BEFORE I FORGET

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WRITTEN BY
ALBERT CHEVALIER

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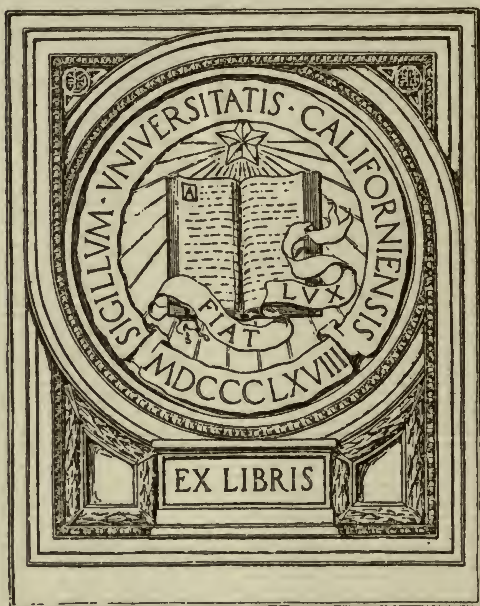

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Super Royal 8vo, cloth, 32s.

The Confessions of a Caricaturist :

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London : T. Fisher Unwin
Paternoster Square, E.C.

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ALBERT CHEVALIER.

Frontispiece.

BEFORE I FORGET—

THE
AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A
CHEVALIER D'INDUSTRIE

WRITTEN BY

ALBERT CHEVALIER

ILLUSTRATED

LONDON : T. FISHER UNWIN
PATERNOSTER SQUARE. 1902

SECOND IMPRESSION

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TO MY UNFAILING FRIEND, THE PUBLIC.

IF in the course of these pages you should resent a constantly recurring personal pronoun, overlook it—mentally erase it, but don't accuse the author of being unduly egotistical. The penalty of writing an autobiography is that you must do it yourself. Custom has made it a rule, that the first person singular shall figure conspicuously in a work purporting to be a faithful record of the writer's life. It's a silly custom, because other people know so much more about you than you know about yourself.

Just one word more. Fortune has treated me very kindly. I am going to record many nice things that have been said, and written, about me. If I omit any unpleasant ones, don't run away with the idea that, in my career, I have escaped them. Attribute it rather to a bad memory—a conveniently bad memory.

ALBERT CHEVALIER.

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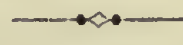

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PART I

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

PART I

CHAPTER I

I WAS born in London at 21, St. Ann's Villas, Royal Crescent, Notting Hill, on the 21st of March, 1861. Until I reached the mature age of seven I exhibited no particular yearning for a theatrical career. At seven, however, I learnt a piece, "The September Gale," by Oliver Wendell Holmes—a humorous recitation which so took my juvenile fancy in a book of "select poetry," that I committed it to memory, and one day recited it, with appropriate action, to my poor dear father as he was enjoying his pipe in a summer-house at the bottom of our garden. He was a good father, and I ought to have known better; but as, by the accident of birth, he happened to be my senior, some portion of the blame must attach to him. He laughed. When in the course of my declamation I simulated a tearful aspect—the result of a supposed irreparable loss—when I drew my sleeve across my eyes, and deplored the disappearance of my "Sunday breeches," carried off a clothes' line (according to the poet) by an incon-

siderate September gale, he simply shrieked, and did not rest until he saw my name entered on Part II. of a local Penny Reading programme. My very first public appearance was in 1869, at Cornwall Hall, Cornwall Road, Notting Hill.

Children have no sense of responsibility, and their nerves are sound, hence the youthful phenomenon. In black velvet knickerbockers and white stockings, with my hair curled, I used to deliver Mark Antony's oration over the body of Julius Cæsar. It must have been a most edifying performance. I occasionally meet people who have lived to remind me that they actually witnessed my eight-year-old Shakespearian recitals. Time, the healer, has probably robbed the recollection of its original bitterness, for in one or two instances these venerable relics have assured me that I "showed promise." There they stopped. They took no chances on fulfilment. I really cannot recall a time when I was not stage-struck. Between the ages of eight and twelve I certainly wavered; but this I attribute to maternal influence. My mother wanted me to become a priest. I forgot to mention that my parents were Roman Catholics. For the sake of the priesthood I am glad to think that a merciful Providence intervened. Still I was sent to St. Mary's College, Richmond, with a view to ultimately becoming Father Chevalier. A Roman Catholic clergyman, who had heard of this, once questioned me on the subject, and inquired how far I had advanced in preparing for a priestly life. I replied, "As far as the vow of celibacy," and then the conversation flagged.

SISTER AND SELF.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

[To face p. 4.

The late Fred Charles, acting on behalf of his manager, the late F. B. Chatterton, approached my father with a view to engaging me for the pantomime of "Hop o' my Thumb" at Drury Lane Theatre. This offer, however, was declined, and I continued to increase my list of pieces for the delectation (?) of Penny Reading patrons in different parts of London. I ruthlessly cut the Immortal Bard out of my repertoire after hearing a local comic singer bring down the house with a bewilderingly mirthful ditty entitled, "I am so Volatile." I there and then determined to oust him from his position as principal comique. Aided and abetted by my proud father, on my next appearance I endeavoured to give an imitation of Stead, in his then immensely popular impersonation, "The Perfect Cure." Being young, and sound of wind, and limb, I contrived to bob up and down, singing at the same time, without experiencing serious inconvenience. The local critics (?) thought it was wonderful, and the exalted position of Principal Penny Reading Comique was assured to me from that moment.

I have mislaid all memoranda, or nearly all, of these entertainments, but so far as my memory serves me, my next efforts were in the way of Irish dialect recitations. My brogue I picked up in the course of conversations with a "broth of a bhoy" who carried the collection plate at the Church of St. Francis of Assisi, Notting Hill. About this time Arthur Roberts appeared as an amateur at Cornwall Hall. Other Penny Reading favourites of this particular period were W. Lestocq (now Charles Frohman's representative in England) and Edward Compton. Talking of

Edward Compton reminds me that I once, when a boy, recited in private to his father (the late Henry Compton). The old gentleman was very patient, and controlled himself nobly.

For a short time, in the family circle, my histrionic aspirations played second fiddle to a spiritualistic mania which my father suddenly developed. Our house in St. Ann's Villas became a happy hunting-ground for mystic waifs and strays. We held *séances* nightly. These *séances*, I need hardly say, were quite private. My father was—or imagined himself to be—a medium. Like most people, I am very sceptical concerning so-called "supernatural" manifestations. When a man assures me that he has seen a ghost, I try to appear interested. Should he press the point, and desire to prove his statement, I gladly agree to consider whatever evidence he can produce. Only the fool speaks of the impossible. The impossibilities of to-day are to-morrow the possibilities which minister to our creature comforts. The application of a piece of wire made it possible for a force in nature to act obediently at man's discretion. Because a thing remains unexplained, is no argument against the truth contained in the assertion that it actually occurred. When men like Robert Dale Owen take the trouble to compile a volume of ghost stories, not to shock weak nerves, but with a view to exciting the interest of thinkers—I allude to "Footfalls on the Threshold of Another World"—the common or garden individual may surely be privileged to "have his doubts."

When a man like Du Prel, in his "Philosophy of Mysticism," endeavours to explain the importance of

dreams—when the influence of this particular work results in the writing and publication of "Psychic Phenomena," by Hudson, &c., &c., I, as the aforesaid common or garden type of individual, may be forgiven for agreeing with Hamlet when he tells his friend, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

My reason for mentioning the subject at all is that one of the mediums I encountered at this time was the notorious Daniel Home, who later on contrived to wheedle sixty thousand pounds out of an old lady—a Mrs. Lyon. This enormous sum was paid to him by way of remuneration : "for bringing back the spirit of her departed husband." This unique widow, regretting either the loss of her money, or the return of the "departed," sued Home for the recovery of her sixty thousand pounds. When in course of cross-examination she was asked what had caused her to alter her opinion, and to think that the returned husband was not the pure spirit Home declared him to be, she gave as her reason quotations from a pamphlet written by my father, and entitled "Experiences of Spiritualism." In this little volume he gave an absolutely truthful and accurate account of certain manifestations which he had witnessed in his own house, and which, he had arrived at the conclusion, were attributable to machinations of the Foul Fiend. That the manifestations he referred to were perfectly genuine—that they were not produced by any ingenious trickery, so far as prevention is humanly possible—I am quite certain. To him, and to my mother, it was a serious matter. They would sit alone in a room, putting questions to,

and receiving replies from, what they, at that time, honestly believed to be the spirit of their dead first-born. I think I need say no more to prove that they had no recourse to trickery. The fact, however, remains that their questions were answered, and my father, in his anxiety to solve the mystery, only succeeded in diving deeper into the mire. He and my mother finally arrived at the conclusion that it was all "diabolical"—that they were being duped by the Evil One, who was permitted to masquerade as a Spirit of Light, until challenged, according to the New Testament, 1 St. John chap. iv. vers. 1, 2, 3—a form of procedure which in their experience effectually put a stop to all "spiritualistic manifestations."

Before leaving this subject, I should like to record—without a word of exaggeration—something which I witnessed one night in our dining-room at St. Ann's Villas. After supper, my father asked me to push the dining-table against the wall, so that he and one or two others might sit round the fire "for a chat and a smoke." The table, although a heavy one, was ordinarily quite easy to move, as it was on castors. I had frequently, on similar occasions, moved it as he desired me now to do; but now I couldn't. I looked underneath (I fear I was born a sceptic!), there was no one there. I walked round and examined the castors. They were in their usual places. Why wouldn't the table move? I asked my father to help me, which he did; but the table remained in the centre of the room. To cut a long story short, the united efforts of three or four men, and a boy failed to move it either by means of lifting, or by pushing. Now, I

wasn't going to relate this incident, because I have a morbid horror of appearing ridiculous ; but as I have gone so far, I may as well go through with it. I had heard my father talk of exorcising the spirits "in the name of God." I repeated to myself what I had heard him say, and the table moved—that is, I was able to make it move. I offer no explanation. I can think of none. I don't say the table moved because I muttered a sacred name. All I know is, that until then it could not be moved. Beyond that I know nothing. I can only say it happened.

CHAPTER II

WHEN I was about fourteen years old I joined an amateur theatrical club called the "Roscius." Not being quite satisfied, however, with the parts allotted to me, I decided to go into management on my own account. I really was driven into doing this by the stage-manager of the "Roscius," who cast me for King Louis in "Richelieu." I was a very bad monarch. Whatever regal attributes I may have since developed, I was not kingly at sixteen. Before the *pièce de resistance* came on, I appeared as Handy Andy in a boiled-down version of Lover's famous novel. I was soaked in Irish—that is, in the brogue—and I couldn't shake it off. This fact may account for my failure as the French King. When I commenced a speech something after this fashion, "Lorrd Card-hinil! Wan by wan, ye have severrred from me the bhonds av human lov'," there was a titter. As the speech continued, my brogue intensified. In the course of that oration the audience were carried away—right away—from Notting Hill (where I was performing) to Cork, by way of Limerick and Tipperary. A local critic went out of his way to be offensive. In the columns of his vile newspaper he wrote of my performance as follows:—

"Mr. Chevalier appeared as Handy Andy in Lytton's play entitled 'Richelieu.'"

Having my suspicions concerning the authorship of this criticism, I taxed a member of the company with being responsible for it. He beat about the bush, but finally admitted the soft impeachment, pleading, at the same time, that his original article had been edited out of all recognition. Before the editorial blue pencil went to work on it, he declared that it read like this :—

"Mr. Chevalier appeared as Handy Andy, *a part which he acted admirably ; and* in Lytton's play, entitled 'Richelieu,' *he took the part of King Louis.*"

The italicised portions had been crowded out. There was no necessity for him to explain that the omissions made a difference.

For a short time, a very short time, I was a clerk in an office—a newspaper office. An English edition of the Buonapartist organ, *l'Ordre*, was published in London. The editor, Comte de la Chapelle, who had "heard of my paintings," interested himself on my account, with the result that I was engaged to sing between the acts of "Still Waters Run Deep," for one night, at the King's Cross Theatre. My fee (my first professional fee!) for inflicting on the audience two comic songs and a recitation was ten shillings. I had almost forgotten this incident ; but a few days ago I happened to mention the King's Cross Theatre to my good friend Edgar F. Jacques, the musical critic, whose name has so long and honourably been associated with the analytical notes on Queen's Hall Symphony, and other concert programmes. To my

astonishment, Jacques informed me that he conducted the orchestra on the occasion above referred to, and that Mrs. Jacques presided at the piano. She therefore accompanied me the very first time I ever appeared as a professional, receiving a fee for my services. Truly the world is very small.

At the King's Cross Theatre, the Ladbroke Hall, and the Bijou Theatre, Bayswater, I occasionally blossomed forth as an actor-manager—generally starring in Irish melodrama—my poor father supplying cash for the necessary preliminary expenses. This Hibernian leaning may have been due to a school acquaintanceship with young Boucicault, the present Dion Boucicault, son of the famous actor-dramatist. Anyway, whenever I had the chance, I elected to appear either as Miles or Danny Mann in the "Colleen Bawn."

The history of the Bijou Theatre, Archer Street, Bayswater, if ever it should be written, would disclose a remarkably long list of names which have since become familiar to playgoers. To mention only a few: Beerbohm Tree's first attempt at management was made there in, I think, a series of *matinées*. Ada Ward, recently "converted" by "General" Booth's "officers," played there, in the "Ticket-of-Leave Man." Fred Kaye, Etienne Girardot, Cecil Thornbury, Percy F. Marshall, Fred Grove, Inez Howard, and many others, whose names, in recent years, have figured on playbills of more important houses, have all either "*débuted*" or gained experience at the Bijou.

When I was fifteen I became "pupil teacher" at a school in Shepherd's Bush. In reality I was under-

master, but, owing to my youth, the principal thought it advisable to call me a "pupil teacher"—a distinction without much difference, if you take the trouble to analyse the terms. Here I remained for about a year, fretting my heart out, and occasionally seeking relief in one-night performances at a local hall, the Athenæum. Here, later on, in conjunction with Julian Edwards (now well known in America as the successful composer of numerous comic operas) I first tried my hand at scribbling for the stage. My initial effort was the libretto of an operetta entitled "Begging the Question," in which, "supported by" the composer and his sister, Annie Kinnaird, I appeared as a French peasant. The little piece was very kindly received by an audience of friends and relations. I was most proud of a notice, written by Julian Edwards' father, which appeared in a local paper. As, according to custom, the critique was not signed, it did me a lot of good—locally. Among Shepherd's Bush-men I was looked up to as a coming literary light. My fame, however, was restricted to this picturesque corner of Suburbia—or rather to a corner of this particular corner.

My father, realising that I was not likely to settle down either as a clerk or a schoolmaster, wrote to the late Dion Boucicault, asking him if he would be good enough to use his influence, and so give me the opportunity to make a start in the theatrical profession. Boucicault kindly sent me a letter of introduction to Blackmore (father of the present well-known musical and dramatic agent). This letter I presented in person to Blackmore *père*. I remember the meeting.

I was a very fat, chubby boy. He stared hard at me, and asked "if I took much exercise," warning me at the same time, paternally, that I was "running a great risk of becoming as broad as I was long." My appearance, however, instead of standing in my way, actually went in my favour. A Mr. Gates, representing the then "Mr." S. B. Bancroft, chanced to be in the outer office. He wanted five or six boys to appear in "To Parents and Guardians," a little afterpiece, by the late Tom Taylor, which was shortly going into the bill at the old Prince of Wales's Theatre in Tottenham Street, Tottenham Court Road. As I came out, he went in to see Blackmore. In the doorway he stopped, and looking me up and down—a deal more down than up!—asked me if I wanted an engagement? If I wanted an engagement! Think of it! A sixteen-year-old budding histrion, bubbling over with an enthusiastic desire to act? Did I want an engagement? Why, cert'nly!

