he

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would not sacrifice that to save the scene, so the curtain was rung down, and the play started again. This was an extreme case. Many actors would have tried to save the scene, but our "old man" knew that he was clearly within his rights, and nothing could move him.

Dear old Pitman! His "still small voice" in the prompt place was often our salvation. He always managed to live near the sea, and to keep a rowboat. There were many ardent disciples of Izaak Walton in the Company, and they made trips down the harbor in Pitman's boat, sometimes for cod at Faun Bar below Deer Island and, in the smelting season, all about the upper and lower harbor in quest of those shiny little fish. During a running play, they would even go down for half a day on Wednesday or Saturday, and return in time for the *matinée*. The catch was frequently abundant, for they were skillful anglers, and they delighted to bring their spoils up to the Museum as a gift to their fellow players. You

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may believe it was no mean gift. Such absolutely fresh fish could not be bought at any price in the Boston market. Nate Salsbury, J. W. Norris (who became the husband of pretty Josie Batchelder), and James Burrows were usually of this party.

Little fishing excursions to Mystic Pond in Medford were common during the early autumn days, at which a much larger number would be present. Burrows usually acted as chef, assisted by Salsbury. W. J. LeMoyne would mix the salad, while William Warren, Dexter Smith (the music publisher and composer of many delightful old songs), Jimmy Nolan, "Uncle Jim" Ring, and half a score of disciples would look on while the fish were frying and the coffee making. It was a jolly group that gathered around the spread on the grass, and Mr. Warren would entertain the party with his rare jests and still more rare stories, which he told with much unction. He would always preface his stories with an apologetic remark,



James Burrows



James R. Pitman





## THE TWO RELIABLES

“I suppose this is an awful old chestnut,” and follow that with something so apropos that even if it were old, it seemed new to all of his hearers.

Joseph Jefferson asserted that Mr. Warren originated the use of the word “chestnut”, very much in vogue in my early days. He says that there was a comedy called “The Broken Sword”, in which Captain Zavier and Pablo, a comedy part, are the chief characters. The captain, a sort of Baron Munchausen in his way, says:

“I entered the woods of Collaway, when suddenly from the thick boughs of a cork-tree — ”

Pablo interrupts him with the words, “A chestnut! Captain, a chestnut!”

“Bah!” replies the captain. “Booby, I say a cork-tree!”

“A chestnut,” reiterates Pablo. “I should know as well as you, having heard you tell the story these twenty-seven times.”

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Mr. Warren, who had often played the part of Pablo, was once at a stag dinner when one of the guests told a story of doubtful originality.

“A chestnut!” murmured Mr. Warren, quoting from the play, “I have heard you tell the tale these twenty-seven times.” The application of the lines pleased the rest of the table, and when the party broke up, each helped to spread the story and Mr. Warren’s commentary. And that, Mr. Jefferson believed, was the origin of the word “Chestnut.”

Those were delectable chestnuts that sputtered around the fire at Mystic Pond, and it was a contented group of actors that came back from their little outing and resumed their work of amusing the Boston public. Pitman was supremely happy at all such times, and never had to give the word but once when he held up his plate for another helping of fish and fried potatoes.

The curtain has rung down for the last time upon all of that merry group except one, and

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he tells me that life is made much brighter and happier for him by the remembrance of those good old times.

Mr. Pitman, after leaving the Museum, had many years of active and honorable work as stage director at the Castle Square and other theaters. He acquired a competency of this world's goods, and did not answer to the final summons until February, 1914, at the age of seventy-two.

James Burrows was born in North Chelmsford, Massachusetts, May 14, 1842. His paternal ancestors came from England in 1635. His great-grandfather and his grandfather settled in Concord, Massachusetts, early in the 1700s, and were residing there at the outbreak of the War for Independence. Both were soldiers in the Continental army during the war period, — the former with the rank of captain — and both survived at its close, so that this actor can claim to be a true Yankee.

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The lad was hopelessly stage-struck before he had ever seen a theater, and he sent to New York for a dozen plays when he was only fourteen years old. The postmaster of the country village where he then lived refused to deliver them into his hands until he had opened and examined them, and then he urged the lad to burn them at once, as he thought such stuff unfit to be read.

The boy's dramatic instinct found partial vent through recitations of poetry at school exhibitions. He states a harrowing experience when he figured as a "Colored Parson" at an entertainment for charity in the village church. His effort was a "Burlesque Colored Sermon." He had no knowledge of burned cork or its easy application and removal, so he was forced to make his face black with half-burned embers from the kitchen stove. Getting into an empty pew, he stooped from sight of the audience, and began to rub on the half powdered charcoal. The gritty particles tore his tender skin,

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and stung his flesh, so that long before his face was thought dark enough for the occasion, he was bleeding from numerous cuts, but he held out in the *interests of art* until he was pronounced black enough. It is needless to add that his success in removing the color was not brilliant. The hard water from the village pump, minus soap, did little more than set the color to a fast black, which stuck to the poor lad for days.

When Burrows was seventeen, he came to Boston and began to write letters to managers, asking for any position on the stage. Those hard-working officials generally consigned his applications to the waste-paper basket, and he received only two replies, — one from W. H. Smith and one from Mr. E. F. Keach, both of the Boston Museum. The outbreak of the Civil War furnished him with a stage so wide, an action so sublime, that he ceased to sigh for the mimic world. He remained in the army until the close of the War, serving in

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the Sixteenth Massachusetts Infantry and the First United States Volunteer Veterans and taking part in thirty battles and skirmishes.

This honorable service ended, he came back to Massachusetts with the same old longing for the stage, and began a new assault upon the managers through the United States mail. This time he had better luck. A courteous reply from Mr. R. M. Field requested him to call at the Boston Museum, January 17, 1866. He then learned that the only road for a novice was one that led through the supers' room, so he took that road, and was regularly entered as an apprentice. The play that had the longest run that season was "The Sons of the Cape", by Doctor J. S. Jones. Mr. Burrows had his share in making the cloth sea waves. He stood at the upper entrance on the right, and during the whole run never failed to be told by the nervous leading man, L. R. Shewell, just when to drop his portion of the cloth so that the boat with the hero might go on into

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the deep sea. If Mr. Shewell had only known that this young super was to be known in later years about the theater as "Old Reliable", because he was sure to be attentive to all of his duties, he would not have wounded the young man's feelings by his needless admonitions.

When Mr. Shewell had his benefit that season, Mr. Burrows was cast for his first speaking part, — Francisco in "Hamlet." Mr. Field had promised to keep an eye on him, and finding that Burrows could make himself heard over the footlights, engaged him as a regular member of the Company for the ensuing year. The season opened August 15, 1866, with the young actor in the character of Dwindle in "Town and Country", and from that night on, he worked his way slowly from small beginnings to responsible characters.

In August, 1874, he joined the Providence Opera House Company, and remained there one season. The call of Boston and his old

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associations was so strong that he could not remain away, and the season of 1875 found him back at the Museum, where he met a cordial welcome from the public and his fellow players. He had offers from time to time to go to New York and also to Philadelphia, but life at the Museum was so satisfying that he put all such temptation aside.

Until 1888, he lived and worked in this ideal atmosphere, when Richard Mansfield induced him to go to London with him. This seemed such a good opportunity for an educational growth that Mr. Burrows could not well refuse it. The glamour of a London season could not keep him from harking back to the old Museum, however, so we again find his name in the list of the Company for the season of 1889-1890. This time he had come home to stay, for he remained just as long as the old theater adhered to the stock company system, rounding out, in 1893, twenty-five full seasons.



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It was upon the stage of this historic house that Mr. Burrows found his wife that was to be in the person of Hattie A. Hill.

It was here, also, when playing McCarty, in "Romany Rye", an Irish emigrant with a large family, that he carried his infant son, Warren Burrows, in his arms, thus giving him his "first appearance on any stage." William Warren was godfather to this lad, who has since followed in his father's and godfather's footsteps on many stages throughout this country.

Mr. Burrows was an interested witness of the gradual changes that took place in the personnel of the old Company, changes not entirely for the better. He recalls the faultless performances of the classic old plays and contributes a notice of the last time "The Road to Ruin" was acted, with the suggestion that at no previous period could Boston critics have written such strictures. He had played in it nearly every season from 1866 to 1889. It had been regarded as one of the sure attractions,

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like "The School for Scandal", and had never failed to meet the unqualified approbation of both critics and public.

### NOTICE

#### BOSTON MUSEUM: "THE ROAD TO RUIN"

The old comedy season at the Museum opened Monday night with "The Road to Ruin" — a play that, in spite of its name, proved a road to success last year, as it is likely to do again. Last night's presentation, it must be admitted, was not faultless. Several of the leading actors were far from letter perfect in their parts, and there was in consequence not a little stumbling and some mumbling together with perfunctory periods that were quite the reverse of inspiring. The frequent blunders of the scene-shifters did not mend matters, and the material element of the performance might be distinctly improved were the chairs and tables arranged with a thought less of stiffness. But, notwithstanding these and other detractions, of which mention will be made later, the entertainment was one quite worthy the enviable fame of the Boston Museum as the standard comedy theater of Boston.

The cast of characters this year is in the main the same as last year, and, generally speaking,

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the several personages of the drama are in able and congenial hands. Mr. Boniface's Old Dornton is a pleasure to the eye, and the dual nature of the irascible, warm-hearted old gentleman, hurling denunciations on the head of his son in one breath, and in the next with fond peevishness defending him against aspersions, which, compared with his own charges, are of small consequence, is convincingly presented, although marred by certain mannerisms which have apparently become constitutional with Mr. Boniface. As Harry Dornton, Mr. Plympton is also very happy as to dress, and in manner he fits the part perfectly. He is the perfect picture of the impulsive human animal, aglow with health and intoxicated with the spirit of youth; but it seems to be quite impossible for Mr. Plympton to restrain his natural tendency to overact wherever the opportunity offers. Mr. Davenport, Mr. Abbe, Miss Agnes Acres and Miss Fannie Addison each does excellent work, the last named especially. Her characterization of the self-seeking and husband-seeking widow is delicious and full of quiet touches of humor which a less gifted artist might fail of discovering. But the honors of the evening were clearly with what may be called the "*big four!*" Mr. Wilson, Mr. Barron, Mr. Burrows, and Miss O'Leary. The Goldfinch of Mr. Wilson, as a low comedy character, gives a better balance to the play, according to modern notions, than a comedy part of more refined eccentricities, and is in the nature of a

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

relief from the staid and sober strain which is the dominant feature of the play. Accepting Mr. Wilson's conception as the proper one, his performance is equal to some of his best efforts, and in make-up he is admirable. He is the horse-gentleman confessed in the grotesque cut of his clothing, and the jaunty, fly-away manner it is worn, in the strut and swagger, in the elevation of the elbow, and especially in the parenthetical legs, which are in themselves a triumph of art.