Before I left Blackmore's my ambition was gratified. I was a full-blown actor, engaged to appear at the most celebrated comedy house in London; and what was more, the terms of the agreement stipulated—there had been no haggling, it was down in black and white—that my salary should be ten shillings per week, payable on Saturdays, at "Treasury." I went straight off to French's (then Lacy's) in the Strand, and purchased a copy of "To Parents and Guardians," bound in the orthodox orange-coloured cover. Having removed my handkerchief from the breast-pocket of my coat, I substituted the playbook. To my sorrow it did not

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show: the pocket was too deep. This, however, I soon remedied by replacing my handkerchief as a foundation, or prop. Thus, as I imagined, labelled "actor," I proceeded to walk home, having exhausted my finances in starting a theatrical library!

On the day appointed I attended my first rehearsal in a real theatre—the old Prince of Wales's—the "Band-box," as it was familiarly called.

How curiously little things impress one—little, incongruous things they are as a rule—things which, under given circumstances, might easily escape observation. I had only seen Bancroft on the stage, playing, as he alone could play, parts like Hawtree in "Caste." I was to meet him now for the first time in private life. As I passed through the stage-door I heard the well-known drawl—that peculiarly languid drawl—which the late M. Marius shortly after reproduced so cleverly in "Diplunacy" at the Strand Theatre. I peeped round a corner to catch a glimpse of my manager. He was talking to a little boy—his eldest son, I think—who, resplendent in a new pair of boots, insisted on submitting them to his father's critical eye, and horn-rimmed glass. It was a very trifling incident, but I never meet my late manager now without mentally conjuring up this picture. In a way it was a disappointment at the time, because, in my youthful inexperience, I had expected something infinitely more imposing. This homely little touch was my first lesson in a very much misunderstood subject, viz., what the actor is like off the stage.

The rehearsal commenced. The cast included Arthur Cecil and Willie Young, both since dead. I,

with my fellow "super" schoolboys, was waiting anxiously to know what we had to do. In the "wings" I struck up an acquaintance with another youthful super, who informed me that his name was Fred Storey. This young gentleman, anticipating the success he was to make in after years, turned out to be the terror of the dressing-room during the run of "To Parents and Guardians." It was a small room, and he would practise the "splits"—to say nothing of his attempts at high kicking. I came off comparatively well. I was short, but the taller boys had a rough time when, imitating the late Fred Vokes, he endeavoured to throw his leg over their heads!

To return to the rehearsal. Bancroft, after a careful inspection of his schoolboys, whispered something to Gates the stage-manager (my friend from Blackmore's), and before I had time to realise what had happened, a manuscript part was put into my hands, "to rehearse on approval." (I shouldn't dare to do such a thing now!!) It was a very tiny part, but it *was* a part. I suppose I must have given satisfaction, as it was not taken away from me. I thought it was too good to be true. A part! a speaking part! However, I played it, and to this early association with artistic surroundings, under the Bancroft *régime*, I owe more than I know how to acknowledge. The thoroughness with which everything was done was an object-lesson to any young actor. What care, what attention to detail! No wonder the little "Bandbox" drew, not only fashionable London, but all lovers of dramatic art at its best.

CHAPTER III

WHEN "To Parents and Guardians" and the "Unequal Match" were taken out of the bill, to make room for the important production of "Diplomacy," I was faced with the fact that I had to procure another engagement—a predicament which has recurred with painful frequency in the course of my career. I haunted Blackmore's office. I really believe he tried hard to "fix me up," if only to get rid of me! But although I was a real, live, full-blown, London actor, privileged to "pass in on my card" to what were then called "professional *réunions*," at the Oxford Music Hall, I could not persuade managers to engage me. I was in despair, when I received a very kind note from Arthur Cecil. He had mentioned me to Mr. and Mrs. Kendal as a likely person to play the small part of Antoine in "Diplomacy." I was fortunate enough to settle an engagement for this provincial tour, and my salary went up from ten to thirty shillings per week. In the company engaged was that truly great actor William Mackintosh. We two became fast friends, and, I am glad to say, have remained so ever since. Londoners as yet have had only a taste of this fine artist's powers—his genius. Some day I hope he may be allowed the opportunity

of proving and establishing his right, to hold a position second to none.

When the "Diplomacy" tour finished, Mrs. Kendal, interesting herself on my behalf, persuaded John Hare to engage me for the Court Theatre, where he, in conjunction with Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, was about to produce Palgrave Simpson's version of "Les Pattes de Mouches," entitled "A Scrap of Paper." My association with Messrs. Hare and Kendal, at the Court and St. James's Theatres, lasted some years, during which time I understudied principal parts, and played small ones, in a repertoire of pieces including: "A Scrap of Paper," "A Quiet Rubber," "A Regular Fix," "William and Susan," "The Ladies Battle," "M. le Duc," "The Queen's Shilling," &c.

At the Court Theatre a Mr. Brandon made his first appearance on the stage. This gentleman, under his own name, Brandon Thomas, has since become known to fame, not only as an excellent actor, but as the author of several plays, notably that screamingly funny farce, "Charley's Aunt."

It was at the Court Theatre also that I first met the late William Terriss. The dreadful circumstances under which poor Terriss met with his death are so fresh in the minds of playgoers, that I may perhaps be permitted to tell a hitherto untold story in connection with this tragedy, for the truth of which I can vouch.

In a certain North London boarding-house, where the proprietor catered for the theatrical profession, there lived a poor, hard-worked general servant—a typical lodging-house "slavey." She had

"PRINCE PAUL" IN "THE GRAND DUCHESS."

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rather a pretty face, but of this fact she appeared quite oblivious until she dressed for her nights out. On these rare occasions she would tittivate herself to such an extent that, as she walked down the street, on her way to the Adelphi Theatre (her one and only source of enjoyment), nobody would have recognised, in the neatly attired, somewhat delicate-looking maiden, the dirty, slovenly, down-at-heel "Marchioness" who cooked and scrubbed for a miserable pittance at No. 18, —— Street, Kilburn. She was madly in love with William Terriss, and made no secret of the fact. In the kitchen, in the scullery even, the walls were decorated with pictures of her hero. She had hitherto worshipped him from afar—from "on high." It was her night out. A mad desire to have a look at him, off the stage, suddenly seized her. After perhaps a little extra tittivation, she hurried away to the Adelphi stage-door in Maiden Lane. On her arrival there she heard a cry, and saw some one reel. Rushing excitedly forward, she was just in time to see her hero. He had at that moment received his death-blow. Terrified, she flew from the spot, and for some days after she did not show up at No. 18. When next she was seen cleaning the front-door steps, she wore, pinned to her torn print bodice, a tiny piece of draggled black *crêpe*.

I resigned my engagement at the St. James's to become principal comedian in an opera company. Auguste Van Biene, with the idea of permanently establishing English opera in Liverpool, engaged a very large and expensive company, a full orchestra, leased the Bijou Theatre in Bold Street (which,

crammed full to the doors, could not possibly have held much over fifty or sixty pounds!), and started with a repertoire consisting of "Trovatore," "Fidelio," "Maritana," "Martha," "Don Giovanni," "La Sonnambula," and by way of variety, Offenbach's "Grand Duchess." It was for the part of Prince Paul in the last-named work that I was really engaged, but I also undertook to play such parts in the "grand" operas as my vocal and other limitations would allow. In the light of later developments, it will astonish my readers to learn that I did not shine in grand opera. Mozart must have squirmed in his grave on the occasion when, as Masetto, I dared the intricacies of his glorious music. Altogether, this experience lasted about six weeks. Then came a welcome relief in the shape of an offer for a short season in Glasgow, at the Princess's Theatre, under the management of H. Cecil Beryl. Here I played a round of parts, supporting William Mackintosh during his first starring engagement. Mackintosh, an enormous favourite in Glasgow, was particularly successful in a little one-act play entitled "Peebles," which I translated for him from Mme. de Girardin's "La joie fait peur." My share of the work was little more than a bare translation, but Mackintosh's performance of the title *rôle*, an old Scotch servant, was something to be remembered by those who were fortunate enough to witness it.

My next engagement was, for me, a very important one. The late Edgar Bruce wanted some one to play Gunnion in A. W. Pinero's successful comedy-drama, "The Squire," then running at the St. James's

"PUFFY" IN "THE STREETS OF LONDON."
(Princess's Theatre, Glasgow.

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"THE PEEPSHOWMAN."
(Princess's Theatre, Glasgow.)

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Theatre. Mackintosh, who created the part in London, suggested that I should play it, which I eventually did for nine months in the provinces. This engagement was important to me in more ways than one. I gave satisfaction, not only to the management, but to the author, who, later on, did not forget me when an opportunity occurred in London.

In 1883 I joined the late T. W. Robertson (son of the famous playwright) for a season at Toole's Theatre, appearing as Sergeant Jones in "Ours," Mulhowther in "M.P.," &c. About this time special *matinée* productions at the Crystal Palace were very much in vogue, and I did my share towards entertaining the glass-house patrons. It was a weird audience in those days, at the Crystal Palace. People who would not go to a London theatre, sneaked in on the quiet at Sydenham, to see the most risky plays. Old ladies would bring their knitting, or wool-work, and the comedian who succeeded in attracting sufficient attention to make one of these venerable relics "drop a stitch," was an object of envy to his brother actors. The wild dissipation of the audience culminated, as a rule, in a mad rush after the performance "to see the actors come out." There was always some "authority" ready to point out who was who. According to this "authority," as from time to time I came out of stage gloom into the light of day, I passed for nearly every well-known actor in London. I never resented being mistaken for a good one, but there were occasions when I thought seriously of showing the "authority" up.

As I said just now, Pinero did not forget me. A piece of his, entitled "Low Water," was put into

rehearsal at the Globe Theatre (then under the management of Messrs. John Hollingshead and J. L. Shine), for which I was engaged to play a drunken broker's man in the first act. The piece was a failure. After this I toured the provinces again, this time as Sir Henry Auckland in "Impulse." The company was organised by Miss Fanny Josephs and C. W. Garthorne, both since dead. On this tour I met J. H. Darnley, who, later on, wrote and produced several ingeniously constructed and very successful farcical comedies, notably "The Barrister." In "Impulse" on tour he played the part in which poor Arthur Dacre originally scored at the St. James's. My next move was once more to London—a chance for which I again had to thank Pinero. At the Court Theatre, under the management of Messrs. John Clayton and Arthur Cecil, I appeared in the original productions of two big successes, "The Magistrate" and "The Schoolmistress." While playing in the last-mentioned piece I was taken seriously ill. Brain fever the doctor called it. I suppose he knew what he was talking about. Anyway, I did not then, and I do not intend now, to dispute what he said, as it establishes a fact: I have a brain. Always enthusiastic in my work, I went to the theatre, and played for three nights running, when, as the doctor told me afterwards, I ought to have been in bed with ice-bags on my head. When I was well enough to resume my part, some three months later, Mrs. John Wood, after congratulating me on my recovery, apologised profusely for a conclusion she had rashly jumped at, in consequence of my extraordinary behaviour during the three nights

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"MAJOR STRETTON" IN "FALSE GLITTER."
(Princess's Theatre, Glasgow.)

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Taken by a member of the Court Theatre Co. when
I was engaged there in "The Magistrate."

"RICHARD FLUFFY" IN "KATTI."
(From a Sketch by one of the Audience.)

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before referred to. She thought I had taken to drink! During the run of "The Magistrate" I wrote a burlesque on "Called Back," entitled "Called Back Again," which Mackintosh took out on tour. My final appearance at the old Court Theatre was on the last night it was open to the public, when a programme was submitted consisting of an act from each of the following plays: "The Magistrate," "The Schoolmistress," and "Dandy Dick"—at that time Pinero's three most successful efforts.

As we were both "resting," Mackintosh and I, within three weeks, wrote, rehearsed, and produced a three-act musical farce. During the first of those three weeks we had an average of about two hours' sleep each night, or rather morning, for we never turned in till daylight. I thought, when we were writing it, that the piece was developing into a great work! Mackintosh distinctly had his doubts, but as he was booked to appear in a new play, he tried to consider the "thing" from my enthusiastic point of view. I have the manuscript at home now, and I must admit that, so far as my share in it is concerned, it is pretty bad—even for a musical farce! The manager of the provincial theatre where the play was to be produced duly paragraphed the "forthcoming novelty" in all the local papers. He advertised that "special scenery was being painted." He spoke the truth—it was being painted. On our arrival in the town we went straight to the theatre where, according to the bills, we were to open that night. The scenery was being painted—we had ocular demonstration of the fact. In the

forest scene one branch of an oak-tree was nearly finished. Unfortunately, the other two equally important scenes were untouched. Mackintosh fumed, I raved, but it only resulted in the old theatrical "gag": "everything would be all right at night." Well, night came, and the company dressed. The house was full up. It was Bank Holiday. We were all ready and anxious for the fray; the scenery, however, was still being painted! A few more trees had sprung up in the forest since the morning, but the Baronial Hall was represented by nothing more advanced than sheets of white canvas stretched on wooden frames. There was only one possible course to pursue, viz., to explain the position of affairs, and offer an apology to the audience, telling them, at the same time, that the money they had paid for seats would be refunded on application at the box-office. Much as we regretted turning such a big crowd away, it had to be done. Somewhere about midnight I encountered Ingle (then Mackintosh's business manager) trying to convince a couple of yokels that they were not entitled to any money, as the tickets, on which they claimed payment, were free admissions, privately marked "for exhibiting bills!" Needless to say, relations between Mackintosh and myself, and the management, became somewhat strained. We accused the staff of painters, carpenters, &c., of not understanding their business. There was a row, and in the end, Mackintosh, the local manager, the company, and myself, were left to do the best we could for ourselves. The staff struck. We remained in the

"No. 1, Round the Corner."

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"The Author" in "The First Night."
(Princess's Theatre, Glasgow.)

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theatre till 4 a.m., went home, returning at nine the same morning to work. By about four in the afternoon we had contrived to dodge up three scenes, out of some old stock stuff, which we found stored away in the paint-room. Determining not to be beaten, we opened, produced the play, acting our parts, and doing our own scene-shifting. I forgot to mention that the advertised "augmented orchestra" was only "augmented" when Ingle could spare time to leave the box-office, which at intervals he contrived to do. Then some slight augmentation was noticeable. Ingle presided at the pianoforte, in order to play certain accompaniments which the "orchestra" could not manage! It remains for me to say that the only people who paid to see the show that night were the strikers—the painters, carpenters, scene-shifters, &c., who had left us in the lurch. They were all in front, and I never played to a more unsympathetic audience!

CHAPTER IV

MY next manager was Willie Edouin. I cannot overrate the value of my experience with him. He came along with that moral pat on the back which at the right moment is of such service to the struggling actor who has learnt sufficient to realise how little he knows. I owe a great deal to the encouragement I received from Willie Edouin and his charming wife, the late Alice Atherton. At the Royalty and Strand Theatres I played all sorts of parts. Edouin, after reading a burlesque of mine on "Clancarty," which piece was then running at the St. James's, advised me, to his ultimate cost, I fear, to go on writing. He bought and produced a little comedietta of mine entitled "Cycling"—my first London production. It would be no exaggeration to say that I wrote reams for Edouin, which he bravely purchased, and which to this day are, I believe, stored away in one of his innumerable trunks, labelled "MSS."

When he revived Byron's "Aladdin" at the Strand, I was turned on to write it up-to-date—an offence for which I was hauled over the coals by indignant critics, who did not hesitate to talk of vandalism. I played Abanazar in "Aladdin." One day at rehearsal Edouin

remarked that among the interpolated numbers I had not included a song for myself. He suggested my writing one. As the date of the production was drawing near, I asked him to allow me to sing a ditty which I had occasionally inflicted on intimate friends in the sanctity of the home circle. He requested me to "hum it over to him," which I did. It was my first coster song, "Our 'Armonic Club." Edouin was not at all sanguine about it, but as I had nothing else ready, he agreed to let me try it :—

OUR 'ARMONIC CLUB.*

WRITTEN AND COMPOSED BY ALBERT CHEVALIER.

On a Monday night when the blokes 'as finished work,
  And the merry "dibs" 'as been a-flowin' free;
At the Brokers' Arms there's a parlour set aside,
  Where us coves indulges in sweet 'Armonee.
There we sets and sings, till the clock strikes twelve,
  We could go on all night long without a doubt;
But the Boss calls, "Time!" and if that don't make us move,
  Well, he sends the pot-boy in to chuck us out!
  With my 'ammer in my 'and, there I sets as large as life
    Surrounded by the patrons of the pub:
  Oh, I ain't by nature proud, but I feels a reg'lar "treat,"[1]
    When I takes the chair at our 'Armonic Club!

Rorty Bill sets down and fakes the dominoes,
  Then I calls on Mr. 'Arris for a song;
In his ear I whispers, "'Arris, cut it short,"
  'Cos 'is songs is allus very much too long!
Then the blokes all grin—they've 'eard 'im sing afore,
  Of all the singers—there, he is the wust!
But he thinks 'e's big, and he likes to do a turn,
  So I allus calls on Mr. 'Arris fust!
        With my 'ammer in my 'and, &c.

[1] Change this word in the chorus after each verse, in the following order: "Dook," "Hearl," "Markis," "Viscount," "Grand Order of Buffaloes."

* *By permission of Messrs. Reynolds and Co., 13, Berners Street, W.*

Arter that I raps the table very 'ard,
Some old bloke 'as kindly offered to recite;
So he trots out sharp, and he bows to all around,
And addresses of the company perlite:
'E forgets 'is "bit," and the coves begin to laugh,
'E turns to me and says it ain't "the thing";
But they shout, "Set down, turn it up, my rorty pal!"
And our comic man is called upon to sing!

With my 'ammer in my 'and, &c.

First Encore.

There's a cove what plays the banjo very nice,
And political effusions is 'is line,
'E composed a verse wot contained a gentle 'int,
That a certain grand old party should resign,
Then a gent wot wheels a barrer down the "Cut,"
Shouted, "Bravo, cully! very good—hencore!"
'Im and Rorty Bill, wot's a Lib'ral, come to blows
And the argument was settled on the floor!

With my 'ammer in my 'and, &c.

Second Encore.

Once a year we gives a very special night,
When the company's particularly *chice;*
I'm the "virtuous" chair, but to gratify my pals,
A member of our Local Board's the "Vice."
He surveys the scene with a patronisin' air,
And he makes a speech, I look upon as crood;
But before he's done, it's a thousand pounds to one,
'E gits landed on the nose for bein' rude!

With my 'ammer in my 'and, &c.

The only rehearsal I ever had for this was on the first night of the production, ten minutes before the doors opened. There had been some delay in copying out the band parts. However, that excellent con-

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Photo by] "SAIREY GAMP." [*B. Knight.*

Photo by] "FAGIN." [*B. Knight.*

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ductor, Edward Jones, pulled me through. Owing to the length of the performance, it was nearly half-past eleven when I came on to sing my song. I feared that the lateness of the hour would handicap my chances of success, but I am glad to say the audience took to the song at once. After this, Edouin altered its position, enabling me to sing it earlier in the evening, and it never failed to obtain an encore. E. J. Lonnen, who saw the burlesque just before it was taken off, asked me if I had another song on similar lines, as he was looking out for one to introduce in the next Gaiety production, "Faust up to Date." Thinking I should never want another coster song, I sold him "'Ave a Glass along o' Me," with which he eventually made a hit in the piece just mentioned.

By arrangement with Willie Edouin I appeared as Silas Hobbs in the authorised version of "Little Lord Fauntleroy" at Terry's Theatre (matinées only). Mrs. Kendal superintended the production, in which, by the way, the Misses Vera and Esmé Beringer made their first appearances in public. During the run of "Fauntleroy" I received an offer from my old managers, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, for their first American tour. It was a tempting offer in some ways, chiefly on account of the parts I should have played—parts originally associated with the name of John Hare. I thoroughly appreciated the compliment of such an offer, but it was a crucial moment in my career. I was just beginning to make headway in London. When the question of terms came to be discussed, we agreed to differ, and so negotiations fell

through. I had my doubts at the time as to whether I had acted wisely, but in the end it all turned out for the best. My refusal of the engagement was the means of introducing J. E. Dodson to our trans-atlantic cousins. Dodson made an instantaneous hit, and at the present moment is one of the most popular actors in America.

At a *matinée* at the Prince of Wales's Theatre (the new Prince of Wales's, Coventry Street) for the benefit of William Greet (some time acting manager at the Strand under Willie Edouin), "Our Flat" was produced, in which I played the part taken after-wards, at the Strand Theatre, by Lionel Rignold. Edouin offered me the engagement, but I decided to try my luck elsewhere. Arthur Roberts was leaving the Avenue to go into management on his own account, at the Royalty. The late M. Marius, looking about for somebody to take Roberts's place, happened to meet me one day at the Gaiety Theatre, where I had called to see George Edwards concerning some lyrics which he had commissioned me to write for him. Marius gave me the libretto of "La Prima Donna" (Tito Mattei and Alfred Murray's comic opera) to read. I went over to the Savage Club, hurriedly skimmed through the book, and the same evening met Marius again by appointment. He asked me if the part originally intended for Roberts was one which I thought I could play. I hesitated. It seemed presumptuous to say "Yes." However, he was willing to engage me if I would take the responsibility of stepping into the inimitable Arthur's shoes. Nothing venture, nothing have, I

Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

ALBERT CHEVALIER AND JOHN BEAUCHAMP
AS
"SAM WELLER" AND "TONY WELLER."

Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

JOHN BEAUCHAMP AND ALBERT CHEVALIER
AS
"BETSY PRIG" AND "SAIREY GAMP."

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agreed, and a few days after signed an engagement as principal comedian at the Avenue Theatre, at a salary of fifteen pounds per week—the largest sum I had, up till then, ever earned as an actor. I settled for the run of the piece only, but after the first night I had the satisfaction of being approached by the management with a view to signing a fresh contract, for a further term of two years, at a salary increased to twenty pounds per week. This matter I was only too delighted to fix up immediately. Unfortunately both "La Prima Donna" and its successor, an old-time Strand burlesque, "The Field of the Cloth of Gold"—in which I played the French King Francis—failed to draw. The theatre was sublet to George Alexander, who, with Hamilton Aidé's farcical comedy, "Dr. Bill" (an adaptation from the French) first tried his hand at management. I believe that one of the stipulations made with Alexander in the transfer of the lease was that he should take over certain contracts, which he did, mine being among the number. In the above-mentioned play I appeared as Mr. Firman. The piece which followed "Dr. Bill," "The Struggle for Life," succumbed after a very feeble struggle, although the cast included George Alexander, Frederick Kerr, Ben Webster, Geneviève Ward, Kate Phillips, and Alma Stanley.

My next, and last, engagement before appearing in the music-halls was at Toole's Theatre, in "The Two Recruits," a farce in three acts, written by Frank Wyatt—a very funny and cleverly constructed play, but a failure, from the box-office point of view.

I have omitted one experience—lamentable in some respects—but with which are associated so many pleasant recollections that, looking back, I do not even regret my share of the serious financial loss incurred by the venture. The well-known actor John Beauchamp and I, during a short summer vacation, visited certain small towns with an entertainment consisting of songs and sketches from me, ("The Coster's Serenade," "The Coster's Courtship," &c., among the number), recitations by Beauchamp, and duologues from the works of Dickens. Beauchamp played Tony Weller, I played Sam. He was excellent as Tony—I was very bad as Sam. In a scene from "Martin Chuzzlewit," I may claim to have done better as Sairey Gamp. Another scene which we successfully produced was from "Oliver Twist." Beauchamp played Sikes and I took the part of Fagin. In Northampton, on Bank Holiday, the total night's receipts consisted of one solitary shilling. My brother (professionally known as Charles Ingle) took the "money" at the doors. Some eighteen months later he again officiated at the Corn Exchange, Northampton, in the same capacity. On this occasion, too, he took very little money at the doors; but for a different reason. At seven o'clock we opened to admit ticket-holders. Those who had purchased vouchers beforehand could get in—those who only possessed money had to go away!

Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"Sock and Buskin."

Messrs. Beauchamp and Chevalier.

Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

John Beauchamp and Albert Chevalier

as

"Betsy Prig" and "Sairey Gamp."

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CHAPTER V

ON the closing of Toole's Theatre I found myself once more out of a shop—to use a term which to the actor is full of such terrible meaning. Charles Morton offered me an engagement to sing at the Alhambra. This offer was a direct result of certain successes I had been able to make during my comic opera and burlesque experiences at the Strand and Avenue Theatres. Although I could not afford to do so, I declined the offer, because I had no faith in my power to hold a music-hall audience. It is one thing to be part of a picture, as an actor is supposed to be in a play, it is quite another thing to stand up alone, and entertain. It is one thing to be "of the halls," it is a totally different thing for the actor, suddenly transferred, to adapt himself and his methods. In this connection I may be permitted to quote from a paper which, in 1893, I was invited to read at the Playgoers' Club.

(In the light of riper experience the quotation calls for certain qualifications; which qualifications, under the circumstances, I consider myself entitled to make.)

"... I unhesitatingly assert that to hold and to

interest a music-hall audience is by far the more difficult task."

I should have added, "when the performer attempts to be artistic, and to produce his effects legitimately."

Later on I shall refer to this subject again. At present I have to record a welcome which was as gratifying as it was unexpected. In my heart of hearts I have always looked upon my success in the halls as a fluke—one of those freaks of fortune which it is difficult to explain. I remember standing at the back of the Pavilion circle, with the late Newsome Smith (then managing director) a night or two before I made my *début.* Bessie Bellwood was occupying the stage. Bessie Bellwood was—well, she was Bessie Bellwood!—vulgar, if you like, but oh! she had the saving grace of humour. The boys in the gallery started chaffing, or, as she would have called it, "chipping" her; but they didn't stand the ghost of a chance. The wittiest "god" that ever hurled satire at a stage favourite, from the security of Olympian heights, would only attempt it with Bessie, knowing full well that he would come off second best. I had often witnessed her performance before, but now it had a special, a personal interest for me. I was to appear before those very "chippers." Where should I be if they started chatting during my performance, as they were at that moment with Miss Bellwood? Turning to Newsome Smith, I nervously exclaimed, "You've made a big mistake. They'll never listen to me. I shall be a dire frost!" He smiled, and begged to differ.

Newsome Smith was right and I was wrong. A

Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

ALBERT CHEVALIER AND JOHN BEAUCHAMP

AS

"SAM WELLER" AND "TONY WELLER."

Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

ALBERT CHEVALIER AND JOHN BEAUCHAMP

AS

"SAM WELLER" AND "TONY WELLER."

[*To face p.* 34.

kinder and more considerate audience I never played to than on my first appearance at the London Pavilion. To recall what actually happened, would be to conjure up the details of a lightning dream. All I know is that I went on, and when I came off I heard the audience applauding. Next day the papers said kind things about my initial effort. My opening song was "The Coster's Serenade."

THE COSTER'S SERENADE.

WRITTEN BY ALBERT CHEVALIER, COMPOSED BY JOHN CROOK.

You ain't forgotten yet that night in May,
Dahn at the Welsh 'Arp, which is 'Endon way?
You fancied winkles and a pot of tea,
"Four 'alf," I murmured, "'s good enough for me."
"Give me a word of 'ope that I may win"—
You prods me gently with the winkle pin.
We was as 'appy as could be that day
Dahn at the Welsh 'Arp, which is 'Endon way.

Oh, 'Arriet, I'm waiting, waiting for you, my dear,
Oh, 'Arriet, I'm waiting, waiting alone out here.
When that moon shall cease to shine,
False will be this 'eart of mine;
I'm bound to go on lovin' yer, my dear; d'ye 'ear?

You ain't forgotten how we drove that day
Dahn to the Welsh 'Arp, in my donkey shay;
Folks with a "chy-ike" shouted, "Ain't they smart?"
You looked a queen, me every inch a Bart.
Seemed that the moke was saying, "Do me proud;
Mine is the nobbiest turn-out in the crowd."
Me in my "pearlies" felt a toff that day,
Dahn at the Welsh 'Arp, which is 'Endon way.

Oh, 'Arriet, &c.

Eight months ago and things is still the same,
You're known about 'ere by your maiden name;
I'm gittin' chivied by my pals, 'cos why?
Nightly I warbles 'ere for your reply.
Summer 'as gone, and it's a-freezin' now,
Still love's a-burnin' in my 'eart, I vow;
Just as it did that 'appy night in May
Dahn at the Welsh 'Arp, which is 'Endon way.

Oh, 'Arriet, &c.

My first night's programme also included: "The Nasty Way 'e Sez It" (written by me, and set to music by Charles Ingle) and a song entitled, "Funny Without Being Vulgar," by Harry Brett, and Chas. Ingle, which I originally sang at the Avenue Theatre in "The Field of the Cloth of Gold." After these, in due course, came, among others, "Wot Che'r; or, Knocked 'em in the Old Kent Road," "Sich a Nice Man Too," "The Future Mrs. 'Awkins," "The Coster's Courtship," and one of the most successful of all my songs, "My Old Dutch."

During my first season I accepted a few engagements from the managers of certain provincial music-halls, but in the majority of these places my work, notwithstanding its London success, met with a very poor reception. I must, however, except Birmingham, where, at the Gaiety, I played to large and most appreciative audiences. In Manchester, at the Palace, they hissed me. A few months later I went back to all these towns, this time with my Recital entertainment. Needless to say, I did not revisit the provincial music-halls. I appeared instead in places like the Free Trade Hall, Manchester; St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow, &c.

On my reappearance in Manchester a local paper, recalling certain unfavourable remarks made on the occasion of my music-hall *début* in that city, said :—

"Yes, Mr. Chevalier, we did hiss once—only once, sir, believe me—but we have tried to atone this week. Don't be hard on us, and do please come again soon!"

Since then I have been to Manchester many times, and I hope to go there again many, many times.

The arrival of the "turns" is a great feature in music-hall life. The late Bessie Bellwood once impersonated the driver of a pro.'s brougham. It is of course absolutely necessary to hire a conveyance, in order to keep anything like time, when appearing nightly at two or three halls. Some of these conveyances are quaint in the extreme. I have often wondered why the drivers so religiously adhere to the livery coat, considering that the remainder of their costume, more often than not, consists of corduroy or check trousers (these the rug covers), a bowler, or straw hat, according to season, and a clay pipe. The brougham itself is strongly reminiscent of the Deadwood Coach, exhibited by Buffalo Bill at Earl's Court some years ago. Sometimes there is carpet on the floor, sometimes straw. But interest centres in the driver. He is a distinct type. He isn't a cabman ; he isn't a coachman, or a stable hand. He drives a pro.'s brougham. A certain comic singer, working three halls a night for the first time in his career, hired a brougham and a driver, known familiarly to his intimates as "Punch." Being a novice in the hack-

hiring line, and with a view to encouraging future punctuality, the master instructed his driver to pull up at a certain public-house. He was anxious to establish a pleasant understanding, and so, with perhaps a suspicion of patronage, he asked "Punch" "what he would have." Something—it may have been an extra stress on the aspirate—irritated the driver, who promptly descended from the box. Drawing himself up to his full height (which was just four feet) he addressed his master as follows: "Wot am I a-goin' to 'ave? Look 'ere, guv'nor, we'd better start as we're a-goin' hon. You call me 'Punch,' I'll call you 'Bill!' Mine's 'arf a pint of mild an' bitter."

My music-hall contracts extended over a period of seven years. Out of these seven years, about three were actually spent in the halls. The remainder of the time I devoted chiefly to touring in the provinces with my Recitals, the business arrangement of these tours being then, as now, in the hands of my brother, Charles Ingle. I lost a lot of money in a foolish attempt to run the Trocadero; but the phenomenal success of my Recitals on tour enabled me to discharge not only my own, but my partner's liabilities in connection with this unfortunate venture. Mention of the Trocadero reminds me of an experience which I related in *M. A. P.* some time ago. Here it is as it appeared in the columns of that excellent paper:—

"I have recently read accounts of foolish people bearding the lion in his den. In the days of my youth I was stupid enough to attempt the Daniel

Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

JOHN BEAUCHAMP AND ALBERT CHEVALIER

AS

"BETSY PRIG" AND "SAIREY GAMP."

Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

JOHN BEAUCHAMP AND ALBERT CHEVALIER

AS

"BILL SIKES" AND "FAGIN."