Mr. Barron is so completely un-Barroned as Silky that his identity is completely lost, and it was several minutes last night before he was generally recognized. His acting of the character is throughout a very superior achievement, ranking with his best and one can hardly say too much in his praise. Sulky is not a part that affords opportunities for an actor to make himself the favorite of his audience, but it gives an actor a chance for good acting, and Mr. Burrows accepts that chance and makes the most of it. In its way his Sulky is one of the finest personations that has been seen for many a day.

“The Road to Ruin” has never been played in Boston since that year 1889, but previous to that time it had hundreds of representations and never one that was not entirely satisfac-

## THE TWO RELIABLES

tory. The year 1889 marked the new order of things, and the old successes had passed with the old players.

Mr. Burrows continued in the employ of Mr. R. M. Field while the latter controlled "Shore Acres" in New York and on the road during the seasons of 1893-1894, and he remained with that play for the twelve seasons that followed.

He has resided in Lynn for the past fifteen years, and has acted from time to time with stock companies there. This present year (1915) rounds out his *fiftieth* of actual work on the stage. He looks back to the old Boston Museum as a sort of heaven on earth, and reviews his many years in the midst of such happy surroundings with pride and gratitude.

## CHAPTER X

### “PINAFORE” DAYS

THE season of 1878 brought about what might be called the transition from the old days to the present. The marked change came when the Gilbert and Sullivan operas made their appearance, for in that year new blood was infused into the Company.

When “Pinafore” was produced, these talented newcomers, including George W. Wilson, made the opera memorable. “Pinafore” was presented for the first time in America at the Boston Museum on November 25, 1878, and took the theatergoing public by storm, with its tuneful music and the dash and go of the whole thing. It was a revelation, artistic and complete in every way, as were all the Gilbert and Sullivan operas.

## “PINAFORE” DAYS

Marie Wainwright, an actress of marked ability and great personal charm, appeared as Josephine, and proved her versatility. Her singing and acting of the rôle was a genuine surprise.

Then there were J. H. Jones and his pretty wife, Rose Temple. They were singers of ability, well equipped for comic opera. She looked like a little cherub, and was adorable in the part of Ralph Rackstraw. He played the part of Captain Corcoran with much effect.

An amusing story is told of Mr. Jones and his young wife. Rose Temple, an English girl, came to America with her sister, Bessie Temple, a well-known dancer of that day. Very soon after her arrival, she met, loved, and married J. H. Jones. Shortly after their marriage, they joined a company *en route* for California, and incidentally made it their honeymoon trip. After some days' travel, the train stopped at a remote station, Mr. Jones got off the train, and somehow wandered too far away. The

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

train started, leaving him behind, with no possible chance of connection with another train for some time.

The members of the company gathered about the little bride to offer consolation, when to their surprise she laughingly said, "My word, isn't it droll; and Jim has left his pipe." Little Rose Temple was always complacent, no matter how trying the situation.

Though many years have passed since those "Pinafore" days, yet it hardly seems possible that the stalwart young man who loomed up head and shoulders above her, with whom I met her walking in London a short time ago, could have been the little baby in arms, the pride and joy of the girl wife and mother who fascinated the audiences of "Pinafore" days.

And there was pretty Lizzie Harold! How irresistibly funny she was as the Bumboat woman. Her song of Little Buttercup was always received with storms of applause. Her best work was in slavey parts; Belinda in





Sadie Martinot as Hebe



Rose Temple as Ralph Rackstraw



Lizzie Harold as Little Buttercup



## “PINAFORE” DAYS

“Our Boys”, Topsy in “Uncle Tom’s Cabin”, always delighted the audience. She retired from the stage when she married Mr. Comley, and devoted herself to home and family.

Every one about the theater was somewhat doubtful as to the success of “Pinafore.” Even Mr. Field was uncertain about the outcome till the song “He is an Englishman”, sung by Joseph Haworth, took the audience by storm, and received encore after encore. Joseph Haworth played the part of Bill Bobstay and added greatly to the success of the opera.

Mr. Haworth was a painstaking actor and absolutely lived in his work. I remember Jack Mason jokingly declared that Haworth used to dress up pillows and play his love scenes with a “pillow lady” in the privacy of his study. However, true or not as it may be, his earnestness was praiseworthy. He was very versatile, but he excelled in tragedy. When he was in support of Mr. Richard Mansfield, he was said to surpass the star in rendition of Shakespearean

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

characters, and his performance of Hamlet might be classed among the best. He was also splendid in romantic rôles, and starred with success as Elliott Grey in "Rosedale."

I remember an incident that occurred on an opening night of a new play. Mr. Haworth and I opened the play in a scene together. The setting was a library, and what is called a box scene, which means closed in on all sides, with one door for an opening, so the actors are hidden from the view of the prompter. The scene started, and all was going well, when suddenly Mr. Haworth reeled, and whispering "I am very ill", abruptly left the stage, leaving me alone.

No one behind the scenes knew what had happened. I hoped that the prompter, realizing that there was a lull in the conversation, would come to the rescue and ring down the curtain, and I carried on the situation as best I could. There happened to be on the table one of the latest novels of that day, which fortunately I

## “PINAFORE” DAYS

had read, so to fill the gap till assistance came, I introduced a soliloquy in connection with the story. In the meantime, Mr. Haworth made a dash for an open window. The cold air revived him, and he returned and resumed the scene, the audience being quite oblivious of any unusual happening.

Joseph Haworth was the means of introducing his cousin, Miriam O’Leary, to Boston audiences. Miriam’s first appearance was in “Colleen Bawn.” She was cast for one of the guests in the ballroom scene and was given a single line to speak, “We have danced enough; ’tis nearly seven o’clock.” Cousin Joe had coached her diligently for days, and the entire O’Leary family were in a state of intense excitement till after the *début*. Miriam has said that for weeks the lines were spoken at home by the children, apropos of anything that might suggest boredom.

Cousin Joe made no mistake when he predicted a successful career for his talented rel-

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

ative, nor did it take long for that prediction to come true. Miriam O'Leary was one of the most popular actresses of her day, and played many parts well.

When Clyde Fitch's first play, "Betty's Finish", was given its first production at the Museum, Miss O'Leary proved herself an actress of unusual ability, and made the little play a success from the start. During her engagement at the Museum, she married Doctor David Collins, and has since succeeded in the rôles of wife and mother. She is devoted to her five splendid children, and the footlights and their allurements have no charm for her.

Miss Sadie Martinot appeared first on the stage of the Eagle Theater in New York, and remained there for one year. At the end of that time she went to a dramatic agency and applied for a position. She possessed a great deal of confidence, and being fully equipped with charm and beauty, she was ready to conquer the world. After assuring the dramatic

## “PINAFORE” DAYS

agent that she was fitted for any position that might be offered her, she was given the choice of two opportunities, both in Boston. One was at the Globe Theater for the rôle of Cupid in “Pippins”; the other was at the Boylston Museum on Washington Street. The latter theater offered her a larger salary and a longer engagement, so she took it.

She said she looked upon Boston as an obscure town, anyhow, and coming from the great Metropolis she was prepared to astonish New Englanders. No one was more amused at her conceit of those days than the little lady herself. She described herself as dressed in her best Sunday gown, a Christmas gift from her mother, with her full name embroidered on the buttons down her back in steel beads, a letter on each button. She was billed as appearing in a great song and dance creation, with imitations of *Mademoiselle Aimee*, singing “Pretty as a Picture.” The afterpiece in which she played the part of the wicked godmother was called “The Erl King.”

## OLD BOSTON MUSEUM DAYS

She said the great feature of her performance was a pair of magnificently embroidered tights which she brought from New York to dazzle the Hubbites. From the audience, however, those gorgeous coverings gave her limbs the appearance of being tattooed, and she was obliged to discard them after the first night.

After a short stay at the Boylston Museum, Miss Martinot was brought to the notice of Mr. R. M. Field, and joined the Museum Company in 1878, where she received splendid training and became very popular with Museum audiences. Shortly after joining the Company, she married Mr. Fred Stinson, who was then manager, under Rich and Harris, of the Howard Athenæum. She was married at the Revere House on a Sunday afternoon, and Charles Fechter, who was playing his last engagement at the Howard Athenæum, gave the little bride away. I think that was in 1879 or 1880.

She was a wonderfully pretty girl, just like a Dresden figure. Never have I seen a head



## “PINAFORE” DAYS

more daintily set on shoulders. She was an attractive actress and made the part of Hebe in “Pinafore” prominent, and was exquisite as Lady Angela in “Patience.” An unusually clever musician, I recall that one time when we were traveling on the road, the score of “Patience” was missing. Everybody concerned was in an awful state of mind, but Miss Martinot came to the rescue, and not only scored the orchestra parts, but arranged the incidental music as well.

When Mr. Dion Boucicault came to the Museum, she was selected for the Irish colleens in his plays. He gave a great deal of his personal attention to the direction of his plays, particularly to the parts of Moya Doolan in “The Shaughraun” and Eily O’Connor in the “Colleen Bawn.” At the close of his engagement, Miss Martinot joined his company and went to London. She left us so abruptly and unceremoniously that Mr. Field never forgave her, so that her connection with the Museum

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was severed for all time. We missed the dear, irresponsible child who had wandered into our ranks in her early teens and won her way into the heart of every member of the Company.

Mr. B. R. Graham as Dick Deadeye in "Pinafore" made a hit from the start. His make-up was screamingly funny, and his acting and singing very praiseworthy. Mr. Graham was particularly happy in the rôle of an adventurer, possessing *sang froid* and suavity of manner most essential for such characters. He played the villains with us, and was so true to life that he was often hissed by the audience.

He was appearing as a naughty man in "Led Astray" when this incident occurred. As smoking was not allowed in the dressing rooms, he decided to go out on the fire-escape leading off his room to enjoy a smoke. After wedging a chair in place on the fire-escape, he proceeded to make himself comfortable. The windows of the dressing rooms overlooked Court Square, and the fire-escapes ran up from the second

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story to the top, broken by very small balconies. Mr. Graham filled his pipe, lighted it, and being comfortably placed, called out to a brother actor who shared his dressing room, “Now for a dang good smoke” (a favorite expression), when the chair gave way, and he was precipitated to the floor below. Fortunately, he escaped with only a badly sprained ankle. We were horror-stricken when we heard of the accident, but with the fortitude that most actors possess under such trying conditions, he persisted in playing that night, though suffering intense agony. Mr. Graham joined the Museum Company in 1878 and was always a popular member.