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Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"SOCK AND BUSKIN."

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act once—and only once. On the occasion in question a couple of lions were being trained to prowl around a young lady, while she indulged in a dance. When she had finished rehearsing, the trainer asked me if I would care to go into the cage? I accepted his invitation on his assurance that there was no danger, as the lions were dead tired. I remained in the cage for a few minutes, and the trainer then suggested that he should leave me alone—again assuring me that I was quite safe. He left the cage, and I remained inside alone, just long enough to enable me to say I had done so. When he returned I made a graceful, if hurried, exit. I had hardly time to get out, when one of the dead-tired lions made a spring, and pinned the trainer to the bars of the cage. Under his breath he called for a stick, which was passed through the bars. He seemed to stare the animal out of countenance, for it suddenly dropped and prowled across to its mate. The trainer, now armed with a heavy stick, attacked the lion, defending himself with a chair, which he held out whenever the animal he was striking turned on him. This continued for about twenty minutes, when both animals seemed completely cowed. He made them lie down, and then, seating himself in the middle of the cage, lighted and smoked a cigarette. When he came out I congratulated him on his presence of mind. 'Ah,' he said, 'if I'd moved when he pinned me against the bars, he'd have done for me. My only chance was to keep still and look him full in the face.' I made a note of that valuable tip, in case I should ever take it into my head to keep lions."

In London, from time to time, I was engaged at the following halls: The Pavilion, Tivoli, Oxford, Canterbury, Metropolitan, Middlesex, Cambridge, Royal, and Paragon. Sometimes I worked as many as five halls nightly. It was a wonderful experience—one from which any actor would have derived benefit. The rapid change of audiences—ten o'clock at the Tivoli, ten forty-five at the Middlesex! Having to sing the same songs at each hall, but under conditions as widely different as chalk is from cheese. No! it was not easy. Often on first nights, driving from hall to hall, I have quaked, never feeling sure that the attention which I had received at, say, the Tivoli, might not be followed in a few moments at, perhaps, the Canterbury by the necessary, but to me distressing, interruption of a drunken man being turned out, in the middle of one of my quietest songs.

Mention of the Canterbury reminds me that the night I first sang "My Old Dutch" there, they would not listen to me, although half an hour before, at the Tivoli, you could have heard the proverbial pin drop during my performance, and after—well, there are certain rounds of applause which I don't think an actor ever forgets. What makes it so difficult to produce effects artistically and legitimately in a music-hall is that you are never quite certain of your audience. One tipsy man in the gallery is sufficient to upset all your calculations. In a theatre, after the first night, it is only on rare occasions that there is the slightest disturbance. It is very different in a music-hall, where a proportion of the audience comes, not to be amused, but to amuse itself. My

Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"MY OLD DUTCH."

[*To face p.* 40.

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experience at the Canterbury, to which I have just referred, was the more extraordinary because I was not a new-comer. I was, if anything, a favourite there, and strange to say, before the end of the week, "My Old Dutch" (which I had cut out on finding it was not to the taste of the audience) was not only clamoured for, but listened to as attentively as it ever was anywhere. Now, suppose that the night they hissed me at the Canterbury had been my first appearance in London. The chances are that the management would not have allowed me to go on again. Many so-called failures have been made under similar conditions.

From an artistic point of view the music-hall may improve when the possession of a wine and spirit licence is not considered the essential attribute for proprietorship. The success of the theatre is mainly due to the efforts of a long list of actor-managers. Where to-day do we find the best dramatic work? At the Lyceum, the Haymarket, St. James's, and Her Majesty's. These houses are all controlled by artists who are also men of business. A few years ago the music-hall was going to revolutionise the entertainment world. It seemed possible that managers would take advantage of a "boom" which was so extensively advertised; but being only business men, they could not, neither did they wish to see beyond their financial noses.

The following selection from one of their programmes will serve to illustrate their system of "giving art a chance." For obvious reasons I have rechristened the performers.

No. 10. The Cocoa Warmer and the Cold Muffin will box six rounds.
No. 11. Miss Celia Fitzgibbons.
(Prima Donna from La Scala, Milan.)
No. 12. The Sisters Longlegs.
(Duettists.)

No. 10 was of course the "star turn," consequently the audience attracted by it, in a neighbourhood notorious for slums, could not appreciate, and declined to listen to, No. 11 in a really beautiful rendering of a very popular ballad. No. 12 was an immense success. The Sisters Longlegs "duetted" in unison, or near it, occasionally. Why do the Sisters never harmonise? They might attempt it, if only by way of prettily emphasising the family tie. Perhaps in the eternal fitness of things they exist to prove that Union is Strength.

A few conscientious "turns" still endeavoured to do good work. Equally conscientious critics, who had "found" the music-hall, and now found it wanting, saw in their efforts a desire "on the part of the management" to establish a higher standard. They forgave, and perhaps forgot, the residue of coarseness and inanity, in a momentary glimpse of something better. They exaggerated the possibilities. They reckoned without the "Blue Bag" and the purely commercial directorate.

The Variety Demon promised, but it did not perform. It transferred its favours to certain theatrical speculators, who availed themselves of that curious concession, the Lord Chamberlain's licence, to produce what was practically a music-hall

show, in which two or three of the performers had a monopoly of the "turns." This ingenious ruse cut the ground from under their rivals' feet. The "eminently respectable" could go to see a "play"—and they went. Then the music-hall managers, realising that they had lost their opportunity, by way of revenge, produced dramatic sketches. Think of it! "The Ticket-of-Leave Man," in two scenes, boiled down, and played by a couple of well-intentioned variety artists! Melodrama in ten minutes, with a pan of red fire for each minute! The palmy days of Richardson's Booth feebly resuscitated, by way of educating the masses, and wiping out the Lyceum.

It is a curious fact that the Palace Theatre, which, under the auspices of Charles Morton, a gentleman of experience and refinement, comes nearer the ideal variety theatre than any other establishment in London, should have been selected by the so-called Purists as their special butt. The abolition of the liquor traffic alone, will not cleanse the show. It is impossible for art, with the tiniest "a," to thrive very long in our music-halls under existing conditions. It may occasionally come as a surprise, and for that reason even please for a time; but it cannot and will not find a home there until the "Blue Bag" yields to the "Blue Pencil." I am not narrow-minded. If certain *blasé* individuals, with jaded palates, want spice, give it to them—let them wallow in it; but see that it is in a place set apart, not in a hall where each programme contains a dead-letter footnote, requesting the audience to report to the management anything objectionable in the entertainment. Let the prurient-

minded have a hall to themselves. Call it the *Obscenity*, but for the sake of the majority—the lovers of clean, wholesome amusement--make it an offence, punishable at law, for any one to encroach on the prerogative of those engaged in pandering to the tastes of the Dirty and Depraved.

The actor-manager runs a theatre to make money—true. To gain a position—true. To gratify his vanity—perhaps. But this combination of motives urges him as a rule to uphold the dignity of his profession, and to deserve the respect of the public.

CHAPTER VI

A FEW days before I made my *début* in the halls I met a well-known dramatic author at the Green Room Club. He took me to task very seriously for contemplating what he was pleased to term "social suicide." "You must be mad," he exclaimed, "to throw up your position as an actor for the sake of tempting Fortune in the music-halls. I am truly sorry. You're going to make a hash of your career. You'll never get your nose inside a theatre again." So much for prejudice, as I encountered it ten years ago. Many of my best friends looked upon the matter in the same light; but there comes a time in every man's life when he must decide for himself. My friends meant well, I felt sure of that. Possibly they imagined I was going to challenge the lion comiques—to adopt their methods. This, I realised, would have spelt ruin to me. Music-hall performers succeed in theatres when they adapt their methods to their surroundings. Why, then, I argued, should not an actor succeed in the halls by similarly adapting himself and his methods? One thing which greatly influenced me in my decision was a love of independence. I thought I could do something which, unless I took a theatre and produced a play, specially

written for me, I might never have the chance to do. As an actor I had always been associated either with burlesque and comic opera or with parts of the "crotchety old man" type. I remember once, when a manager was casting a piece, suggesting that I might be able to successfully impersonate a certain character in which there was a vein of sentiment. I shall never forget the look that manager gave me. "My dear boy," said he, smiling at my presumption, "I know you can make 'em laugh, but I can't afford to let you do it in the wrong place!" He could not believe that the audience would, under the circumstances, take me seriously. There is a penalty attaching to success in any one special line. To prove you are capable of doing something else outside that particular line is next door to impossible, at all events in a theatre. Nowadays actors are more often than not engaged because in private life they resemble the parts they are called upon to "impersonate." This is the age of the specialist. An actor is successful as a Frenchman, a German, a dude, a villain, or a lunatic, and he is doomed henceforth to earn his living either as the aforesaid Frenchman, German, dude, villain, or lunatic.

I wanted to break fresh ground, and in doing so I too paid the penalty of the specialist. Arthur Symons christened me the "Costers' Laureate," and it is wonderful to reflect how, even to this day, with a programme consisting of types as widely differing as "An Old Bachelor" and the Curate in "Our Bazaar," certain critics in some of the small towns which I visit on my provincial tours will, in writing

of my entertainment, speak of "his rendition of some of his best-known *coster* songs," and then proceed to enumerate as follows: "An Old Bachelor," "Our Little Nipper," "A Fallen Star," "Burlesque French Song," "Our Bazaar," &c.

It was this type of "critic" I attempted to burlesque in a sketch which I produced recently at the Queen's Hall. Unfortunately, in some respects it was too "shoppy" to be very successful. The audience had never met the man. Their state was the more gracious. They did not know him as I knew him, and so the point of the skit did not appeal to them; but it certainly went on Press Nights! I chaffed this "critic" concerning his weakness for "dipping into the unlucky tub of set phrases, with the result that the impersonator of Hamlet is classed with the clog-dancer as an 'able exponent' or a 'gifted artiste,' or possibly Irving is told that 'he took his *rôle* with discretion and showed ability of no mean order.'" I tried to represent the man as a well-intentioned, egotistical, slightly patronising person, who, in describing the local *début* of an old acquaintance in the part of Othello (the acquaintance dating back to a time when they were both members of an amateur minstrel troupe), wrote the following criticism: "Mr. —— played Othello with the same verve and spirit which always distinguished his delineation of coon characters."

When my playwright friend told me that I should never get my nose into a London theatre again, he was as wrong as he was in calling my temporary secession from the theatre "social suicide." I had

not been in the halls more than a few months, when I received two offers to return to my first love, the theatre—one from George Alexander and the other from the late D'Oyley Carte. These were quickly followed by many more, including one from John Hollingshead (representing a syndicate) to run me at the Princess's in drama, one from the Shaftesbury, and quite a number for various pantomimes. I also had plays submitted to me written by well-known authors, and I was offered more private work than I could possibly accept. Of these private engagements I shall now have a word or two to say.

Nervous as I naturally am, I am never more so than when appearing at private engagements. To an actor accustomed to the conditions of a theatre, a few screens and lamps form a poor substitute. I have had some delightful experiences when performing in private houses, and I have had some which no fee would ever tempt me to repeat. These unpleasant ones were nearly always the result of being left to the tender mercies of Flunkeydom. There is one night, indelibly stamped on my memory—one awful night when I was engaged to appear "before Royalty" at the house of a noble lord. I was timed to go on about 10.30. At ten o'clock I drove up to the front door with my "props" in a modest four-wheeler. I rang the bell once, twice, several times. It was a cold night. After waiting a quarter of an hour, as nobody answered the bell, I made up my mind to go home. Before I had time, however, to re-enter my cab, a dirty-looking scullery-maid came up the back-door steps and inquired "'oo was a-ringin'?" I

explained the position. In a few minutes the front door was thrown open, and I was escorted, or rather patronisingly led, to my dressing-room by a gorgeously arrayed prototype of Thackeray's "Jeames." The fact that I was receiving a fee for my services entitled this person, so he imagined, to treat me not only with offensive familiarity, but with less consideration than he would possibly, in his magnificence, have extended to a new groom. I have mixed with all sorts and conditions of men, under all sorts of conditions. I am thoroughly Bohemian, and patronage to me is as the proverbial red rag to a bull. Under any circumstances I resent it; but to be patted on the back by a swaggering, liveried nonentity—a nought without a rim—who told me to "go *h*upstairs," was more than I could stand. I was already boiling over with irritation at having been kept waiting on the front door-steps for a quarter of an hour. Knowing the man I had to deal with, I, metaphorically, jumped on him, whereupon he became comparatively civil. An agent had negotiated the engagement. I had stipulated, as I invariably do under similar circumstances, that I should not have to walk into a drawing-room in my "make up"—that there should be an arrangement of screens, or curtains, to separate me from the audience. I discovered that there was a kind of stage erected some distance from the dressing-room. To reach this, however, it was necessary to traverse a long passage, which passage the flunkey assured me was reserved solely for the use of "*h*artist*es*." To my horror, on leaving my dressing-room, made up as an old yokel in decayed corduroys, and a dirty smock-

frock, I found the passage through which I had to go, in order to reach the platform, crowded with guests—gentlemen in evening dress, and ladies in elaborate gowns—who, as I heard one of them whisper, were "going to see what the funny man looked like near to." Royalty had not yet arrived. West played the introduction to my song, "'E Can't Take a Roise Out of Oi," and I walked on to "entertain." Every one was talking. The song consists of three verses. About half-way through the last, somebody laughed very faintly, and the others looked round with languid curiosity to see what was the matter. Lorgnettes were levelled at me as I made my exit, feeling like a spent bottle of ginger-beer—not champagne—ginger-beer. There were only two or three artists engaged. One, I remember, was an opera singer, with what I once heard described in America as a "searchlight" top note. There was also a humorist—a foreigner—whose comments in the dressing-room on the manners and customs of high-toned English society, as displayed on this particular occasion, were funnier even than his stage gags; but I don't think they would have been quite so well received! With the arrival of Royalty, which, as luck would have it, occurred in the middle of my second song, the chattering diminished, and by the time I went on for my last "turn" the conditions were a little more favourable. When I had finished, the host came round and asked me to give them that "awfully jolly song of yours—er—don't you know? Oh, an awfully jolly song!" I mildly hinted that the description was too vague for purposes of identification,

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Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"'E CAN'T TAKE A ROISE OUT OF OI!"

[*To face p.* 50.

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Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"KNOCKED 'EM IN THE OLD KENT ROAD."

[*To face p.* 51.

whereupon his lordship proceeded to hum something, still insisting that it was "an awfully jolly song." Anything more funereal than the noble lord's attempt to remind me of a "jolly song" it would be impossible to imagine. I apologised profusely, but as his knowledge was limited to the tune, or, as W. S. Gilbert says, "something resembling a tune," I could not for the life of me guess the particular song he wanted. One moment his effort feebly suggested "The Lost Chord," then it somehow merged into "Little Brown Jug." The only thing he seemed absolutely certain about was that it was an "awfully *jolly* song." Later on in the evening a solution dawned, not on me, but on West. As we wended our way homeward West was very silent. He had been thinking deeply. As I wished him good-night the spell broke. Bursting into a wild guffaw, he excitedly exclaimed, "I know! Lord —— was trying to sing 'Knocked 'em in the Old Kent Road!'"

As a result of the above experience I wrote the following song, which I shall probably produce in London next season:—

THE FLUNKEY.*

Hi'm disgusted with my present situation,
  Hi took it in a casual sort of way,
An' I hain't got not the slightest 'esitation
  In sayin' as I now regrets the day.
I've been used to mixin' in the 'ighest suckles,
  Where one can meet the chickest of the chic;
From my powdered 'ead of 'air down to my buckles
  In helegance I'm halways hup to Dick.

By permission of Messrs. Reynolds and Co., 13, Berners Street, W.

So me an' my young woman's given notice,
We can't abear the company they keep;
We don't see no Dooks or Princes,
And we ain't been used to minces,
To dine without a hontray is a bit too steep!

The governor's a common button maker,
Of trade I've hallus managed to fight shy;
'E's a terror at 'is ware'ouse near Long Acre,
But trembles when I fix 'im with my heye!
Oh, 'e do get hon my nerves when 'e's at table,
The things 'e sez! the 'orrid jokes 'e'll crack!
Now the missus, cos she's gone an' missed a sable,
Makes vulgar low remarks about the "sack."

So me an Hangelina's given notice,
They've 'urt our feelings, cut into 'em deep;
We are class, an' they're parv*e*nus,
You can tell it by their m*e*nus,
An' the master's best cigars would make a hangel weep!

Though they wants to be considered quite "de rigger,
The *e*lite mostly keeps itself aloof;
Still, they hentertains an' tries to cut a figger,
The buttons seems to bring in lots of oof.
Hat a swarry I was filled with hindignation,
Hi must say I was hawfully henraged;
They expected me, a pillar hof the nation,
To serve a lot of singers they'd hengaged!

So me and my financier give 'em notice,
Hi can't stand bein' knocked hall of a 'eap;
Hi can 'and a hice politely
To a party as is knightly,
But to 'ave to wait on hartists is a bit too steep

CHAPTER VII

I ALWAYS look forward to my provincial tours. For the past ten years, with the exception of the time I was in America, I have spent a considerable portion of each year in the provinces, appearing almost invariably before large and enthusiastic audiences. The work in connection with these tours is no sinecure. As a rule my brother Ingle starts booking three or four months in advance. I seldom stay more than two nights in a town. I "get away before they find me out," as dear old John Toole once jokingly said to me. On the occasion in question I met him coming out of the local booking-agent's office in Ilfracombe. He had remained inside for half an hour, unrecognised by the clerk, whom he had utterly bewildered by insisting on having seats for my Recital, "as he was intimately acquainted with a friend of mine in London, a policeman. If they doubted his word, he referred them to Scotland Yard." I should like to repeat the many encouraging things which John Toole has said to me from time to time; but in cold print it would be hopeless to express the kindly interest which, as spoken by him, his words conveyed. I have to thank him for advice which has proved of the greatest value to me. "Always keep

to that little bit of human nature in your work. . . . Aim at depicting true comedy, in which there is not only laughter, but tears." He came into the show that night at Ilfracombe, and the encouragement of his appreciative presence, the consciousness that I was playing before a past-master of the art which can command not only the laughter, but the tears of an audience, spurred me on to do "all I knew."

I have a press-cutting book—a formidable-looking volume it is, too—which contains for me, I am glad to say, more pleasant than unpleasant reading. There is one cutting from a London paper which I may be pardoned for quoting, as it does not so much refer to my actual performance, as to the motive behind my work :—

"Welcome Chevalier, who has ministered so much to the healthy amusement of both sexes."

I am very proud of this cutting, as I am of many more in my big book. Judicious applause is a fine stimulant. If an audience only realised how much more it can get for its money by showing its appreciation! That is why actors on first nights are seldom seen at their best. It is hard work to appear before a body of people who have come, not to be entertained, but to criticise. To a public performer, the moral pat on the back, at the right moment, means more perhaps than to any other artist, for the simple reason that so far as it can be of any real service, there is a time limit. To him the moment is when he is actually working. The author and the painter are not seen at their work—building it up, and completing it in public.

I shall perhaps be reminded of the fact that actors rehearse, which preliminary I should compare with the author's or painter's "thinking out" before either touches pen and paper, or paint-brush and canvas.

I have had several delightful tours in Ireland. Dublin gave me a remarkable welcome on the occasion of my *début* there. In four nights I appeared before twenty thousand people. In one of the smaller Irish towns Ingle, on his arrival at the hall, could not see a seat in the place. He applied to the caretaker, who said, "Sure, that'll be all right. You lave it to me, sorr." Ingle "left it to him" for two hours. When he returned, about six o'clock, he found that the caretaker had been as good as his word. There were the seats, but covered in dust, having been put away for months to "keep clean" in a cellar. Ingle suggested that it would not be a bad idea to dust them, whereupon the caretaker replied, "That'll be all right. You lave it to me, sorr. Sure they'll dust 'em when they sit on 'em!"

On the conclusion of each tour from 1891 to 1895, I returned to my engagements in the music-halls. I always tried to reopen with one or two new items. I did not, however, change frequently enough to meet with the approval of one critic, who accused me of allowing my songs to wear out their welcome. Parodying "My Old Dutch," he attacked me in verse thus :—

"We've heard your songs, old pal,
They're mostly out-and-outers;
Many months yet we shall
Hear them from Highway Shouters—

And we applaud each dainty thing,
Which you, our Albert, blithely sing,
But oh! we 'ope you'll not cling
To these too much.

Chorus.

We've been togevver now for two or three years
From 'Arriet to My Old Dutch;
But we 'ope *re* the ditties of the Coster Band
That you won't wear them out too much."

Claiming an equal right to paraphrase my own song, I replied next day as follows:—

"Listen you shall,
You gen'rous, thoughtful critic,
You're a dear, good old pal
With a mania analytic.
It ain't so long since fust we met,
I've got yer praises by me yet;
An' now yer seems a bit upset—
Cheer up, old pal!

Chorus.

You've been a critic now for many a year,
An' perhaps you 'ave seen too much,
It ain't my fault if, with the great B.P.,
You're a little bit out of touch!

I see yer, pal,
Yer fads an' fancies sportin';
Lizer, 'Arriet, Sal,
I've been a long time courtin'.
wants to reach the public's 'eart—
A orgin as gives your'n a start;
ain't for you I acts a part,
My *blasé* pal!

Chorus as before.

I calls yer "pal,"
  You queer opinion airer!
Like a faded old gal,
  I should wish you to be fairer.
I ain't a angel! When you start
A-tryin' to be extry smart,
I recollects *as you don't part*
  To 'ear me, pal!"

Chorus just as before.

Here are a few specimens of curious communications which have been sent to me from time to time :—

WELCOME TO SOUTH SHIELDS TO MR CHEVALIER.

MERIT and worth will always win the Day
When combined with a Clever Rich Display,
And South Shields folks are Brave and true
So unite to give Honour where 'tis Due.

Mr. Albert Chevalier's Great aim and Plan
Is to comfort and cheer his Fellow-man;
A Select and Rare treat we will find
A credit and Boon to mankind.

So long live Mr. Chevalier we say to-night!
May his star be never Dim, But always Bright!
May Prosperity and Honour attend him Day by Day,
And nothing Ever Plunge him in Dismay!

By W—— H——,
Local Poet (a Poor Man). By request of several gentlemen.

"DEAR SIR,—I write songs for composers, but I have just composed a descriptive song of walking on the seashore and fancying I heard a gull scream, but

on looking round about I found a girl in tears. I go to her and tell her I am a Palmist, and read her hand, and so on. I find she has had a row with her lover. I advise her, &c. Knowing your clever make-ups and acting, I venture to take the liberty to write and ask you may I send it for your inspection. I can get it set to music. Would you give me £10 or £15 for it? If you do I'll soon make it the rage for you through two well-known personages in Society.

"Yours faithfully,

"R—— V—— (Miss)."

"Dear Sir,—I am sending you these few lines to know if you require any New songs. I have eighteen Comic and two Love Songs which I should like to have the Pleasure of showing you at any time you like to mention. I would bring them up to you, if you would kindly let me know what time I could bring them after you done work in the afternoon, and you would look them over, which would take about a quarter of an hour. They would make you and others Laugh when you read the lines and verses. They are the Life and ways of the People; they are not Vulgar they are my own, they are not old Songs on New Lines they would Please the Audience. And make them Laugh, I would like to show them to you or any other Artistes.

"I am, yours faithfully,

"R—— F——"

"—— St. Lukes, E.C.

"Dear Sir,—Will you kindly Excuse me kindly taking the liberty of Writing to you but a Happy

thought struck me, of a cheap advertisement for you and also of doing me a turn. I am a Coster and my round extends from St. Lukes to Regents Park I am well known in the West End as well as here, But Being a Bit on my Knuckle just now I thought perhaps you could help me in an easy way. and this is My plan, if you had by you, an old suit of Pearlys you could dress me up in Put an advertisement on my Clothes, in any Place the People could see Plain I could Wear them on my round, for a small sum. I have Been a West End Coachman for twenty years and have driven some of the Royals also the Khedive of Egypt Ishmail Pasha. When he was in London, I also have driven some Artists such as Cheevers and Kenedy. Miss Kate Munro. Sir Arthur Sullivan & Many Others But I have Made a good round and as a Coster am quite at home, But in want of a Little start. and answer to this Will Oblige

"Your Most humble Servant,

"T—— B——"

The following was sent to me when I was appearing at Koster and Bial's Theatre in New York :—

"—— Street,

"New York City.

"Dear Sir,—As I should like to hear you sing some of your songs and as the price of seats at Koster and Bial's is too steep for a working man, I should like you to send me tickets for me and the old

Dutch, I kept a Greengrocer's shop in Bethnal Green when George Leybourn was Lion Comic.

"Yours, &c.,

"G—— H——

"PS.—They printed your song, 'What's the good of *Harry Fink?*'—they think they know it all too! —G. H."

"*June*, 1900.

"To Mr. Albert Chevalier.

"DEAR SIR,—I do not know what you charge for your signature, and I have no money. Please could you let me have it? My address is—

"S. T. W.,

"—— House,

"—— College,

"Bucks."

PART II

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Photo by] "Our Bazaar." [*Hubert.*

Photo by] "The Waxwork Showman." [*Hubert.*

[*To face p.* 63.

PART II

CHAPTER VIII

A CERTAIN fabulous legend concerning an old gentleman and his donkey has, from time immemorial, been treasured for the moral it points, viz., you cannot please everybody. The legend only asserts a fact. The story culminates in a truism. I suppose every one has encountered the man who can always see how matters might be arranged, where improvements can be made, and who does not hesitate to submit his "ideas," either in letter form or by word of mouth. I have a remarkable collection of "suggested improvements." Nearly all the songs and sketches in my entertainment—so far as the words are concerned—are written by me. Before submitting a new item to an audience I have frequently turned it over in my mind for months beforehand. "Our Bazaar" (of which I am part author) remained on the shelf for two years. The dread of failure has often, at the last moment, caused me to postpone the production of something which I have not only written and thought out, but which I have carefully rehearsed for weeks—and then, I am such a hopelessly bad first-night performer! I am so susceptible to the

attitude—or what I imagine to be the attitude—of an audience, that if—as it sometimes happens—I am unfortunate enough to catch sight of one forlorn-looking, unsympathetic face, I lose consciousness of the smiling ones. I see only that moral wet blanket, and its influence is fatal. "Our Bazaar" might have remained on the shelf but for a particularly enthusiastic reception which I had one night in Bedford. The audience insisted on a double encore. I had come prepared with sufficient "props" for my usual programme. My wardrobe, so I thought, was exhausted. Hunting in a basket (the audience still applauding) my dresser turned out a clerical suit which I had ordered to be made when "Our Bazaar" was originally written. I seized hold of it, dressed rapidly, went on the stage, and so broke the ice with an impersonation which has proved to be a great favourite. What has pleased me as much as anything in connection with this item is that it has appealed to the "cloth" precisely as I intended it should do—as a perfectly good-humoured satire on that extra yard in the cloak of Charity, which is added to cover a multitude of—well, not exactly sins—but little winked-at evasions of certain rules governing ordinary trade transactions. That in some exceptional cases it struck unpleasantly home, may be gathered from the following correspondence:—

"—— Terrace, Chiswick.

"Dear Sir,—Having been present at your charming dramatic entertainment yesterday afternoon, and having thoroughly enjoyed it, I yet want to enter a humble

Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"WOT'S THE GOOD OF HANYFINK? WHY! NUFFINK!"

[*To face p.* 64.

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protest on one point. I need hardly say that point is your truthful and clever impersonation of a Church of England vicar. In view of the approaching Xmas holidays particularly, when young and old will throng to hear you, would it not be better and more expedient to impersonate the vicar's wife in your inimitable sketch of 'Our Bazaar'? This would obviate all suggestion of irreverence in the performance, which as it stands at present may offend many a weak brother like myself.

"Yours truly,
"T—— K——"

To which I replied :—

"DEAR SIR,—Your letter is so quaintly paradoxical that I am unable to quite grasp its meaning. In one and the same breath you 'protest' against a performance which you praise as 'clever and truthful.' In 'Our Bazaar' I ridicule a man who makes an ass of himself—I do not attack his calling. When a clergyman breaks the law his coat does not protect him. When a clergyman makes a laughing-stock of himself, he cannot reasonably reproach those who laugh at him. The writer who draws his characters from life must, in the natural order of things, offend some one. The type will object. I take it you are a bachelor. This I gather from your suggestion *re* the Vicar's wife—a suggestion which is as chivalrous as it is charitable—as gallant as it is amiable. But what has the poor lady done to deserve such attention? However, *you* evidently know, as you consider 'this

impersonation would be better and more expedient,' and as I am anxious to 'obviate all suggestion of irreverence in the performance' perhaps you will be good enough to write a sketch, round the type you desire me to ridicule—which sketch might be advertised in my programme as follows:—

"THE VICAR'S WIFE:
"(*a 'weak' brotherly sketch*)"
"Written by T—— K——
"and sung by,
"Yours truly,
"ALBERT CHEVALIER."

By way of contrast I will give just one more letter concerning my impersonation of the curate, which I received, a few months ago, from a clergyman living in the north of London:—

"DEAR SIR,—Allow me to thank you for the splendid humour of your 'Burlesque Lecture' given yesterday afternoon.

"We members of the clerical calling, which is in itself so great, need a good whipping like that when we give way to ridiculous antics.

"The tone of your whole afternoon performance, too, was so beautifully human that I could not help respecting you throughout as a real preacher of righteousness. . . .

"Yours faithfully,
"H. H.
"(*Vicar of St.* ——.)'

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Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"An Old Bachelor."

[*To face p.* 67.

When I produced "An Old Bachelor" I received the following from my good friend "the man who sees where improvements can be made." As an example of "how not to do it"—as a sample of that intelligence to which only the very obvious can appeal, it is worth quoting:—

"Dear Sir,—. . . At the finish of the song, after delivering his last lines, the old Bachelor buries his face in his arms on the table, at the same moment the stage gradually darkens, and the back scene opens at the upper centre, and shows an illuminated picture of a village church and graveyard by moonlight, at the same time the church organ is heard in the distance (this can be produced with an harmonium at back) and curtain descends slowly. This I think would bring down the house.

"Faithfully yours,

"P—— R——"

The following appeared in an article which I wrote for *M. A. P.*: "In the course of my career I have received many curious letters from unknown correspondents. Until recently I thought it would be impossible to beat some of these, as samples of cool impudence, but it has been reserved for a gentleman who writes from an address in Hampshire, to put my collection of many years entirely in the shade. He calls himself a 'soul specialist.' He cheerfully refers to the time when I shall 'shuffle off this mortal coil,' and asks if I shall then call to my bedside my brother artists, to comfort me with selections from their

various repertoires! He encloses me a printed form. Near the stamp at the bottom there is a blank space left for signature; and then comes this remarkable line: 'Witnessed by the angels in heaven.' On the stamp is a reproduction of a well-known picture of the Founder of Christianity. Accompanying this so-called 'bond' is a letter saying: 'I feel led by the Spirit of God to write to you in reference to your soul's eternal welfare, seeing that you are a wonderfully popular man, *as far as this world goes.*' The italics are mine. By way of encouragement the example of two 'converted' actresses (who only discovered how bad they were when business was the same!) is placed before me. The 'soul specialist' is gracious enough to believe that even I may occasionally doff the cap and bells in favour of more sober headgear. His generosity equals his condescension, for he offers 'to answer any question' or 'explain anything which I don't quite understand.' Only those who know me intimately can appreciate the largeness of this order."

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Photo by] [*B Knight.*

"OUR COURT BALL."

[*To face p.* 69.

CHAPTER IX

I DON'T think any cockney realises that he lives on an island, or understands what is meant by England's isolation, until he sails for a far-off land. I had often been away for two or three or six months, travelling mostly within the limits of the United Kingdom, but when the moment came to say "goodbye," and I knew my passage was booked on an Atlantic liner, I confess to a feeling which I had not hitherto experienced. It was but the foretaste of many new sensations. Why will people insist on seeing one off? It is the cruellest kindness which well-intentioned friends can inflict. It's bad enough at any time to say "goodbye" quietly; but to have it emphasised by shouts, and the waving of hats, handkerchiefs, umbrellas, sticks, hands, and other wavable objects, adds a weight to the heart, and swells that irritating anatomical enigma, the lump in the throat.