In the early days at the Museum, fire-escape precautions were not so carefully regulated as they are now. At one time, when the fire inspectors were inspecting the building, they were up in the “flies”, and encountered Mr. Glessing, who was the scenic artist at the Museum for many years. They began to ex-

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plain to him the many ways to escape in case of fire. One way was to attach himself to a rope and go down hand over hand. Mr. Glessing was huge in size, and very retiring in manner, and after listening attentively, he asked, "Do I understand that in case of fire I am to manipulate that rope in this fashion (at the same time demonstrating the directions given), hand over hand?"

"That is it exactly," explained the inspector.

"Well, my dear sir, were I to try that method, I should go down heels over head."

The intrusion of the fire inspectors caused a great deal of excitement up in the "flies region" that day. Mr. Glessing had for a neighbor dear old Susy Mason, the wardrobe mistress. The wardrobe had been transferred from the depths below to the flies above, and was guarded with a jealous care by Miss Susy. The costumes in her faithful charge worn by Mr. Warren were revered and regarded by the good soul as a sacred trust. If any male

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member of the Company seemed lacking in enthusiasm over the costume Susy had selected for him from her vast stock, one might expect to hear her say: “Mr. Warren wore that coat for many years, as far back as 1857, and it was good enough for him.”

Kind-hearted Susy was quite voluble at times, and the fire-escape episode caused her much anxiety. Not for herself; as she expressed it, “There is some possible chance for escape for me, but what would become of the wardrobe and Mr. Warren’s Sir Peter Teazle costume that was made for him in —”; And then she would enumerate the number of spangles that were sewed on, every one by hand, and the quantity and quality of materials used in the making of the treasured garments.

Miss Ormond (Sadie) also superintended the wardrobe department, and was an authority on everything that pertained to costume details. Through her, one learned the proper use of footgear, from sandals to Oxford ties; the

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Scottish filibeg and sporran; the correctness of sleeves, — whether slashed or puffed; when and how to wear the large, square, upstanding ruff, also the cestus and girdle or hanging pouch. The headgear of the Grecian maiden with its three-banded fillet and the snood of the Scotch lassie were all carefully defined by her. The girl who played pages must know about doublet, trunks, and hose, and the draping of the toga. All this detail was troublesome for the beginner, but Sadie was equipped with exact knowledge. She gave us a foundation training in such matters that was never forgotten.

When Miss Ormond became Mrs. Montgomery, she retired, and we all missed her greatly. Dear old Susy Mason stayed on until the close of the Stock Company, and spent the last of her days at the Old Ladies' Home on Revere Street; but she made occasional visits to the wardrobe, and kept the garments carefully brushed until they were disposed of.

## CHAPTER XI

### FAMOUS STARS

**W**HILE the dramatic life in Boston was not entirely absorbed by the Boston Museum, yet many of the Museum actors wielded a powerful influence in their day. Just think of those men and women who interested the Boston Museum playgoers for year after year, and think what the American stage of to-day owes to some of them. And they are not by any means the only ones who owe much of their success to the training received at that theater. There are many others who became and are still famous; E. H. Sothern, Nat Goodwin, William H. Crane, Henry Dixey, Blanche Ring, John Kellerd, Thomas W. Ross, Henry Miller, — to name a few.

Our E. H. Sothern — Eddie Sothern in those

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days — was with us for a short time. He came for a good stock training. Many of his parts required more serious *thinking* than actual *speaking*. Those usually assigned to him were dumb bandits, burglars, and bold bad men. Mr. Sothern was the most bashful, diffident young man in those days I ever encountered. It was embarrassing to speak to him, he blushed so easily. A little more than twenty years old and very attractive, he won the heart of more than one young maiden in the company.

One little incident comes to my mind, which happened in a musical comedy — “Pippins” — when we were playing opposite parts. A “song and dance” was allotted to our share of the entertainment. Neither of us could sing or dance. When the music started, I don’t know where we were, but I remember the song was called “Nantasket down the Bay.” We were supposed to be lovers and very coquettish. In the dance he flicked a beautiful, gorgeous-hued, silk handkerchief. I was supposed to



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capture it and run merrily off the stage, pursued by my ardent admirer — a task not so easily performed as in the present day of Tango and the good old Fox Trot. I know I was awful — I think he was worse. Speaking of it but a short time ago, he laughingly said, “Yes, indeed, I remember how awfully bad *we* were.”

He told me of the horror of his experience on the night of his first appearance in a speaking part. It was at Abbey’s Park Theater, New York, in 1879, and I think in his father’s play, “Our American Cousin.” His duty was to carry on a trunk and make some sort of a demand in a very few words. He said when his cue came, he felt as though he were going to be shot, and when he made his entrance, his nerve failed him. He stood there absolutely dumb. Every line had escaped his mind. His father was on the stage at the time and prompted him. Young Sothern had never realized that actors spoke to each other on the stage, and

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though his father's tones were *sotto voce*, he felt disgraced and humiliated before an audience that scarcely realized his appearance. Then he took up his apprenticeship at the Boston Museum, and no doubt that apprenticeship stood him in good stead.

"Tommie" Ross (Thomas W. Ross), a Boston boy, got his training at the Boston Museum, as did also William Morris. Both are to-day in the front rank of stardom.

John Kellerd played many speechless parts with us. I recall vividly one he played with Boucicault in "The Shaughraun." I don't remember the villain's name, — Riley or Donovan perhaps. I know that I played Bidy Maddigan. The action of the play demanded that at the end of the act the peasants run up an incline, waving all sorts of murderous implements — shovels, pokers, shillalaha, pitchforks, and axes — all to wreak vengeance on the villainous head of Harvey Duff. Bidy's duty was to stand at the highest point of the incline,

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wielding an ax, but Riley, or Donovan — played by Mr. Kellerd — gained a higher point, and his pitchfork waved Bidley's ax into insignificance. Jealousy and resentment seethed within me, and when the curtain fell — well! He must have felt that I mistook him for Harvey Duff. Poor boy! He was very penitent, and soon made me realize that his enthusiasm and earnestness rather than professional discourtesy was the cause. He has since gained the highest point and retains it, as shown by his recent splendid success in Shakespearean plays.

Blanche Ring began with us, in the ranks. Her opportunities were limited at the Museum, yet the comedy spirit of her illustrious grandfather, J. H. Ring, was evident. She was what might be called a laughing girl — brimful of fun and sunshine. Her success in musical comedy came after she left us, but Boston claims Blanche Ring as its very own.

I must tell you of the Boston Museum greenroom — a long room with windows over-

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looking Court Square. There were long mirrors at each end. Over the door was framed "Trifles make perfections." There were seats on either side of the room, upholstered in green rep. The walls were painted green, and on them hung the portrait of William H. Smith (first stage manager) and E. F. Keach (second stage manager) and a call board where the castes for the coming plays were announced.

We had a fine library. Our books were contributed by authors, visiting stars, managers, and members of the Boston Museum Company. The greenroom, which is now a thing of the past, was a social living room, where we spent our time when we were not engaged on the stage. We had a call-boy in those days and were called for our different scenes.

What pleasant memories that dear old green-room recalls! The brilliant wit and interchange of ideas is never to be forgotten. I remember that Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes, William Dean Howells, and Thomas

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Russell Sullivan contributed their books to our library. It was at the Museum that I met Longfellow, and also Doctor Holmes. Doctor Holmes was fascinated with the play of "Little Lord Fauntleroy" and praised very highly Elsie Leslie in the part.

A pleasing incident is pictured in my mind in relation to Doctor Holmes. My baby daughter insisted upon having my pocketbook, and when I took out its contents and gave her the empty purse, she gave way to her disgust very audibly. Doctor Holmes, who was present at the time, said, "Oh, don't cry, little girl. There are many grown-ups disgusted over empty pocketbooks." She yelled her disapproval of his interference, whereupon he took her in his arms and in his kindly way soothed her into good nature. He was delightful to meet, and we missed him when "Little Lord Fauntleroy" came to an end. A story is told that when Doctor Holmes started to practice and the first announcement was printed, he

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said he wished he might add, "All small fevers gratefully received."

Our visiting stars, as they would come and go, one by one, gave to our Company an attractiveness and fresh interest. We were like one big family, we anticipated their coming and missed them when they were gone. We all had our favorite stars, whom we looked forward to with much pleasure.

Edwin Booth, serious, kind, and gentle, — with what pleasure we looked forward to his visits! He was most patient and courteous. I remember an incident that occurred when he played "Richelieu" with us. Several Harvard students were suping in the play, and one young man constantly watched Mr. Booth from the wings. After the curse scene — his most strenuous scene in the play — Mr. Booth would come off the stage exhausted, and followed by his valet holding up his velvet robes, would go to his dressing room and sink into a big easy chair, almost breathless. One night the

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young man, who had been watching him with intense interest — almost in a hypnotic state — followed him closely to his dressing room, and after the door had closed, knocked boldly and said to the valet: “May I be permitted to speak to Mr. Booth?”

Mr. Booth, always courteous, answered from within: “Certainly, young man. What can I do for you?”

“Mr. Booth, will you kindly tell me how you do that cough? I have watched for several nights, and I can’t quite get it.”

“Well, young man, how would you do it?”

The young man proceeded to give his cough with the best possible effect.

Mr. Booth said: “Now, what can you hope for, better than that?”

Another story in connection with Mr. Booth is told of our old doorkeeper Pat. He was an inveterate smoker, and the actors kept him pretty well supplied with cigars. He would invariably make some remark to remind the

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actor that a cigar would be acceptable, such as "By George, you smoke fine cigars," or "A whiff of your cigar is as good as a smoke," which would invariably bring forth the desired article. One day he said to Mr. Booth, in a very reminiscent way: "Ah, Mr. Booth, I knew your father very well. I remember, too, that he never passed this door without giving me a good, big cigar." Mr. Booth replied in his quiet way: "My dear man, it must have been a very bad one."