I had hardly set foot on the landing-stage at New York when I was seized by a gentleman of gigantic proportions, who, asking me "how I liked America," hustled me into a cab. The giant apologised for his apparent rudeness, explaining that he represented my managers, and that he was anxious to get me away

before the swarm of reporters should have time to surround, and interview me, which, so he informed me, they were waiting to do on the landing-stage. We drove off. I sat up in a corner eyeing my companion somewhat suspiciously. He then disclosed to me his plan of campaign. He had promised to take me first of all to the *Herald* office to meet the editor. Then he arranged that I was to spend the remainder of the evening with representatives of various other New York papers. With a tear in his voice he begged me to assure each and every individual pressman that I was being interviewed for the very first time in America—that, as a fact, I had promised my managers *he* should be the first in the field. Before I had time to dissent, or acquiesce, my transatlantic guardian, throwing a dash of sentiment into his naturally strident tones, said: "I know you will be pleased to hear that *Sir* Henry Irving" (he emphasised the "Sir" in a manner characteristic of true democracy, and repeated)—"*Sir* Henry Irving and Mr. John Hare have sent you telegrams containing the kindest welcome to this country, which country they regard as the greatest on earth." Having been a member of Mr. Hare's company some years previously, and knowing his good-nature, I was not surprised that he should have wired. I said as much, and expressed my appreciation of his thoughtfulness, but not having the honour of more than a casual acquaintance with Sir Henry Irving, I confess that I was not only pleased, but gratified to think that he should have so remembered me. Well, I contrived to get through the evening. At one time

I sat in a little room full of Press ladies and gentlemen who asked me "to talk." That's a terrible thing to be called on to do, when you are conscious of notebooks, and the presence of rapid stenographers! Still I managed to pull through the ordeal aided by my mentor, who, perspiring from over-anxiety, came to my relief every now and then with the Irving-Hare telegram story. I left my gentle adviser about 2 a.m. Just before bidding him "good-night" I asked him to let me have those two telegrams. I wished to keep them. "What telegrams?" said he. "Irving's and Hare's," I replied. He laughed—an unusual proceeding I afterwards discovered—then lapsed into solemn silence, which he broke with the following astonishing statement: "There are no telegrams." It took me about a week after that to know when to believe him—and then I wouldn't have bet on it.

My first evening's experience included a visit to the *Herald* office, where I was introduced to the editor. He very courteously showed me over the building. As we were roaming round we came to a little room full of pigeon-holes. "What room is this?" I inquired. "Obituary notice room," was the reply. Then, with a twinkle in his eye, the editor called an attendant and asked him to look in pigeon-hole C. "What name?" asked the attendant. "Chevalier," said the editor. There was a pause, and a little bundle of papers was handed to me for my inspection, and, I suppose, approval. The bundle of notes contained the necessary "copy" in case of my premature demise.

To his many accomplishments my friend, philosopher, and guide added that of yarn spinning. He had a larger stock of funny stories than any man I ever met, except, perhaps, our own English comedian, Arthur Williams. He was a perfect godsend to the journalistic Autolycus, who never failed to pay him a visit when hard up for "copy." Here are a couple of samples which occur to me at the moment:

He was at one time managing a theatre out west. The house could accommodate comfortably sixteen hundred people. During a performance one night the place caught fire. My friend assured me that the following day no less than ten thousand playgoers called to thank him for having saved their lives by placing them near the doors.

An actor—a notoriously bad one—sought him with a view to being engaged for a forthcoming production. The offer of his services was firmly but courteously declined. Losing his temper, the actor sneeringly remarked—

"You're like all the rest. You know nothing. You don't even begin to understand what good acting really means. You think you can do as you like because you have the dollars. I should like to know where you managers would be if it wasn't for us actors?"

"That question is easily answered," replied my friend. "I should be in a barber's chair, and you'd be shaving me!"

I arrived in New York a week before I was booked to appear at Koster and Bial's. A suite of rooms had been taken for me at the Normandie Hotel, Broad-

way. On the night of my arrival for reasons already given, I was tired out. I tumbled into bed and slept like a top. My sitting-, bed-, and bath-room were on the same floor. The following morning, when I was in my bath, I heard somebody apparently moving the furniture about in the sitting-room. I put my head out of the bath-room door, and, to my amazement, saw two gentlemen busily engaged in screwing together a photographic camera-stand. I was too staggered to say anything, but they courteously put me at my ease by informing me that they represented the *New York* —— (a newspaper). They were deputed to call with the object of obtaining three photographs of me depicting the following emotions: Surprise, Joy, and Disgust. I told them I should have some difficulty in supplying the middle one, but the other two I had on hand. "You are too good," was the answer. "Don't hurry—continue your ablutions. We'll wait till you're dry." The photos were taken, and in due course published. I had a frantic struggle about the second, but they declined to go until I placed my "joy" on record.

For the next few days I was hardly able to leave the hotel. From nine in the morning, until late in the evening, cards were brought in from people purporting to represent the Press. Not feeling sure of my ground, I received them all until my giant adviser happened to drop in. He assured me that they were not authorised at all. They simply represented the journalistic Autolycus on the look-out for unconsidered trifles. After this I declined to see

any one who could not produce proper credentials. To this action on my part I attribute several flattering (?) paragraphs which eventually appeared.

As my address was apparently public property, I decided to leave the Normandie (a remarkably comfortable hotel) and to take private rooms. No sooner had I done this than the following was printed in one of the daily papers : "The London costers are noted for thrift, but there is a man in this city who mimics their songs, sayings, and doings for —— a week. I refer to Mr. Chevalier." Of course a salary was mentioned. I say *a* salary because, although guesses were constantly hazarded, no paper, even by accident, ever gave the correct sum. "He makes more per diem than the President of the United States, and finds life enjoyable in a room that costs four dollars a week." As a matter of fact I found private rooms more expensive than living in an hotel.

Some remarks of a similar kind appearing in an evening edition called forth the following anonymous reply published next day :—

"—— I know for a fact that when on one occasion a man carried Chevalier's trunk up four flights of stairs, the latter put his hand in his pocket and gave him a nickel. I hope you will print this in the interest of fair play."

That there should be creatures willing to accept payment for scurrilous drivel of this description is bad enough, but that they should be permitted to publish it in an important newspaper, does not reflect much credit on the discrimination of the editorial department.

Before I Forget——

From the Press of America I received so much unqualified praise, that it may look like ingratitude to even recognise the existence of a section that is deplored by none more than by the cultured American journalist. Still, as I am recording my experiences, I may be forgiven if I do not allow the perfume of praise to obliterate all recollection of certain low-down thorns.

CHAPTER X

IN fear and trembling I wended my way to Koster and Bial's on that, by me, never-to-be-forgotten 23rd of March, 1896. There had been so much preliminary puffing, that I felt sure the audience would be disappointed. When the time came for me to go on, I was so nervous that I could hardly control my limbs. My knees were knocking together, my throat was parched, my head was on fire, my hands and feet were as cold as ice. I contrived to shake off a horrible dread that my memory would—to use an Americanism—go back on me. I talked to any one, about anything. A few minutes before my number went up my friend, philosopher, and guide came round to wish me luck. When I told him how I felt, he patted me on the back, saying: "What, nervous? You don't say! Nonsense! . . . Nonsense! . . . You'll hit them hard, sure! . . . Fail? . . . No, sir, no *artist* ever failed in Amurrica. . . . They're waiting to welcome you, sir. Why, I've just been round to have a look at the house. In the stalls there are two hundred and fifty of your old schoolfellows. . . . Sure! . . . I counted them!" My number went up, and the applause started. I feel nervous as I write about it now. My first song was the "Future Mrs.

'Awkins." Through the symphony the audience still applauded, and they continued to do so as I stood before them bowing, and bowing, unnerved by the warmth of a welcome which, as I had not yet commenced my song, could only have been meant to assist, to encourage me. I have never experienced anything like that night. I sang five songs, all in a dialect foreign to the majority of my hearers, and yet they did not miss a point. To work for such an audience was a real pleasure.

I have sometimes been accused of being too impressionable, too emotional. The charge, in my opinion, carries with it very little of reproach. I am not ashamed to own that when I came off the stage I was so elated, amazed, and overpowered by the experience I had just gone through, that I—well, never mind. They were calling for me, and I managed to control myself sufficiently to make the only successful speech I ever attempted. It was very short—a feeble expression of sincere gratitude, but it rang true, and was generously acknowledged.

As I was going upstairs to my dressing-room my "F. P. and G." met me with the following characteristic remark: "Sir! You own New York!"

Here is a story for which, shortly after my arrival, the inventive faculty of my friend, philosopher, and guide was responsible. It appeared in the *New York Times* shortly after my *début*:—

CHEVALIER'S IDEA OF DISTANCE.

Albert Chevalier has a better idea of distances now

than he possessed when he first set foot on New York soil.

When Koster and Bial's thousands finally induced him to come here, the fact that he would be able to see many of the famous things he had read about made him forget, to a considerable extent, the dread he had lest we should fail to approve his delineations of characters to be found in one place in the world. He thought of the Yellowstone National Park, the Capitol at Washington, Chicago, and Niagara Falls, and determined to see them all.

Jauntily swinging a cane, he walked briskly into Albert Bial's office last Tuesday afternoon and said—

"Well, Mr. Bial, I'm going to see them at last. *Au revoir!* See you at the performance to-night."

"Why, where are you going?" asked Mr. Bial.

"Oh, just going to take a run out to the Falls—Niagara Falls, you know. Goodbye for a while."

Away tripped the coster, leaving Mr. Bial speechless and incapable of action.

"Great Scott!" shouted the music-hall man when he recovered. "Niagara Falls! We'll lose him for to-night, sure. Get after him, there, everybody! Go to every *depôt* where he could get a train! Hurry on your lives! Ten dollars to the man who gets him!"

Every man in the office rushed to the street, and even the stage hands were pressed into service, and it seemed to passers-by in Thirty-fourth Street that a lot of lunatics had broken away from their keepers.

The man who went to the Grand Central Station won the reward. He found Chevalier calmly smoking a cigar in a smoking compartment on a Central

express. The train was due to start in a few seconds. There was no time for argument or explanation.

"Come on, sir, quick! come off!" screamed Mr. Bial's emissary. Chevalier looked at him amazed. The man seized the laureate by both arms, dragged him to his feet, picked him up, and soon had him on the platform.

The situation was explained in a few words as the train was vanishing northwards. In his dressing-room that night Chevalier found a bundle of time-tables and a card reading, "Compliments of Albert Bial."

CHAPTER XI

THE BOWERY BOY

CHUCK CONNORS, or, to give him the title by which he is known in the Bowery, "Mayor of China Town," is a great character, a type distinct from anything we can produce in England. He is a "tough," a real "tough." In appearance he might have wandered out of a slum in Whitechapel, but the moment he opens his mouth!—well, into that moment he can cram more lurid word-painting than any British artist I have ever encountered who fancied himself in the same line of business. Chuck was born in China Town, a quarter of New York set apart for Celestials. Bret Harte wrote about the Heathen Chinee, but Chuck Connors knows him, knows him intimately, and to his cost; a fact to which his arm bears witness—an arm slashed by a dagger in a scuffle with an irate 'John." In America all Chinamen are called "John." I have Chuck's authority also for saying that all Chinamen are cousins. He stolidly informed me that no other degree of relationship was recognised between Celestials. If a man's wife presented him with triplets, three more cousins had arrived to swell the already overcrowded list. It was a journalist who introduced

me to Chuck. We—the journalist, Alfred West, and I—visited the Bowery about eleven o'clock one night, and stopped there till the small hours of the morning. Chuck met us by appointment. His "get-up" was a surprise to me, it so resembled the costume I wear in one of my coster songs, "Our Court Ball." Talking of a ball, Chuck Connors related a rather curious incident connected with a dance of which he was the instigator. I think it was given to celebrate a fight which he had won. (The Bowery boy never works—it is against his principles—but he will fight for stakes.) Chuck was paying his attentions to some one in the vicinity of China Town, a damsel whose pet name was "the Rummage." The night before the ball "the Rummage" was locked up by an officious policeman for being drunk, and creating a disturbance. Chuck was in despair. What sort of a ball would it be without a hostess to welcome the guests? She must be bailed out—and she was, by Chuck, who, true to his plighted word, escorted her back to prison "after the ball."

About 2 a.m. we had supper in a Chinese "restaurant." I can laugh now as I mentally picture Alfred West struggling to follow Chuck's example, eating a bowl of rice with the aid of a couple of chopsticks!

We explored China Town from the Joss House to the opium dens, and then Chuck took us to Steve Brodie's saloon.

Steve Brodie is the man who created a sensation some years ago by diving off Brooklyn Bridge. Chuck called for a "schooner," the largest drink supplied in

any saloon, and I had—a look round. Two frames decorating the walls attracted my attention. One contained a splinter of wood with a blob of crimson on it, underneath which was written this explanatory note: "Drop of Charles Mitchell's blood spilt in his great fight with John L. Sullivan."

The other frame enclosed a piece of linen. This, the inscription told me, was—

"A portion of the shirt worn by —— on the day he was electrocuted for the murder of Mr. ——."

After this I went home.

I had not, however, heard the last of Mr. Connors. He came to the theatre one night, and next day I received the following communication from him:—

"friend chalvier i hope you will excus me for not seeing you last thirsday i hope you will not be sore me an the gal wants to see you but the blok wodent let us in so we went a way so i hope you will come down next thirsday night i will give you a good time for the favor you did me so chiv i hope you will not forget me come for you now one good tirn disvers an other no more from me chuck connors

"see me at 16 Doyer St

"thirsday night sure"

CHUCK'S VOCABULARY.

Don't be alarmed. I'm not going to give it *in extenso*, only little bits—tit-bits. For instance, when he told me that "his pipes were froze" I was to understand that he had a cold. The Bowery boy's term of

endearment for his sweetheart is "my Rag." A "twist" or a "spiel" is a dance. Thus the intention to whirl in a mazy waltz is conveyed in the following elegant sentence: "I'm going to have a twist wit' my Rag." Speaking confidentially to me concerning his "Rag," Chuck Connors assured me that "she had more fellers after her than you could shake a stick at." When I asked him how long he had lived in China Town he replied, "Been here since Daddy paid the doctor's bill!"

CHAPTER XII

ALFRED H. WEST, who as solo pianist and accompanist has so long and popularly been associated with my entertainment, is one of the quietest, most modest, and retiring of men. Give him his pipe and piano, and he is perfectly happy. He would not know how to begin to advertise himself, and I am glad to see that, in spite of this fact, his remarkable gifts are being recognised, even within the charmed circle of academic faddists. I say I am glad of this, because such is the influence of Red Tape, that it is considered risky to deal with those outside the ring. There is a "Tattersal's" in every profession, and the pass-word to it is not necessarily "Genius." Men force their way through on the strength of other attributes. Once inside, they can pose with the best. They have been recognised. As a musician Alfred West is almost entirely self-taught, and I hold that the self-educated man is generally the man with grip, the man of initiative. He learns because he wants to learn. He may be deprived of many advantages, but in the end he knows more. On my American trip West accompanied me in more senses than one.

To prove that West is able to hold his own under

any conditions, I need only refer to his frequent appearances at Robert Newman's concerts in the large Queen's Hall—concerts which appeal essentially to lovers of the best in music. I remember on one of these occasions West was playing a piece by Schumann for piano and orchestra. Henry J. Wood was conducting. At the conclusion West, after responding to five enthusiastic recalls, gave, as an encore, a scherzo of his own composition, which a musician sitting next to me informed his neighbour was "another Schumann."