I was very young when I was cast to play the Duchess of York, his mother, in "Richard III." I was inexperienced, and in consequence, very nervous. I remember in that play I had my first real stage fright. Stage fright is like nothing else in the world. You are perfectly sane, when all of a sudden, as if seized with an electric shock, your knees and toes wriggle with no power of control, and your mind becomes a blank. But I was fortunate in being able to overcome it. Mr. Booth was patient



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and gentle, and each night, while waiting for our cue to go on the stage, he would say: "Courage, little mother! Don't forget to curse your cruel son loud and bitterly to-night!"

I remember, too, how near I came to ruining a scene in "The Fool's Revenge." I played the Duenna, and the first night I made a wrong exit. Crossing at the back of the stage and passing a window that was supposed to be high up, to the audience I appeared to be walking over the roofs of houses, chimneys, and tree tops. Of course the audience enjoyed it very much. Poor Mr. Booth was on the stage at the time playing a serious scene. 'Tis needless to say I kept out of his way that evening. I did not apologize then; I thought it wiser not to.

He was very fond of children. My little girl interested him very much, and she was very fond of him. She called him "Mr. Boot." That amused him so much that he'd try in every possible way to get her to say it, and

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would play hide and seek with her and let her find him, while she shrieked: "Oh, Mr. Boot!" He would often hold her in his lap while he directed the rehearsal.

I can't help thinking how much simpler the lives of actors were in those days. Mr. Booth's life was a noble example, and as our critic, Mr. H. A. Clapp, has said: "The one appalling disaster and sorrow of his experience he bore with such patience and magnanimity as presently reconquered the favor of a shaken and bewildered nation. The soul of Edwin Booth—like the Art of Edwin Booth—was of the truly heroic type." I am very grateful to have known him. I feel that Edwin Booth is still unapproached as a tragedian.

On the other hand stands Dion Boucicault. How we dreaded his return! He was a martinet, but as stage director he was invaluable. He had a way of changing his ideas at each rehearsal, and while they were always good, they were somewhat perplexing. I re-

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member once, when uncertain just where to go on the stage, I went where he had planned an imaginary table. He shrieked: "Are you going to walk over that table?"

I was confused and stepped aside quickly.

"Here, here, don't run about like a hen with its head cut off!"

It was his delight to get the women of the company confused to the extent of shedding bitter tears. It is told of him that a member of his company who was painstaking, but whom Mr. Boucicault had selected as a special target to shoot at, ventured to say, when the director reprimanded him for some business on the stage: "Mr. Boucicault, I have written the directions as you gave them to me yesterday."

"Ah!" said Boucicault in his Dublin brogue and sweetest manner, "yesterday, certainly, my boy, I told you to do it that way, but the world is just twenty-four hours older, and we have advanced that much; so do it this way to-day."

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I'll never forget how scared I was the first time Boucicault came to the theater. I was to play Katty Walsh in "Arrah-na-Pogue." She dances an Irish breakdown on a barn floor. I had a partner who was a fine dancer, but I had never done anything of the kind, and didn't have the courage to say I couldn't do it. Anyway, when the music struck up, I jumped on the board, and with my hands on my hips danced as naturally as you please. Boucicault was delighted and told my partner to follow me.

Some one said to him once: "Mr. Boucicault, you have written many plays. Which do you consider your best play?"

"Well, my first best play was 'London Assurance,' and the next best one is the one I am now writing."

Mr. Boucicault was a brilliant conversationalist and a charming host, often serving tea in his dressing room to a favored few. He traveled with a tea-basket, provided with a



Richard Mansfield



Edwin Booth



Dion Boucicault



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choice brand of tea. He was a curious type of man to look upon, with glittering eyes, scrubby moustache, and a fringe of hair that was dyed very black. He always wore his coat collar turned up and seemed cold, bilious, and sarcastic. The most prolific writer of his time, he is said to be the author of more than three hundred and fifty plays — original adaptations and translations. He made a great deal of money, but died a poor man.

Richard Mansfield made his first appearance as a star before a Boston public at the Boston Museum in 1885, as Baron Chevrial in “Parisian Romance”, supported by the Museum Stock Company. The rôle of Baron Chevrial was made possible for him by the declination of J. H. Stoddart to play the part and gained for him almost instantaneous recognition of his ability.

An incident that is impressed on my mind occurred the second night of the play. Miss Annie Clarke, who played the part of Madame

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D'Targy, had been ill, but with the usual persistence of the player who can go on the stage and play while suffering intense physical agony, she got through the first performance; but the next night, after her arrival at the theater, she was obliged to succumb.

I was regarded as a quick study and was often called upon to play parts at short notice. That night on my way to the theater with my husband (we were playing small parts and our duties did not begin till the second act), we noticed one of the boys of the Company rushing toward us, saying excitedly: "Oh, Miss Ryan, they are waiting for you at the theater. Miss Clarke is ill, and you are to play the part." It happened to be April 1st, so I said, "Oh, yes, I know. April Fool joke," but my ever conscientious husband insisted that we make all possible haste. The German doorkeeper greeted us with: "Vat you do? Vat you do? Don't you know dot you play Miss Clarke to-night?" and sure



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enough, there were Mr. Seymour and Mr. Mansfield anxiously awaiting me.

There was no time for study. I was rushed into Miss Clarke's dressing room and the manuscript thrust into my hand. The adjustment of a costume was a problem. Dear Annie Clarke was tall and stately — I quite the reverse. However, the dressing maid, after much ingenuity, accomplished the deed. With a gray wig and beautiful lace draperies that covered a multitude of pins, I looked a perfect lady. The part! Oh, my! Oh, my! Longer than the moral law. Never had I encountered so many French names or words as were in the lines of Madame D'Targy. I remember a very affecting scene with my son, Henry D'Targy, played by John Mason. He embraced me very tenderly, while I wept on his manly chest, pleading with him to save the family honor, — all the while struggling to read the lines of the part over his shoulder. The audience applauded me, and encouragement always meant

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so much to me that after my first exit, I “winged” the part; to “wing” a part in stage parlance means studying the lines between the scenes and acts.

After the play, Mr. Mansfield congratulated me on getting through so well. He said Miss Clarke would not be able to play for several days and advised me to be ready to play the rest of the week. The next day brought forth a *matinée*, so I studied long into the night and prepared a fitting costume. I felt that my opportunity had come, but, alas! the path of the understudy is not bordered with roses, and I found on my arrival that Miss Clarke had recovered sufficiently to play. I am conscious even now how keenly I felt the insincerity of my solicitous inquiries and tender anxiety.

“Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” was produced at the Museum for the first time on any stage, May 10, 1887. I doubt if any actor drew a more brilliant and representative audience. It

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was a veritable Boston Museum first night. What a wonderful performance Mansfield gave of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"! No one who was present will ever forget the awful moment when Mr. Hyde's malignant, hideous face appeared at the window, and another scene when Doctor Jekyll appears at the door, holding a light over his head, directly after Mr. Hyde leaves Mr. Utterson in the dark street. I played Mrs. Lanyon in the play, and while I was familiar with the details of the illusion, yet I was horrified at every performance.

My first really trying experience with Mr. Mansfield was in his play "Monsieur", produced at the Museum for the first time. He had been rehearsing it for weeks and was to play a supplementary season with his own company at the Boston Museum at the close of our regular season. On the Saturday before the Monday night opening, Mrs. Germon, who was to play, folded her tent like the Arab and quietly stole away, leaving Mr. Mansfield in the

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lurch. She left Boston, bag and baggage, and all efforts to locate her failed.

As our season was closed, I was available, so he asked me to play the part. I didn't enjoy the idea of appearing at such a great disadvantage. (It was then late on Saturday night.) However, after considerable difference of opinion as to salary — the usual haggling — I gained my point and accepted the position. I shall never forget the difficulties I encountered. I sat up all night studying and rehearsed the next morning. I was dazed. Ordinarily it was not difficult to study a part at short notice, but on that occasion I could not retain a sentence. I knew the lines at home, but when I rehearsed with Mansfield, every word left me. I was truly scared. The same evening we had another rehearsal at the Hotel Thorndike, where Mr. Mansfield always stopped in those days, as no rehearsals or performances were permitted at the Museum on Sundays. Mr. Mansfield had arranged a supper for the company after

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the rehearsal, but, alas! I hurried home to resume my studying. The supper party was a gay one. Mansfield was a genial host and spared no personal exertion to entertain his guests.

The next and last rehearsal on Monday found me almost as hopeless. Dressmakers were on hand to make my costumes under Mr. Mansfield's direction, the smallest detail being of the greatest importance, but I could not remember the rôle. Not until the rise of the curtain for the first act did I recover from my nervousness. I was discovered and spoke the first line, and never before or since have I been so perfectly at ease. I positively enjoyed playing the part. I think deadly fear of the author had taken possession of me.

The play was a mild success and remained in his repertoire for some time. I went to New York and played during the summer, and he offered me an engagement to go abroad with him. But, fortunately for me, I was already engaged at the Museum.

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I had many amusing experiences with Mr. Mansfield, some pleasant and some unpleasant, but I never knew him to be resentful or malicious. He was continually discharging some member of his company and engaging him over again. He suffered a great deal from acute indigestion and during these periods was more easily annoyed. The slightest noise would send him off in a tantrum. I remember that while playing at the Madison Square Theater, the portable stage was somewhat squeaky and rickety, causing him much annoyance at times. In the play of "Prince Karl" I had to run on into his arms, and the stage fairly lurched. He was furious and rushed out of the theater, and the rehearsal was dismissed, of course. I was humiliated because my *avoirdupois* was the real cause. That night, when I arrived at the theater, I found a box of bonbons on my dressing table, with a card on which was written "Forgive and be forgiven," signed "Mansfield."

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Madame Janauschek, when she played at the Museum, impressed me in a wonderful way. She was very powerful and magnetic. Those lustrous, speaking eyes, that reflected every emotion of the character she portrayed, fascinated me. I shall never forget the wonderful expression on that Slavonic face with its high cheekbones, low brow, and firm jaw. A Bohemian woman of strange temperament and fire, her superb art held her audience at will.

I have never witnessed a more thrilling performance than her acting of the dual rôles, Lady Dedlock and Hortense in "Bleak House", in which I played her daughter. She was very nervous on that opening night. In one of the scenes with her, I was kneeling at her feet, weeping bitterly, with my head in her lap. I remember vividly that while soothing and stroking my head, she encountered a hairpin, whereupon she vigorously lacerated my scalp. It remained a tender memory for some time.