I may be pardoned this digression, as it is essential to the story I am about to relate, that the reader should have some idea of the type of man whom I all but succeeded in "booming" on the approved American lines. One day, in New York, a pressman called on West to interview him. West begged me to relieve him of the ordeal, and to give whatever details of his career I might consider necessary. Seeing fun ahead, I consented, and the following is culled from an article concocted by me, submitted to, and accepted by the pressman, who, agreeing to send me a proof next day for correction, thanked me, and retired. The proof came—ah!—but thereby hangs a tale. Meanwhile here is the interview—or rather bits of it:—

"Alfred H. West, a native of Plymouth (England), is at the present moment thirty-four years old. A musical enthusiast, a pupil of Cipriani Potter (who, as everybody knows, was the near friend of, and studied with, Beethoven), superintended Mr. West's musical education. His father, a wealthy brewer, fearing that

he would take up music as a profession, knowing how precarious the calling was, decided that his son should study for the law, and with that end in view Alfred H. was sent to Eton, where he became famous among his companions as the composer of those students' songs which to this day resound through the historic corridors. He was captain of the cricket eleven which gained a notable victory over Harrow in '77. Following up his college success, at Lord's, he was personally congratulated by Dr. W. G. Grace on his wonderful left-hand bowling. Spraining his arm at football the following year, he was unable to practice his beloved piano, but with a turn for mathematics and calculation, which has never left him, he conceived a passion for chess. At St. Petersburg, he beat Strelitzki three games out of five. Rubinstein, who happened to be present, entered into conversation with him, and hearing him speak modestly of his musical achievements, begged him to play something of his own composition. Rubinstein was so struck with the originality of the work, that a few days after, West received a special command to appear before the Czar, at the Winter Palace. Here he met his first wife Princess —— with whom he contracted a morganatic marriage. This lady died three years after, leaving him with two children. On his return to England he found his father a ruined man. The necessity of earning his own living was forced upon our hero for the first time. This fall from the lap of luxury he naturally felt very keenly. One night, at the Carlton Club, Mr. Chevalier was introduced to him by Lord Salisbury and the late Cardinal Manning.

"He is now on tour with Chevalier.

"This is the history of one who might have been a lawyer, a professional cricketer, a champion goal-keeper—one who became a petty Prince, but whose musical genius has wafted him, on the wings of the American Eagle, to win fresh laurels under the fostering shelter of the Stars and Stripes."

Unfortunately for the success of my scheme, I was out when the proof arrived. West, however, was at home, and when I returned I found him engaged in a heated argument with a printer's devil, who declined to go away without the corrected proof. West, over-coming his natural modesty, gave the devil a letter to his chief explaining matters; and in due course a less romantic, but distinctly more truthful, account of his career appeared in print—the result, this time, of a personal interview. I may add, that though I volun-teered my services, West would not allow me to correct, or edit, the second proof.

For some days after my unsuccessful attempt to play a practical joke on West I received each morn-ing, by the first post, a suggestion for a new chorus, which the anonymous author, signing himself "Your Ardent Admirer," sent free of charge, enclosing also a written request (type-written) that I would "work it into a popular success." Altogether I received about ten verses of four lines each. Here are a couple of samples:—

Suggestion No. 1.

What a curious thing is the chirp of the ox
If you wrap it up well in a pair of new socks!
What a very rich coat is the wool of the snail,
It is softer by far than the fur of the whale!

SUGGESTION No. 2.

How extravagant is the "inetative" [1] moth!
I am told that it never will feed upon cloth,
It prefers incubated or tailor-made broth,
Blown at first with the bellows to give it a froth.

Regularly, as if turned out by clockwork, the matutinal type-written verse arrived. One day I came upon West, suddenly, as he was reading to a mutual friend—who, by the way, owned a typewriter—an advance copy of what would have been the following day's contribution. I always thought West was a kind man; but I altered my opinion when he informed me that if I had not found him out he would have written, and I should have received, daily, during my stay in America, "a suggested addition to my repertoire." It was useless for me to think of paying West back in his own coin, although, shortly after, I made the attempt. I sent him anonymously the following verses, accompanied by a request that he would set them to music:—

Are the wild flowers wild, when the scenery's seen?
Does the nurse to the child say, 'You're suckled,' I ween?
Does the hollihock holl, when the daffodils daff?
Does the lollipop loll, when the saffrons saff?

Does the marmalade marm, when the petticoat pets?
Do harmoniums harm, if the metronome mets?
Does the omnibus om, when the battledore bats?
Can the tomahawk tom when the latitude lats?

We were having breakfast when this arrived by post. He read the "poem," then looked across the

[1] PS.—I own all rights in this word.—*Author's note.*

table with such a dazed, unhappy expression that I burst out laughing, and so gave the joke away.

In the matter of not seeing a joke, I am afraid the Englishman appears to the American as the Scot to the cockney. In each case a libel has been uttered.

I happened one day to mention Mark Twain to an American. "Mark Twain," he exclaimed. "Oh yes! That's the man who writes stories for the English market!" There was no mistaking the inference—Mark Twain had fallen in his estimation because he had become so popular in England! That this curious mental attitude was not exceptional the following cutting from a New York paper will show. For obvious reasons I omit names:—

"This week the Vaudeville stage has offered new proof of a fact that has frequently been demonstrated in legitimate performances. Not long ago the —— Sisters gave a singing and dancing entertainment that was one of the most graceful, ingenuous, and pleasing features of houses engaged in this kind of diversion. The young girls went to London, stayed a season with our English cousins, and have come back to us shorn of much of the charm by which they first caught our favour. We no longer find pleasure in these now confident faces which used to blush with happiness at the spectators' applause . . . beyond the money they earned, their admirers must regret that the Sisters —— ever left home."

Of another American performer who returned to his native land after a "demoralising" stay in London, the same paper remarked: "Here, too, is ——, who at one time was a considerable singer. . . .

After a dozen years, Mr. —— has now returned to us. The writer has studied character for many a year, but he never found one who resembled the character comedian into which —— has been transformed by the London music-halls. . . . From these and other examples of the evil of foreign influence," &c.

Most Americans are keenly humorous, but there are exceptions, and these, in order to support the strain, cultivate a sort of facetious second sight, with which they will pretend to discover a joke, too subtle for the ordinary intelligence—where probably the original intention was quite serious—and then tell you, as an American once told me, that "the reason Englishmen are not quick at getting on to a funny point is that they lack practice!"

Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

BURLESQUE FRENCH SONG.

[*To face p.* 90.

CHAPTER XIII

AMERICANS are nothing if not practical. They utilise everything. Even woman's inquisitiveness is a marketable commodity, hence the lady journalist. Sometimes she is young and pretty, and pleads for information with an assumption of ingenuousness positively alluring. To inspire confidence she tells you her whole history. Her "Popper," once a millionaire, lost his fortune some years ago, and the shock killed him. She is now the sole support of her poor old "Mommer." She has made a few notes. You need not answer any of her questions if you would rather not. She gushes, you reply, she overwhelms you with thanks. "So good of you to spare an hour of your precious time to poor little me." Her eyes are eloquent. Eye eloquence is an art cultivated by American women to an embarrassing extent. She holds out her hand, you take it nervously, she reassures you with a sympathetic pressure, and leaves with more "copy" than a male reporter would have dragged out of you in a month of Sundays!

Here is an example of the lady journalist when she feels inclined to show how free the American Press really can be. For unsparing bitterness, for just that *soupçon* of the Pharisee, so characteristic of

many women when writing of outraged modesty, it would take some beating. No mere man could have done it! I did not see the performance which she criticises. I therefore cannot express an opinion as to the fairness of her remarks; but it is decidedly hard hitting. It is headed—

"THE APOSTLE OF VULGARITY."

Here are a few of the mildest hits—

"She is a tall animal with a perfectly foolish face. I want some positive proof that she is not closely related to the notorious Mrs. Fleming who was last year tried and acquitted of matricide. She strongly resembles her. Her face consists of a nose which is sheep-shaped, large eyes like raisins, and a large, red, loose mouth. The Creator left out forehead and chin. Upon her chest and bosom, which are thin, she wears a mineral display which is vulgar, distracting, and extremely tiresome to look at. If the museum of stones is inherited, her ancestors were people of bizarre tastes, and by wearing them she pays a respect to their memory which they don't deserve. . . . Inane and flaccid, Mlle. —— came on the stage exposing so much of her corseted and tortured little anatomy that undressing was superfluous. Mlle. ——" mentioning yet another performer, "kept a certain amount of our respect by keeping on her clothes, and her underclothing remains, thank Heaven, unknown to us. . . . Now and then, Mlle. ——," the original subject of her criticism, "essays to give us a suggestion of coquetry. She shows us her yellow chiffon bloomers and her long, continuous ankles. It is a

failure. She wriggles and inverts herself. More yellow chiffon. That is ecstasy! She snaps her long, gem-crusted fingers and stamps. That is abandon! . . . She is not encored. While this sensual, soulless creature goes through her overpaid exhibition of bad taste and mediocre art many beautiful young women, with talent, education, foreheads, and chins, voices and grace, are looking in vain for 'a chance.' . . . Their careers are not punctuated by suicides.

"Now is your time, ladies without talents. No sense of humour or skill, or good workmanship, or hard study is needed. Not even good looks are necessary. Learn the fashionable art of undressing. That is all."

The following interview with an American dancer, who had just come home from Europe, appeared in one of the New York daily papers. It will, I feel sure, appeal to all lovers of international courtesy: "In England I was gloriously received, and I met nearly all of that great country's people. The Prince of Wales I found to be one of the most charming gentlemen I ever met—genial, kindly, and democratic in his manner. In Lord Wolseley and Sir Arthur Roberts I saw two grand soldiers, whose bravery I trust we will never have to face. Lord Salisbury looked to me like a veritable lion—fierce and unyielding, while Joseph Chamberlain and Arthur Balfour appeared more like men of fashion than men of affairs, and the weighty affairs of a nation at that. But the brainiest, brightest, wittiest, cleverest man in all England is Henry Labouchere, editor of the London *Truth*. His store of knowledge borders

on the marvellous. He completely hypnotised me in the little chat I had with him. Poor Princess Beatrice, generous, kindly woman, as well as gentle princess —how I sympathise with her in her bereavement!— gave me a pleasing token of her appreciation. It is a beautiful gold watch, studded with diamonds and pearls, and has an appropriate inscription on its case. I never leave this treasured memento out of sight. Another nice memento I have is a gold chatelaine presented to me by the Khedive of Egypt. . . . I met Emperor William at Berlin, and Emperor Francis Joseph at Vienna. The German monarch much impressed me with being a fine, manly young soldier, full of military ardour, and filled to the brim with national pride. He will make a great man when he grows a little older. Emperor Francis Joseph looked like a man borne down with grief and cankering care. The tragic death of his son no doubt is the cause of all this, for the old monarch fairly doted on the erratic Rudolph. He attends the theatres once in a great while. Whenever he does he acts as if he had received a bracing tonic, and plucks up a cheery spirit for a few hours, but the inevitable gloom returns when the effect of the tonic has disappeared. The most charming man I met abroad was the late Alexandre Dumas, the gifted author and playwright. The most charming woman I met is Sarah Bernhardt. The great actress gave me words of cheer and encouragement. Dumas sent me a beautiful painting of himself and a complete set of his works. Truly I have been more than favoured by fortune. . . ."

There was one Press representative in New York

who was most persistent. He would never take "No" for an answer. He was not attached to any particular paper. He just kept his eyes open for "copy." All was fish that came to his net. Failing the net, and the fish, he had his imagination to fall back upon—an imagination so vivid that I often wondered why it had not helped him to occupy a better and more remunerative position. He had always some new idea which he wanted to work into a story about me. Occasionally he carried out his scheme without consulting me. At other times (generally when the initial idea contained a suspicion of truth) he would seek my advice and assistance—my consent he seldom troubled about. I became acquainted with him in the following way: I was seized by an attack of influenza. I struggled through a *matinée* at Koster and Bial's, but on coming off the stage I was so ill that I had almost to be carried home. The doctor was called in, and he ordered me at once to go to bed, as he found my temperature alarmingly high. My bedroom was on the ground floor. No sooner had the doctor left me than I heard a ring at the front-door bell, and a voice announcing that "somebody wanted to see Mr. Chevalier." West was with me at the time, and he interviewed this "somebody," who turned out to be the above-mentioned Press representative. Through the folding-doors, which separated my bed and sitting-room, I heard the following conversation:—

Press Rep. Can I see Mr. Chevalier?

West. I'm sorry to say you cannot.

Press Rep. I should vurry much like to have just a few words with him. I represent the New York ——.

West. I feel sure, if he could, Mr. Chevalier would be only too pleased to see any representative of the Press, but unfortunately he has been suddenly taken ill.

Press Rep. Yes, I know—I've been over to Koster and Bial's. I've heard all about it. I'm vurry sorry that he's sick.

West. He's very *ill.*

Press Rep. Sorry he's so sick. Can't I see him? I won't keep him five minutes.

West. I regret to say "No," but he must obey the doctor's orders.

Press Rep. Is he really so vurry sick?

West (somewhat irritably). He's seriously *ill,* I tell you. Temperature somewhere about 105°.

Press Rep. (after slight hesitation). Humph! Well, can't I see him to ask how he feels with his temperature at 105°?

I heard the front door slam as the anxious inquirer made his exit.

It was on a Saturday afternoon that I was taken ill. I sent word some time before the doors were opened at night that it would be impossible for me to go on. What happened may be gathered from the following account which appeared in the *New York Herald* on the Monday morning after:—

"TROUBLE AT KOSTER AND BIAL'S.
THE AUDIENCE RAISED A ROW BECAUSE
MR. CHEVALIER WAS ILL AND COULD NOT APPEAR.
WANTED THEIR MONEY BACK.

"There came very near being a row at Koster and

Bial's last night, when at half-past ten o'clock the stage-manager came forward and announced that Mr. Chevalier was ill and could not appear. Such a storm of hisses and shouts of disapproval that went up from the audience has probably never before been heard in a New York playhouse. The speaker tried to explain that the management had not heard of Mr. Chevalier's illness until very late, but they had induced Herr . . . to go on and fill the vacancy in the bill.

"But the audience would have none of it. They yelled, they hooted, they hissed; even the women added their protest, and said things about the management that were not polite.

"They Wanted Their Money Back.

"Many in the audience left their seats and flocked out into the lobby, where they besieged the box-office —which had been closed—and loudly demanded their money back.

"Some of the most indignant in the crowd said they had not come to the house before ten o'clock, only wishing to hear Chevalier, and that if the ticket-seller had informed them that he was not going on, or if an announcement to that effect had been posted in the lobby, they would not have bought seats. . . . Finally the angry crowd broke up and left the building."

Not a word was ever said about the note which I had sent to the management long before the doors were opened for the evening performance!

My friend the "anxious inquirer" looked me up again when I was well enough to receive him. One day

he brought me a bundle of manuscript which he wanted me "to sign." When I asked him why I should put my signature to a formidable-looking document, the contents of which I had not had time to examine, he assured me that any such examination was quite unnecessary, as he "had been through it all himself—in fact, it was his own composition." There was nothing—so he said—to which I could possibly take exception. I expressed my appreciation of his desire to save me trouble, explaining at the same time that I had a foolish foreign prejudice in favour of reading things before I signed them. He appeared a trifle disappointed, not to say hurt. However, he left the manuscript with me to look through. It contained the supposed private history of a number of New York celebrities! In any one case the details, as set forth—whether false or true—would, even in America, where the Press is so very free, most certainly have laid me open to an action for libel. In this "article," which only awaited my signature to be published, so he informed me, in a big magazine, my anxious friend had allowed me to spare nobody. Here is a story, which, in the course of our acquaintance, he related as a fact. I will endeavour to repeat it from memory, omitting all names—a formality which occurred to the original narrator as being quite superfluous :—

Somewhere in the seventies a wealthy New York merchant engaged a private secretary. The merchant and his wife kept an elaborate establishment in —— Street, —— Avenue, where they had lived during the five years of their married life. Until the advent of the secretary the husband had never had reason to

suspect his wife of being other than faithful, and attached to him; but now he noticed, or thought he noticed, some alteration in her manner towards him. He accused her of being in love with the new secretary. This she indignantly denied. Her denial, however, did not convince him, and he determined to watch the supposed guilty couple. One night he surprised the secretary coming out of his wife's room. Without a moment's hesitation he drew a revolver, and shot him dead on the spot. He was arrested, tried, and convicted. He appealed (there is a Criminal Court of Appeal in America), and so contrived that, on the next hearing, the verdict went in his favour, and he left the Court a free man. (My anxious friend did not hesitate to say that the "almighty dollar" was responsible for this miscarriage of justice.) The sequel to this story my anxious friend assured me he had witnessed only a few days before he met me.