I was so fascinated by her acting, however,

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that I felt I must show my appreciation, so the next morning after the hairpin episode, I went to the florist's shop and sent her some roses, with card inclosed, "From an adoring daughter who is willing to suffer at your feet." That night I hoped for some recognition, but received not a sign. Possibly there was some mistake. At any rate, I carefully removed my hairpins. Madame Janauschek loved to visit cemeteries. She anticipated these visits with great pleasure, and said she had visited all the noted graveyards in Europe and Egypt.

It is said of her that in her most needful times she was offered an engagement in vaudeville at a remunerative salary. She spurned it with lofty scorn and said: "I have been a king's favorite tragedienne; I will never be a top-liner in a variety show." Poor dear! She escaped poverty only through the humanity of her friends and the theatrical profession.

Modjeska was delightful, with a charming personality! Her first appearance in Boston



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was at the Museum in "Adrienne Lecouvreur." She was very nervous on the opening night and in making her entrance fell over the doorsill, but the audience greeted her so kindly, that she soon recovered and gave a brilliant performance. Her engagement was most successful.

We looked forward to an engagement with Fanny Davenport with pleasure. She was wholesome and fine, an actress of remarkable versatility. I adored her as Beatrice in "Much Ado About Nothing", in which her real personality shone forth. Her great successes were in "Fedora", "La Tosca", and "Gismonda."

Lester Wallack was a breezy, romantic personality off the stage as well as on, and we hailed his coming with delight. He directed his own plays, and while outlining the business for the players, he would act every part in the play. The young woman who couldn't play the part of Rosa Leigh in "Rosedale" under his direction was indeed devoid of dramatic sense. I never knew him to lose his temper; he was

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courteous and encouraging to every member of the Company. We needed encouragement too, as we were often limited as to time, being obliged to put on plays with but one or two rehearsals with our stars.

Speaking of Lester Wallack recalls Harry Montague, an adored matinée idol of that day. He was splendid in the "Romance of a Poor Young Man", and his starring engagement with us in 1876 was a brilliant success. We were grieved to hear of his death in 1878, the season we expected him for a return engagement. He died at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco after a short illness that was supposed to be merely a cold. It is sad to think of the handsome youth, adored in life, dead among strangers, without a relative near. Theatrical friends — ever loyal — attended to every detail as a labor of love.

Lawrence Barrett played occasional star engagements with us. I was very much impressed by his acting in "The Man o' Airlie",

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in which he played the part of Jamie Harebell, with a rare tenderness not shown in his other characters. One scene comes to my mind clearly. The peasants are singing outside and by the window stands Jamie Harebell — the kindest face I ever saw — with tears streaming down his cheeks, his whole frame convulsed with real feeling as he listens to the peasants singing his praises :

“Oh there upon yon heather hill,  
Where footfalls come but rarely,  
There dwells a man they think of still,  
There dwells the Man o’ Airlie.

“He wore a coat of Hodden Gray,  
His hands were hard with labor,  
But still he had a homely way  
Of standing by his neighbor.”

I was a peasant, and each night I sang in the chorus of that play, my nose was red with weeping, and my eyes besmeared with cosmetic. Mr. Barrett was regarded as being unapproachable, but I always found him courteous. He was somewhat exclusive, but he was a close

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student, entirely engrossed in his art — an actor who had to fight for every scrap of his existence against every hardship and handicap imaginable. He is enthroned in my mind as a devoted husband and father, an intellectual actor, and a kind gentleman.

Sol Smith Russell was a very agreeable star. "Edgewood Folks", "Peaceful Valley", and "A Poor Relation" came to us usually at the close of our regular dramatic season and served as a mild spring tonic — effervescent and refreshing. Mr. Russell was more often taken for a clergyman than an actor. My husband used to tell an amusing story of an incident that happened when we were living at Martha's Vineyard. Mr. Russell came down to spend Saturday and Sunday with us, and incidentally to get in a fishing trip with my husband. Early on the Sabbath morning they both started off, equipped for the trip. The natives somehow regarded Mr. Russell as a minister, and were very much shocked.

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One of the native fishermen who had charge of the fishing trip learned that they were actors, and after watching Mr. Russell for some time curiously, said: "Say, are you one of them fellows that does jimcracks on the stage? I wish you would come up to the house sometime and kickup some of your kididoes for us. Mother'd like it fust rate." (Mr. Russell introduced these lines in the play of "Peaceful Valley", and they never failed to please the audience.) When the men got on shore (the trip had been somewhat squally), they were wet and chilled, but had provided themselves with a stimulant and offered the old fellow a drink. The old man hesitated for a moment and said, "If you fellows will wait till I go up to the house and get a vial, I'll take some. It'll come handy to have in the house in the winter time."

Once, while waiting at the station with Mr. Russell, an old gentleman who had been watching him closely, suddenly rushed forward, and shaking Mr. Russell's hand vigorously, said,

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“By George, I’d like to see you play to-night, but unfortunately I saw you the last time you were here.”

The star or successful actor is regarded a public servant off the stage as well as behind the footlights. The romance and glamour which surround him never fail to interest the outsider, who feels a sort of privilege to intrude upon his privacy. Subjects of the most intimate nature are advanced without a qualm. On one of our traveling tours, I heard a man say to Mr. Warren, “Why in the world, Warren, do they send a man of your age about the country? Can’t they see that they are killing the goose that is laying the golden egg?” Dear Mr. Warren, who never lost the spirit of youth, was ready with a reply. I cannot remember accurately just what he said, but I am quite sure the man was subdued.

Age is the usual topic introduced, generally somewhat in this fashion. “Well, well, is it possible that you’re still going? How much

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longer do you expect to act? I declare, you don't look a day older than I do. Do you know my first recollection of a theater was when I was taken there by my nurse on a half-price ticket to see a play that you were in. Now, what was the name of that play? I wonder if you remember. I know somebody jumped out of the window. Goodness me! It was years and years ago." After regarding your chatty friend, you feel that nature indeed has been kind to you.

Mr. Warren intensely disliked publicity. I shall never forget his embarrassment on an occasion when he invited a young lady and myself to hear the phonograph at Horticultural Hall when it was first introduced to Boston audiences. The young lady was very pretty and popular, and always attracted attention. She lingered on her way out in the corridor to draw on her glove. Quite a number of people gathered about and insisted on shaking hands with Mr. Warren, and it was some time before

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he could disengage himself from the curious crowd.

Stars and actors of the earlier days usually avoided publicity, but I am quite sure that the old Boston Museum, its plays and players, formed a large part of the conversation over the teacups of Boston for more than half a century.



## CHAPTER XII

### THE YOUNGER GENERATION

**T**HE decade between 1873 and 1883 saw the Boston Museum at the zenith of its greatness. Never before or since has such a coterie of players graced an American stage. Here were produced the works of Shakespeare, Sheridan, Goldsmith, Bulwer-Lytton, Taylor, Robertson, the Morton farces, and the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. These plays demanded actors possessing dramatic fire, imagination, and intelligence; actors who could play in tragedy and farce in the same night; actors capable of representing historic traits, elegant manners, with pure diction and well-carried costumes. All this was the result of a broad experience and a sound, fundamental training.

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The last decade from 1883 to 1893 brought in a younger generation of players: Viola Allen, Eben Plympton, Edgar L. Davenport, H. M. Pitt, Fanny Addison Pitt, W. F. Owen, George C. Boniface, Frazer Coulter, Leslie Allen, Alfred Hudson, J. B. Booth, C. P. Flockton, Edwin Arden, E. H. Vanderfelt, Evelyn Campbell, Blanche Thompson, Maida Craigin, Forrest Robinson, Isabelle Evesson, E. A. MacDowell, Henry Miller and his wife, Fanny Reeves, Charles Dade, Arthur Forrest, Thomas L. Coleman, John Kellerd, Edwin Holt, Arthur Falkland, Blanche Ring, Louise Jordan, Russ Whytal, Sol Smith Russell, Frank Burbeck, Charles Abbe, Lillian Hadley, George Purdy, Helen Dayne, Grace Atwell, Fred Sydney, William Melbourne (Melbourne MacDowell), Gertrude Blanchard, Willis Grainger, Franklin Hallett, Howard Gould, Sidney Booth, Mary Hampton, Marie Burress, Robert Edeson, Edward E. Rose, Edward Wade, Ethelyn Friend, Ida Glenn, Ella Hugh



### The Boston Museum Stock Company, 1889 1890

Standing: Thos. L. Coleman, John Mason, Lillian Hadley, Edgar L. Davenport, Errol Dunbar, Chas. S. Abbe, James Burrows, Marian Hebron  
 Kate Ryan, Junius B. Booth,  
 Seated: Fannie Addison Pitt, Emma Sheridan, Geo. C. Boniface, Jas. R. Pitman, H. M. Pitt, R. M. Field, Annie M. Clarke, Miriam O'Leary  
 Geo. W. Wilson, Evelyn Campbell,



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Wood, Kenneth Lee, Nat Hartwig, Percy Bowles, Harry Courtney, Alice Livingston, Morton Payne, and Mary Hebron.

Mr. Seymour's coming in 1879 brought about some advanced changes in stage management. His methods represented the best of the old and the best of the new. In his hands, the claims of traditions were not neglected, nor was the past allowed to obscure modern methods. He realized the importance of his position, and was faithful to his duties. I recall very clearly Mr. Seymour's first rehearsal. He was youthful in appearance for the position of stage manager. His predecessors were older men. I think he was about twenty-five years old and very good-looking, and I remember that the young ladies of the Company were in a flutter of delight, and many little tricks were practiced to attract the attention of the young stage manager, one girl even going so far as to feign a sprained ankle. He was extremely polite, but hardly as sympathetic as she hoped.

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A real feminine outbreak occurred in the play of the "Two Orphans." We were rehearsing the Convent Scene, and many young girls were on, as there are numberless small parts. Sadie Martinot, who was rehearsing the part of Marianne, started the girls to giggling, and we became hysterical. It was a trying situation for the young stage manager. At first he was nice; then, failing to subdue us, he became very severe. That caused us to be all the more hysterical. Finally he was obliged to dismiss the rehearsal until we regained our composure, but all through that morning we were difficult to manage; anything and everything seemed ludicrous. One of the girls reprimanded us, saying, "It's a shame to make it so hard for the new stage manager." That thoughtful girl happened to be Miss May Davenport, who became Mrs. Seymour later.

I was reckoned with the good for promptness and punctuality, but helpless in restraining

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mirth on the stage. One incident is brought to my mind in connection with Mr. Seymour. It was in the play of "Topsy Turvy", written by Dion Boucicault. After being played at the Museum with some success, it was sent on tour and we opened in Portland, Maine. Mr. John Mason, who played the leading part, through some mistake missed the train from Boston, and Mr. Seymour went on in his place at short notice. He was obliged to wear a negligee costume belonging to Mr. Mason, which was extremely ill-fitting. Mr. Seymour was slight and dapper in those days, and Mason was big and broad-shouldered. I was playing the part of a gushing widow infatuated with the young man (played by Seymour), and when I came on the stage and saw my new lover in an ill-fitting fatigue jacket with sleeves much too long and trousers to match, I couldn't speak with laughter. I could only see our fastidious stage manager in ill-fitting clothes. Fortunately we were playing a broad comedy scene, and my mirth could

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be disguised in the lines of the play. I never explained to Mr. Seymour, but I remember his manner was sympathetic, and I presume he regarded my laughter as a feminine weakness.

Another trying situation occurred in a scene with Mr. Alfred Hudson in the play of "Nerves" in which he played my husband. While rehearsing the part one day, he said, "I am in a dilemma about a hat for this character." George Purdy, our orchestra leader, replied, "I can lend you a hat, Al", and on the evening Mr. Hudson appeared with the hat which was somewhat small but not noticeably so to an audience. He had ridiculed his appearance by putting it on in various ways and striking comic attitudes for our amusement in the greenroom. When he appeared before me as a serious, dignified husband, I was convulsed, and nothing but the good fortune that I was playing a nervous, hysterical wife saved the situation.

I was heartily ashamed of myself, for there existed a scrupulous regard for professional





John Mason



William Seymour



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etiquette in those days. The most serious breach was to show an actor up on the stage or ridicule any mishap before an audience. It was a rather trying situation though, when an eyebrow became dislodged or a pretty nose distorted, or your lover had lost part of his beautiful moustache in an ardent love-making scene, to remain unswerved, even in the good old days.

The season of 1879 was indeed an interesting one because of the other newcomers, — John Mason, May Davenport, Mary Shaw, and Alice Carle.

Miss May Davenport comes to my mind as a charming type of young womanhood, sweet, pretty, and demure. I remember she wore gray gowns and violets. She married our attractive young stage manager in January of 1882.

Mary Shaw made her *début* about the same time. Her career was brilliant from the start. I shall not attempt to eulogize her; her work

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on the stage has already shown her worth in her chosen profession. Her sister Peggy (Evelyn Shaw) was also with us for a short time. Dear Peggy, always brimful of humor and wit! She left us all too soon.

Alice Carle — a sweet singer from Maine — brings up pleasant memories. I am not clear as to her acting ability, but I am certain that she had an unusual contralto voice and made a marked success in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. She was a girl of sunny disposition and wholesome personality.

John Mason first appeared with us as Careless in "The School for Scandal", and made a good impression from the start. He had a pleasing baritone voice, and his singing of the toast song was heartily applauded. He had studied singing in Italy, and just after a summer vacation at the Isles of Shoals, "Handsome Jack" — as he was called in those days — joined our ranks. He was a stunning-looking, athletic type of manhood, and was generally

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accompanied by his mother. She was devoted to her two boys — Jack and Lowell Mason. I remember that many young girls were very attentive to Mrs. Mason, though somewhat disappointed if Jack were not also in evidence.

Jack was always up to some sort of mischief. Our old stage doorkeeper, Louis Bohner, was the butt for many of his boyish pranks. Louis had been an old soldier who carried his medals and scars in evidence. He had also been a brave soldier, and seemed to resent the reign of peace. He guarded the stage door like a sentinel, and was ever ready with war anecdotes. Louis's duty was also to guard the mail-box and distribute mail and packages to the Company. He could always inform you in advance where the mail was postmarked.

He was devoted to Mr. Mason whose mail claimed his special attention. On handing him a letter he would usually say, "Das ist some letter, Mr. Mason: I don't know vat iss in it," eying Mason curiously the while. On one

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of those occasions, as Louis turned his back, Jack dropped a huge torpedo. The poor old German jumped into the air, shrieking: "Da man vat do das, iss a liar." After that Jack would taunt him for being a coward, afraid of a toy torpedo, and beg him to lay aside his medals. All this chaff would bring forth from Louis incidents of shot and shell and brave acts in war times, told in an excitable manner, and with an accent almost unintelligible. All this was great fun for Jack, who would finally toss the old fellow a cigar, when all would be forgotten and forgiven.

Mr. Mason remained a member of the Company for some years, taking leading rôles and rapidly becoming one of our most popular actors. He left us and played for a time in New York, then returned to the Museum again for a revival of the old comedies. Mr. E. H. Vanderfelt, an English actor, had been engaged as leading man, but gave up the engagement in the middle of the season. He found a constant

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change of bill and the studying of new parts too strenuous, and Mr. Mason returned to take his place, but not for long. He had a falling out with the management and departed abruptly, leaving the Museum without a leading man. A young actor who had made himself quite popular, Mr. Erroll Dunbar, filled the gap until arrangements were made with Mr. Eben Plympton.

Mr. Plympton was a spirited actor, having had a wide range of experience, and was especially fine in the old English comedies. He had played those characters the season before. Mr. Field valued his work, and when the position of leading man was open, Mr. Plympton was selected.

There were many rumors that the breach between Mr. Mason and Mr. Field was adjusted, and that Mr. Mason might have returned had he been willing to play for his old salary, but in the meantime he had been to London, made a success there in "The Idler",

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and in consequence felt that his services were more valuable. It was said that Mr. Field would make no advance from the former salary, and Mr. Mason said: "The trouble is, Mr. Field, I have grown up in your theater and had the misfortune to go to you at twenty dollars a week. The least salary that I had expected you would offer me would be the amount that I could draw at one *matinée* each week." Mr. Field was obdurate, and so ended the Mason-Field controversy.

Mr. Mason had in mind, too, at that time, a plan to star, and no one could deny that he had superior equipment for starring if he chose to pursue his professional career in that direction. He appeared as Henry Spreadbrow in "Sweethearts", by W. S. Gilbert, for Miss Clarke's benefit on Thursday afternoon, May 26, 1892, and that was his last appearance on the Boston Museum stage. What a glad greeting awaited him! Every man from the stage gave him a cordial grip, and the women all adored him.



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The audience outdid themselves and extended to their old favorite a welcome that shook the roof of the playhouse.

Jack Mason has never outgrown those dear old Museum days. He said to me but a short time ago, "You know I always stop at the old Parker House when I am in Boston. I can see the Museum from my windows, and I often stand on the corner by Kings Chapel and the old burying-ground and look across the street where the Tremont House used to be, where my mother and I lived so happily. Then I saunter down by the old Museum and stop at what used to be the foot of the stairs leading up to the stage entrance, and it seems hard to believe that it has all passed out."

That old location is entirely changed. Sullivan's Drug Store was on the corner that Houghton and Dutton's store now occupies. Next door was Galvin's flower shop. On the opposite corner was the old Tremont House, and Papanti's Dancing Academy, where

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Boston's most exclusive beaux and belles tripped the light fantastic, was directly opposite the Museum. Not far away on Tremont Street was Copeland's Ice-cream Parlor, a popular meeting-place for the youngsters as well as the grown-ups. Across the way were Atwood's Chop House and Resteaux's Drug Store — familiar haunts for actors. Remick's Gem Shop, next door to the Museum, was a fascinating place, where my husband and I often stopped to admire the collections of precious gems.

Jack Mason has ever been loyal to the old location "where we used to be so happy in days of yore." He has made rapid strides in his profession, and is to-day doing his best work. I feel that the real stock training he got at the Boston Museum, with its intellectual background, has helped to make him the intelligent actor he is to-day.

Elizabeth Robins, a Southern girl still in her teens when she joined us in 1883, was an in-

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teresting member of the Company. She showed decided promise and was able to get a splendid training in all kinds of parts. She made a strong impression when she played Donna Casilda in "Ruy Blas" and Blanche in "The Iron Chest." After two seasons with us, she left and joined the Edwin Booth Company, where her real chance came. While at the Boston Museum, she married George R. Parke, a promising young actor, whose end was tragic and untimely. After the death of her husband, she went to Norway and there she remained some time with Mrs. Ole Bull. During that time she made her study of the great Norwegian dramatist, and later aroused the attention of London playgoers and critics in Ibsen's heroines. She has since become celebrated as a novelist.

Miss Helen Dayne, whose resemblance to Sadie Martinot was quite remarkable, came just after Miss Martinot's sudden disappearance, and in a very short time won a place for

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herself in the hearts of Bostonians, as well as in the heart of our orchestra leader — George Purdy — whom she married. They both remained in the Company several seasons and were valuable members.

Charles Smith Abbe, a stage-struck boy, appeared as a super in "Romany Rye", in 1882. After a season of indefinite (super) work, he was engaged as a regular member of the Company at the magnificent sum of three dollars a week. He was given small parts to play, but in a very short time he attracted the attention of the management and public by his playing of these "bits." He was cast to play Osric in "Hamlet" in support of Edwin Booth, and so attracted the attention of the star that the following season he became a member of Mr. Booth's Company.

In 1890 we find him back at the Museum, a full-fledged actor. His first real hit after his return was as Christopher Dabney in "All the Comforts of Home." A few of his numerous

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successes were Bulger in "Sweet Lavender", Joskins in "New Lamps for Old", and Ike Johnson in "Hands Across the Sea." Mr. Abbe has always kept up his interest in painting — a study he had taken up before his stage career — and his pictures of Warren and Jefferson are eagerly sought by collectors. Mr. Abbe was a member of the Museum Company for seven seasons.

George A. Schiller also graduated from the super ranks, and in a short time developed into a clever comedian. He surprised us all when he got his first chance in musical comedy, and is to-day a leader in that line. Many of the stars of our American stage were graduates from that old Boston Museum super room.

Among the attractive young women was Georgia Tyler, a prim little schoolma'am in her country town, who came from Greenfield to Boston to seek fame and fortune on the Boston Museum stage. She was a strikingly handsome girl and, strange to say, hags and

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witches fell to her lot to portray, but she was very ambitious and glad to play any part, however small or unpleasant. When "Little Em'ly" was produced, she was cast for the part of Rosa Dartle. She made a pronounced success in the character and ever after, when there was a villainess in a play, she was selected. Her excellent work will be remembered. In that caste, Frank Burbeck played Steerforth, the handsome, polished villain, to the life.

Miss Norah Bartlett came to us from Portsmouth. Attractive and distinguished in appearance, she was very much in earnest, and showed a great deal of promise, but her stage career was a short one, and somehow she never really seemed one of us. She was always accompanied by an enthusiastic mother, whom I remember very pleasantly.

Boyd Putman, a delightful young actor, faultless in dress and manner, struggled diligently for the position he attained at the Museum through his painstaking and conscientious efforts.

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Edgar L. Davenport joined the company in 1887, and remained at the Museum five seasons. He made his first appearance in the part of Robert Van Der Veer in "The Dominie's Daughter." That play brings to my mind June Booth, son of Agnes Booth and brother of Sidney Booth, who was also with us, both boys doing excellent work. "The Dominie's Daughter" is tinged with sadness in my mind, as Mrs. Vincent's last part was the Dominie's wife.

The last decade of the Museum reign from 1883 to 1893 brought in a new generation of players, many of whom had already won distinction. Miss Viola Allen assumed the position of leading woman in 1888, when scarcely out of her teens. She made a delightful impression as Dearest in "Little Lord Fauntleroy", with Elsie Leslie as the little lord. Her father, Leslie Allen, was also with us that year — a sterling old actor who had been playing many seasons at the Boston Theater previous to coming to us.

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The Allen family were delightfully domestic. Mrs. Allen, who had also been a member of the Boston Theater Company, never played with us, but she was her daughter's constant companion. She made Viola's costumes, and they were ideally picturesque and correct. She was a devoted mother and housewife, and one always knew where to find a good pattern or a cooking receipt and incidentally the best of advice when needed. We were neighbors for a time, and I missed the Allens when they left their cozy little house on Rutland Street.

Eben Plympton, a forceful, spirited actor, became leading man when John Mason departed abruptly, but did not remain long. He found the duties strenuous, and complained of the hard work, often saying, "This is worse than working in a treadmill." He was a splendid actor, though somewhat excitable at times — very temperamental but always interesting.

Miss Emma V. Sheridan filled the position of





Miriam O'Leary



Joseph Haworth



Marie Burress



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leading lady very creditably for some time. During her engagement she became Mrs. Frye.

Mary Hampton and Marie Burress might be called alternate leading ladies. They were both handsome, talented young women of opposite types. Miss Hampton was a brilliant brunette — Miss Burress a beautiful blonde. Robert Edeson was a worthy foil as leading man.

These young leading men and women were quite equal to the requirements, but the character of plays had changed. Romantic drama and melodrama became very much in evidence. "Harbor Lights", "Bells of Haslemere", "Hands Across the Sea", these plays running seventeen weeks each, "English Rose", and "Ye Airlie Trouble" were successful productions. Miss Evelyn Campbell gave a charming portrayal of the English Rose. Marie Burress made her greatest success in the play of "Ye Airlie Trouble."

"Harbor Lights" opened the season of 1886 at the Boston Museum. The year and play

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are impressed on my mind because of many incidents connected with it. My husband and myself and little daughter went abroad that year for the first time, for a summer vacation. Going to Europe was not as general as it is to-day. Our plans for our holiday were varied and pleasant. There was the weekly saving for the trip, studies in French and German, careful examination of guidebooks, European maps, etc.

Miss Annie Clarke and her mother had been over the summer before, and they advised us how to plan our trip. Miss Clarke said, "Never will another trip be as nice as the first one", and truly it is so.

Well, the time arrived for our departure, and we were an exuberant trio! My little daughter (very tiny) was arrayed in a long frieze ulster, with a field glass strapped over her shoulder and a little Turkish fez on her head, and my husband and myself were in traveling regalia that would to-day seem unusual at

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least. We embarked very much like the Micawbers, with the good wishes of almost every member of the Company, as our ship sailed 'mid cheers and waving of handkerchiefs.

Each and every one sent a ship letter, with a special message inclosed. The message was a commission. "Harbor Lights" was to be produced at the Boston Museum for the first time in America, and was to be the opening bill of the coming season. It was being played in London, and I was commissioned to take note of the play, costumes, and stage business of each individual character. I was so familiar with the work of our players that I could cast them mentally, and I discovered at the first rehearsal of the play that I had done so quite accurately.

We arrived in London on Sunday afternoon, and on our way from the station we recognized many American actors, whom we hailed from our hansom, and friendly greetings and ad-

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dress cards were exchanged. Dear old Jimmie Lewis was the first actor we met.

My little girl's appearance in a Turkish fez aroused much merriment among the English children, and in consequence, the poor child was very unhappy, and could not be induced to go out of doors until an approved English hat was procured.

The day after our arrival was a bank holiday, and as the shops were all closed, we were obliged to lose two whole days of sight-seeing. The landlady, a wholesome, good-natured soul, suggested that after dark we take the child "hout for a bit, hup has far has the Circus" (meaning Oxford Circus). The little one thought it was a real circus, and the explanation caused her much disappointment. The poor child, after having it out in a good cry, asked for a glass of ice-water, whereupon the good landlady explained sympathetically, "Why, Duckie dear, we don't have ice in summertime. Ice only comes in wintertime." The child climbed

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into her father's lap, sobbing, "Oh, please, Father, take us home. I like 'Merica best."

We found the English actors very hospitable and courteous, and we were constantly being entertained at their homes and clubs. Sir Henry Irving and Mr. Wilson Barrett extended the courtesy of their theaters to us during our stay in London.

It was at the Lyceum that I saw dear old Mrs. Stirling as the nurse in "Romeo and Juliet", with Ellen Terry as Juliet. It was an ideal performance.

Henry Dixey was playing in London at the time. He was not received very enthusiastically at first; the London public did not appreciate his imitation of Sir Henry Irving. Later, however, the prejudice was overcome, and he became very popular. I have been told that no one was more amused than Sir Henry himself, who would request Dixey to give imitations of him at clubs and social gatherings, where Sir Henry entertained the American as his guest.

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Mr. Dixey and my husband had been friends since the old "Evangeline" days at the Museum, where he danced from the hind legs of the heifer to the front rank in his profession. A funny incident is connected with our meeting of him in London. One afternoon on the Strand, we were passing a haberdasher's shop where a quantity of socks was displayed at the door as an advertisement. Dixey, on seeing my husband, rushed up and embraced him, at the same time grabbing up a number of socks and thrusting them into Mr. Nolan's arms. The shopkeeper rushed out and took possession of my husband, while he lustily called for a "Bobby." Of course a crowd soon gathered, as can well be imagined. Dixey pacified the irate shopkeeper by purchasing the socks, and then distributed them among the crowd, who tumbled over each other to get them. For a few minutes there was indeed great excitement. We were greatly embarrassed. Dixey reveled in the discomfiture of



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my poor husband, who had a horror of publicity. We saw Dixey play at the Gaiety that night, where he introduced lines for our special entertainment, many suggesting the incident of that afternoon on the Strand.

Mr. and Mrs. Nat C. Goodwin (Eliza Weathersby) were in London spending the summer with the Weathersby family, and a delightful family they were. They lived in a charming house at Clapham near Clapham Common. Many a time we had the pleasure of dining "en famille" with the Weathersbys, gaining, through Mother Weathersby and her brood of delightful girls, a charming glimpse of English home life. The girls, Eliza, Jennie, Emmie, Nellie, and Harriet were all followers of the stage.

We made a short stay in Paris, but as our time was limited, we preferred to spend the greater part of our holiday in London.

We reached home on time for rehearsal by the merest chance. It seems our steamer was

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scheduled to leave from a certain dock, but the sailing was changed on account of the tide, so when we reached the dock we found we had at least half a mile to walk; so off we sprinted, like a Chinese trio, my husband ahead, and I, as usual, in the rear, laughing and breathless, only to be rushed on to the steamer just as the gangplank was being removed. I have spent summers abroad since, but as Miss Clarke has said, "Never will another trip abroad be so enjoyable as the first one."

We saw "Harbor Lights" several times in London, and I brought home a notebook filled with useful information for my associates. The play was splendidly staged. Mr. Sydney, who staged the original production in London, was engaged for the Museum production, and no expense was spared. It was a great success, George Wilson, Helen Standish, and Mrs. Vincent making distinct hits in their respective parts. There was one ludicrous situation in the play when Mrs. Vincent used the expression

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(as only she could use it), "The engagement is broke hoff." That never failed to convulse the audience, and it became a catch expression about town.

In that play, Isabelle Evesson made her first appearance, as Dora. She was a beautiful, wax-doll type of girl. When "Held by the Enemy" was put on, she was cast for Susan. I remember she had some difficulty in getting the Southern dialect. She and her mother lived at the Vendome, and the waiter who served them at table, she said, possessed the dialect she was seeking, so for weeks she made a study of the Southern dialect, and at last acquired it, giving a charming, sweet portrayal of the character. Miss Evesson, after leaving the Museum, made many return visits, and Boston, ever loyal, welcomed her kindly. Dear Belle has passed on only just recently, as have Eben Plympton and George Purdy, our efficient orchestra leader.

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Maida Craigin, a Boston girl, aroused a great deal of interest the first night of her performance in "The Jilt" with Dion Boucicault. She made a favorable impression in many plays, especially when "Bells of Haslemere" was produced. She married Arthur Falkland, a young Englishman, who was an actor in the Company.

Erroll Dunbar impressed me as an actor rather seriously inclined, and a student who loved his pipes, of which he had a wonderful collection. He lived in a fascinating studio on Ashburton Place on Beacon Hill. It was very high up, and he called it "Cloud's Rest."

Fanny Addison Pitt, who did unusual work and never failed in any part assigned to her, deserves more than my weak praise. Her husband, H. M. Pitt, was also a capable and distinguished actor. His performance of the old Earl in "Lord Fauntleroy" will be remembered for some time to come.

Many of these actors of the younger genera-

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tion — both stock and star — were brilliant, capable, and skillful, and the theater never failed to keep up its worthy standard. Yet after William Warren's retirement in 1883, there was a marked change in the character of the Boston Museum. The patrons missed the players with whom they had become familiar, and whom they regarded rather as old friends of long standing than as actors playing for their amusement. They were accustomed to their traits and peculiarities, which explains the popularity of the Old English comedies so frequently repeated that they were as familiar as household words. There was a falling off in the production of the old comedies and standard plays.

Few of the younger generation of players were familiar with the traditions of that noble school of acting, or what might be called the grand manner, which was one of its characteristics. This dignity of style is something not easily explained, but is instinctively

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felt. The younger generation is inclined to sneer at traditions, and has even tried to modernize Shakespeare. With what result? I have always thought it a mistake to modernize the old comedies, even in the matter of costume, so much of their atmosphere is therefore lost; and I am inclined to believe that if the old plays were again well acted — according to the old traditions — we would experience a surprise that would be good for us.

But with the passing of the old plays and old players, the patrons so loyal for a half century became indifferent, and the newer generation of playgoers was not so stanch as the old. Our manager, R. M. Field, stemmed the tide successfully till the season of 1893, when he was obliged to succumb. Mr. Field had been at the helm for thirty years. It is interesting to note that three men guided that great institution at different periods for half a century: William H. Smith, E. F. Keach, and R. M. Field.

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Mr. Field was born in Boston in 1832. Previous to joining the Museum Company, he was connected with the *Boston Post*. He began work as a typesetter, and later became one of our best dramatic critics. Through a mutual friend of the Kimball family, he was suggested to Mr. Moses Kimball to fill the position left vacant by the retirement of Mr. Keach. Mr. Kimball's selection proved to be a fortunate one.

Mr. Field was a man of big ideals, who always held steadily to the idea that the theater should be an artistic force, and should exercise an influence upon the dramatic taste of the community — an idea that he carried out successfully for many years. It is a joy to remember that he resisted all commercial temptations, and maintained the traditions of the old playhouse to the last. There was indeed a sickening feeling of pain when we realized the passing of the old Museum days, and none felt it more keenly than our courteous

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manager, who had conferred a permanent benefit to our stage.

The last play presented by the Stock Company was "Shore Acres." When the final curtain fell that last night, we of the Old Guard passed out of the theater with eyes bedimmed with tears, our hearts flooded with memories, pleasant and unpleasant. It all comes over me again, as I look across the Gulf of Yesterday. How much our life is fortified by our associations and friendships! Though many voices are hushed, the memory of that past day is a great happiness to possess.

"Would you have your song endure?  
Build on the human heart."



## CHAPTER XIII

### YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

**T**HE Boston Museum Stock Company was in its day a powerful influence on the minds, morals, and manners of all classes. The Museum was a place of recreation for the old and young alike, and of great educational value, serving as a museum, picture gallery, library, and playground. There is no doubt that there are many grown-up children to-day who remember the wax gallery with its horrors and its delights, and the good old fairy plays, "Puss in Boots", "Aladdin", and "Humpty Dumpty", with G. L. Fox as the clown. There were given also the classics — Shakespeare, and the best modern comedies — where might be found standards of speech, of conduct, and of tastes. The actors were students, and even

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the beginner in the ranks must be familiar with his Shakespeare. It was a part of his trade.

One served a long apprenticeship before securing a contract, which in those days was issued for a long season. There was no two-weeks-clause, as to-day. The actor or manager who willfully violated his contract was regarded as dishonorable, and ostracized for being irresponsible. An engagement could only be terminated by some glaring misdemeanor on the part of the actor in violation of the printed rules.

One was expected to conform to the printed rules and regulations. The iron rule of not permitting strangers on the stage was rigidly enforced. The Museum stage was sacred to the player. We were very much surprised on one occasion when a younger member of the Kimball family brought a visitor on the stage as the curtain was about to rise. Mr. Barron at once requested that the stage be cleared of visitors. He said: "We are not a lot of freaks to be exhibited for anybody's pleasure behind

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the scenes," and the curtain was held until the stage was clear of the intruders. That is just as it should be. It is somewhat embarrassing to find yourself face to face with strange people in the wings when you come off.

Stage etiquette demanded that one must endeavor never to allow a scene to flag through the hesitation of any character, or the failure of any player to appear upon the scene at the proper time, but in some way must fill up the break with improvised words or business, and keep the play in motion, whatever unexpected change of lines or action might occur on the part of others. If a member of the Company were late at rehearsal, he apologized to the actors on the stage as well as to the stage manager. It was not permissible to suggest business or criticize another actor during a scene of a rehearsal. The direction of the play was entirely in the hands of the stage manager, and any grievance might be discussed with him after rehearsal. Crossing the front of the stage

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while a rehearsal was in procedure was in bad form. Smoking was never permitted in the greenroom. The men used the music room for smoking, and could enjoy a pipe, if they wished, in comfort, as there was a call-boy to warn the actors for their scenes.

Familiarity between players and the public was not tolerated. I never saw our actors playing to individuals or groups in the audience. We were all conscious of an audience, of course, but there was a sort of dead line that separated the stage from the spectators. Our actors avoided publicity. The leading members of the Company were conscious of having won a degree of position in the life of the city, and realized that much of their magnetism depended on maintaining a certain glamour around their personality, which would fade with intimacy. They never attempted to gain any social prominence. They bore themselves with dignity and were not indifferent in their bearing toward the public.

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Our engagements at the Museum were reckoned by decades rather than by seasons in the early days, our dramatic season lasting into midsummer. The Fourth of July was anything but a holiday for the actors. Performances were given every two hours on that day, the last one after the fireworks at night. I remember sitting out on the balcony in the shade of the globe lights, watching the fireworks and waiting for the people to come in. Somehow the crowd of holiday folks seemed to get more innocent fun out of life in those days, with its pink lemonade and peanuts, whips and toy balloons, than they do to-day.

I can't help wondering whether the dreams of our childhood are not the real ones after all, rather than the dreams that come from a mature mind. When the spirit of Youth dominates, all the world is beautiful. Why should we allow that spirit to grow old? So long as we preserve the spirit of Youth, we are fortified against petty trials, and it will stand by us in

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times of greatest anguish. Well, those were happy days, despite the hard work.

I have in mind the play of "Moll Pitcher", a popular holiday piece. In it I played two parts; one was a little black "gal", the other a demure Puritan maiden. I was discovered at the rise of the curtain as the little darky, and in the next act as the simple Puritan maid; and then a return to the character of the little darky for the last act, which meant putting on and taking off burnt cork make-up eight times that day, but I loved the work.

There is a great fascination about stage life — a peculiar fascination — that nothing else seems to offer. Perhaps it is the power of pleasing people, if only for a few moments, — and in the character of another than one's self. When one is deadly tired and would prefer to cuddle down and read a good book, it is hard to have to go to the theater. But once there and out in front with the audience — with the lights and applause and music and all the surround-

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ings that go with the play — one forgets being tired and leaves the theater actually refreshed. Acting is a great panacea for the aches of mind and body, and acting, too, tends to keep one young, at least in feeling. The active life, the constant brain activity, keep the sentiments youthful, and give one no chance to become old.

Extra performances then meant extra pay at the rate of an eighth of a week's salary, so we rejoiced in being cast in the holiday bill. Until 1871, there were no Saturday performances given before the Puritanical Sabbath, which began at sundown on Saturday. When I first went to the Museum, the members of the Company who were engaged in the Saturday-night bill were paid for an extra performance. Such plays as "Ruy Blas", "Iron Chest", "Lucretia Borgia", or some Shakespearean tragedy were usually selected.

Speaking of Saturday-night bills brings to my mind the gallery god of that time. I am

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sure that the gallery god of the old days got more realism out of the theater than he does to-day. He usually expressed his likes and dislikes in a way that could not fail to be understood. He was familiar with the text of Shakespeare and often anticipated the actor's lines. Often in our Shakespearean plays, we required many supers, and it was not unusual to hear those supers in their dressing rooms give entire scenes from Shakespeare. I doubt if that ever happens to-day.

The production of Thomas Russell Sullivan's play, "Midsummer Madness", is impressed on my mind for the reason that it led to the signing of my first contract. After years in the ranks playing thinking parts, good parts, bad parts, no parts at all, I was cast for the landlady. Mrs. Vincent was originally cast for the rôle, but for some reason or other she didn't play it, and I was put on at short notice.

It was an unusual opening night. There was great interest in the play, as it was said to



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be written for the Museum Company. A very enthusiastic and fashionable audience greeted us, and the production proved a success. They were re-engaging the Company for another season about that time, and I also was re-engaged with a contract and a salary of nine dollars a week. My salary for years previous to that time was six dollars a week, with an extra eighth of a week's salary when I played on Saturday night.

This was my first contract and I was filled with joy in receiving it and in the feeling of having at last reached the goal. There was no doubt that I was a real actress, with my passport in the strong box. I said to my husband while crossing the Common that night, on our way home, "Jimmie, I am quite satisfied now. But if the time ever comes when I have a contract signed at twelve dollars a week, I shall never ask for more."

"My dear," he said, "don't be so sure. As your salary increases, your wants will increase."

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No, I was convinced that twelve dollars a week and a chance some time to play Lady Macbeth would complete my desire, — but it is easy to see that Nature never intended me for a tragedienne.

The salaries of actors were small in those days, but we lived simpler lives. There was no sighing for the social limelight. The Company was composed of home bodies who respected their profession. Our stage managers were not merely producers and contrivers of stage business. They knew the literature, the traditions, the art of their profession.

I tell you it was a great treat to grow up with such people. There was a certain nobility of character in them, a dignity that was splendid. The audience, too, seemed a part of our life. Everybody seemed to know everybody else. An artistic atmosphere pervaded the house as well as the stage itself.

I think that the actors of yesterday were more versatile. The opportunity for fundamental

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training was better. You felt, because of that, there was more of an intellectual background in the conception of a character. You see to-day a man is selected because he is a *type*, not because of his ability as actor. He has some special personal characteristic, and when that characteristic is outlived, then the career of the specialist is limited.

I don't mean to say that there are no good actors to-day. There are many. The present offers plenty of opportunities to enjoy the finest pleasure the art of the theater can give. It is absurd to sigh for the plays of the past; most of the people of to-day don't want them.

The stage is largely what the people make it. It simply tries to meet the public demand. The difference between the stage of to-day and the stage of yesterday is the same difference that distinguishes the people of to-day and the people of yesterday. The actor of yesterday, to be successful, must change with the development acting constantly undergoes.

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I am not sighing for the good old days and the good old plays. I am very much in the present, and quite conscious of the realism and the art of to-day. If all things and times change, it is well we change with them. Old school, new school, what does it matter, so that it is good?

But, somehow, those earlier days hold fond memories for me. New things come into our lives, new people and new interests, but they cannot quite replace the old — so I will say with Bobbie Burns :

“Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And never brought to mind?  
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And days o’ lang syne?”

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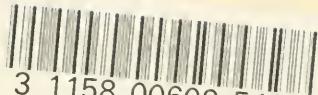
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