He had dropped in to lunch at a restaurant in—or, as he called it, "on"—Broadway. Seating himself first of all at a table which the waiter informed him was reserved for a little party of three, he moved and settled down elsewhere. As he was finishing his meal, three gentlemen were escorted by the waiter to the reserved table.

"Guess," said he, "the names of the three people who proceeded to partake of a very *recherché* lunch? You can't? Well, I'll tell you. That little party consisted of the three principal figures in the celebrated murder trial of twenty years ago: So-and-so, the judge; So-and-so, the prosecuting counsel; and So-and-so, *the criminal!*"

I had often been approached by managers with a view to visiting the States, and I had declined because I was afraid to try my luck with a repertoire consisting, as mine did then, of nothing but songs in the cockney dialect. It was Richard Harding Davis, the well-known writer, who first led me to believe that his fellow-countrymen would take kindly to me. I cannot sufficiently thank him for the innumerable articles he wrote concerning my work before even I thought of crossing the Atlantic, and for introductions which resulted in much social pleasure to me, not the least memorable being a little dinner at the Manhattan Club, where I was invited to meet Rudyard Kipling. If I remember rightly the number of guests was limited to six. After dinner Kipling recited some verses which he had just written. These were promptly snapped up for publication by a guest, the editor of one of the big New York papers. I rather think he had the agreement signed and sealed before wishing Kipling "Good-night."

I was entertained one night by J. E. Dodson, and the members of the Lotos Club, at supper. Somewhere in the small hours a party of us went on to the Manhattan for "a few minutes," the result being that I turned into bed about 4 a.m. It seemed to me that I had only just gone off to sleep when a knock at the door woke me up. Some one was ushered into the sitting-room, and a card was brought to me. Needless to say it belonged to a Press representative. I dressed hurriedly, wondering what business could possibly necessitate such an early call. My curiosity was soon satisfied. My visitor represented the *N. Y.*

Journal. He apologised profusely for disturbing me, "but," said he, "it is quite unavoidable, as we want to publish a song specially written by you for next Sunday's issue." I told him that I would look through my papers for something suitable, and if I could find it I would send it on immediately. Holding out my hand I wished him "Good morning." He took my hand, and did not let go of it until he had made me understand that he must have that song before leaving. "How about the music?" said I. "Oh! that'll be all right! Don't you worry about that! I took the liberty of looking Mr. West up before coming to see you. He'll be here in a few minutes. If you will just knock off a couple of verses and a chorus, he can get to work on it when he arrives." I tried to explain that I had had a late night; that I couldn't even under ordinary circumstances "knock off" things to order in such a cold-blooded way; but that, if he would leave me alone for a few hours, and call again later on, I would do my level best to supply him with what he wanted. He was more than polite. He said that words failed to express his sorrow at having to disturb me in the "middle of the night," but unless he could hand in my "copy" before midday the *Journal* readers would be disappointed, and, he added with an ingenuous smile, "You will miss a very fine ad." I tried to temporize, but he would have none of it. What he wanted was a song, and a song he meant to have! At this moment West entered the room, rubbing his eyes. "Have you done it?" he inquired, yawning. "Done it!" said I; "I haven't the ghost of an idea what to write about." "Hand it over as

soon as possible," said West, throwing himself into an easy-chair. "I can't keep my eyes open. I'll have forty winks. Wake me up when you've dashed it off!" A loud snore informed me that I had wasted a look of bitter reproach. "What sort of a song do you want?" I inquired in desperation. "Just whatever you care to write. You won't mind if I smoke? You're very kind. I'll wait for the inspiration!" I stared at him, and then at West fast asleep in the armchair. In the matter of blissful calm there was nothing to choose between them. "Can't you suggest a subject?" I asked sadly. "No, sir, I *cannot*." Now, when an American does not use this word in its abbreviated form, you may take it that he is more than usually positive. I thought to tire him out, but he wasn't built that way. I deliberately sat down and wrote one verse and a chorus. They were very bad, but he said that didn't matter. He wanted another verse. Then I struck. I was too ashamed of what I had done to prolong the torture by so much as even one additional line, and I told him so. Seeing that he was not likely to get any more out of me, he woke West up, and "encouraged" him to compose a melody. West dived into his inexhaustible tune fund, and within an hour the "work" was finished. The following Sunday this atrocious composition (I allude to my share) occupied the whole front page of the *New York Journal*.

THE THEATRE GOOSE.

Shortly after this a journalist called on me to ask if, in my opinion, audiences were entitled to express dis

approval by hissing. Fancy putting such a question to an actor who in his time has gone through the awful ordeal of being hissed! I can think of nothing more cowardly—more cruel—than to hiss during the progress of a first night's performance, except, of course, when decency and good taste are outraged.

I remember something that Joseph Jefferson, the grand old American comedian, said to me during an after-dinner chat in St. Louis. Comparing the art of acting with the painter's art, he observed: "The actor's art is the art of reproduction. When you criticise a picture you see before you the work completed—the consummation. In criticising an actor, take into consideration that you see the picture being painted. You watch its progress, its evolution."

If first-night audiences would realise this I think they would pause before giving vent to that nerve-wracking hiss. I wonder what sort of picture an artist could produce, what sort of book an author could write, if compelled to work before an audience whose attention might be distracted at any moment by some self-constituted critic? Does the Theatre Goose ever stop to think that before a play is produced in London it has meant months of work to the author, generally speaking an experienced writer? The manager has turned the matter over in his mind very carefully. The actors have heard the play read. It has been altered and cut at rehearsals. Everything that money and forethought can do has been done. A play, when produced, is not the work of one brain only. In nine cases out of ten the advice of experts is sought, and yet, because when acted it does not

quite hit the taste of a noisy section, that section is privileged to upset the performers. How would the painter get on if, working under the conditions to which actors have to submit, a crowd of roughs suddenly rushed on the stage and mixed up all his colours, or jogged his elbow every time he attempted to touch the canvas? Hall Caine once told me that he never read the reviews of his books. He was perfectly candid. The reviews might be good, they might be bad ; he would not run the risk of reading them. He acknowledged that a "slating" hurt and, in a way, unnerved him. The critic, unlike the actor, appeals to one audience only. The actor has to try and please two, each distinct in temperament : the public and the critic.

CHAPTER XIV

ONE night I went to Hammerstein's magnificent variety theatre to hear Auguste van Biene play the 'cello. Prior to his appearance the stage-manager came forward and informed the audience that "he had a surprise in store for them—an extra 'turn.' Two officers of the American army would now sing to them." Judge of my surprise when two people, members of the Salvation Army (man and woman), walked on the stage. They were obviously genuine Salvationists. The man sang a long hymn, and the woman, in her hideous poke-bonnet and correspondingly ugly regimentals, accompanied him on the piano. The whole thing was so impudent—so daring—that the people in front were too astonished to utter even a protest. They didn't hiss, neither did they applaud. They just sat still and allowed the dirge to proceed. When it was over I went round to see Van Biene. From what I could gather the incongruous scene which had just been enacted was the outcome of a chat between Oscar Hammerstein (proprieter) and Mr. Booth (son of the "General"). I won't enter into the matter of motive, but the whole business was an object-lesson in what the public will occasionally submit to at the discretion of experienced

showmen. As the papers next day devoted considerable space to "the storming of Hammerstein's by Salvationists," I suppose both showmen were satisfied. The only person, so far as I could see, who really resented the extra "turn," was Van Biene, whose dressing-room the "captains" surreptitiously contrived to decorate with printed queries as to where its present occupant would "spend Eternity." If I remember rightly the musician expressed a hope that, under any circumstances, it might be far away from Booth's brass band!

I received the following letter when I was performing in New York:—

"Mr. Albert Chevalier.

"DEAR SIR,—I write you this believing that it is a pleasure to one to know that some act of theirs has been of important benefit to others.

"I was married seven years ago, and have two beautiful children, aged five and three. For the past three years I have been gradually, though without a predetermined intent, becoming estranged from my wife, through no fault of hers, however, as she has been true and faithful.

"A few days ago I left home, in a distant city. . . . Hearing you sing 'My Old Dutch' on Tuesday night so affected and impressed me and opened my eyes to what can be, that I have determined to go back home and be the husband that a loving wife deserves, and with the help of the Almighty spend the balance of our days as happily as the costermonger and his Old Dutch; and while you don't know me, and never will,

I want to thank you a thousand times for opening my eyes.

"God bless you.
"STRANGER."

Here is another communication—telegraphic this time—which I received at the theatre in New York from some one in California :—

"John ——, English actor, died here yesterday in poverty. No money to bury him. Cable funeral expenses to ——."

I wired back for further particulars, and in due course received a letter to the effect that the writer could guarantee the genuineness of his statement. An English actor, friendless, and alone in California, had died in abject poverty. The reason he (the writer) had wired me was "that he thought I might like to pay the funeral expenses of my fellow-countryman, as the papers were sure to hear of it and it would be such a good '*ad.*'"

On the last night of my engagement at Koster and Bial's my Friend, Philosopher, and Guide approached me with an air of mystery. He had been commissioned to request my attendance at a little function in his office after the performance. When I pressed him to tell me the nature of the function, he informed me that the management had invited a few friends to witness a presentation. I was to receive a cup in recognition of my American *début*. I finished my "turn" and made my way round to the front of the house. There my friend met and escorted me to his office, carrying in his hand a large green baize bag.

After the customary formalities, speech-making, &c., had been observed, he opened the green baize bag, and drew therefrom a large silver goblet, which he handed to me "with every good wish from the management." Needless to say I returned thanks, clumsily and inadequately, as usual, pleading, not without sincerity, that any lack of eloquence might be attributed to an overwhelming sense of gratitude, for the kind thought which had prompted the handsome presentation. The guests gradually filed out of the office, leaving me alone with my Friend, Philosopher, and Guide, who, taking the cup, which I was admiring, out of my hands, replaced it in the bag. Lighting a cigar, he said, "The real cup will be here in a day or two. It wasn't quite finished when I called at the silversmith's this afternoon." Then, throwing the green baize bag and its contents into a corner, he exclaimed, "That is a dummy!" In the course of a few days I received the real cup—a very handsome one.

For three or four dollars per diem, living on the American plan (inclusive terms), it is possible to obtain almost anything that a reasonable being can desire in the way of food or accommodation. A bath-room attached to the bedroom, a constant supply of hot and cold water; all sorts of ingenious contrivances for anticipating your wants and saving servants unnecessary trouble; telephones and lifts, electric lighting and steam heating apparatus everywhere, even in the smallest one-night stands.

Prices vary according to the position of rooms occupied. The man who pays twenty dollars, or more, per diem gets no better food at *table d'hôte*

Photo by] [*A. C.*

THE RUISSEAUMONT HOTEL, LAKE PLACID, ADIRONDACKS.

Photo by] [*A. C.*

OUR TENT IN THE ADIRONDACKS.

[*To face p.* 108.

than the man who only pays three dollars. It has often amused me, in American hotels, to hear cockney tourists grumbling at the food, and the cooking. With some of these very cockneys I have been sufficiently well acquainted to know that they never in their lives sat down to anything half so good ; nor did they ever, in an average English hotel, find such a variety of dishes—such a profusion of delicacies. The conservative Briton, accustomed to his cut off the joint, is a hard person to please in the matter of food obtainable outside his own country. There are many little home comforts which an Englishman misses in America ; but he should not forget that he is away from home, and that to grumble at the best which can be provided, is hardly the way to make things pleasant, either for himself or for others who may come after him.

The American is intensely patriotic. A New Yorker who had just returned from a visit to England sent me his autograph album, accompanied by a request that I should write something in it. Here are a few typical entries, evidently the work of patriotic, home-sick fellow-countrymen :—

"I'm going home to see the sun.
"London. "J. B."

"In England after twenty-one years' absence, and can't get back to the States quick enough.
"London. "R. V.

"I'm off the earth in London.
"W. M."

"Three years in England, and still no dialect.
"London. "C. T."

Tell an American that New York is the greatest city on earth, he will smile and say courteously, "Yes, sir! the greatest—bar London"—or Paris, if you happen to be French. Tell him that New York is a hopelessly inartistic jumble of half a dozen European cities, and—well, you'll hear some real common sense concerning London—or Paris, as the case may be.

It is impossible to do justice, adequately, to the hospitality which is extended to strangers in America. It is unbounded, if they will only accept it. They mustn't be continually finding fault with the mutton, which is bad, and the beef, which is not. They must take things as they find them, and they will find them very good indeed. Speaking personally, if I had to choose between the discomfort of the average English hotel, and the light, bright, clean, well-appointed American hotel, I should consider myself a fit subject for Hanwell if I did not plump, hands down, for the Yankee. There is no comparison—always allowing for the fact that the American hotel is run, primarily, for the accommodation of natives. There is hardly an hotel in the United Kingdom in which I have not stayed at some time or another; and I unhesitatingly assert that not only are the American hotels, as a rule, better so far as cleanliness, lighting, and the ordinary creature comforts are concerned, but they are less expensive. Say you live on the American plan, and it costs you four dollars per diem. Instead of a miserable candle you have the electric light in your

Photo by] [*A. C.*

WILD RASPBERRY BUSHES (ADIRONDACKS.)

Photo by] [*A. C.*

NEAR LAKE PLACID (ADIRONDACKS.)

[*To face p.* 110.

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SKETCHED BY AN ARTIST IN CHICAGO.

Photo by] [*A. C.*

MISS MARTHA MORTON AND HER BROTHER.

[*To face p.* 111.

bedroom. Instead of a tub with a canful of lukewarm water, you have a private bath-room with a constant supply of hot and cold. Instead of two cane-bottom chairs, a gilt looking-glass, the frame of which is wrapped up in a dirty pink fly-paper, a bed constructed on the switchback principle, a few mourning cards on the walls, side by side with, perhaps, a German print of The Black Brunswicker, The Raising of Lazarus, or Martin's Day of Judgment, you have a neatly, in most cases an artistically furnished room, tastefully decorated. Travelling about as much as I do, in Great Britain, I only wish I could get anything like the comfort, the cleanliness, and the cooking, at the same price. One of the most delightful holidays I ever spent was in the heart of the Adirondacks, at the Ruisseaumont Hotel, Lake Placid. If you wanted to forget that there was anything so civilised as an hotel in the district, you could live out in a tent in the pine woods; the thoughtful proprietor, however, would send out all your meals to you, the courses served exactly as you would have had them in the hotel at *table d'hôte*. This was your only necessary link with the crowd of elaborately gowned "Mommers" and correspondingly attired marriageable daughters. At night you lit a "smudge," the smoke from which—so the legend ran—would keep off the mosquitoes. In the morning the chip-monks and squirrels would come round the tent, and feed out of your hand. My wife and I lived in one of these tents, and we both of us hope some day to repeat the experiment. At Lake Placid we met Miss Martha Morton, the well-known American

dramatic authoress. To her, and to her family's kind hospitality, we owe much of the pleasure associated with our holiday in the Adirondacks.

This holiday I took when I finished my engagement at Koster and Bial's. Prior to my tour, under the direction of Charles Frohman, I had a three months' vacation. I was going back to England, but my wife, who had been seriously ill, thought the trip across the Atlantic might do her good, and so she came out to me there. I offer this explanation, because my busy friend, the journalistic Autolycus, wrote, and published, his own views on the subject—which views I reproduce from the columns of a New York paper :—

" Albert Chevalier has concluded not to go back to England at all this summer, but to spend his vacation in the Adirondacks. In this section board may be had upon an exceedingly inexpensive basis, and it does not cost as much to get there as it does to go across the water at the fashionable time of year. It is, of course, highly improbable that Mr. Chevalier has considered this point. But to a man who receives the mere pittance of"—here, as usual, a large number of dollars is mentioned—"a week the matter of personal expenditure ought to be of very grave importance."

MRS. CHEVALIER.

dramatic [illegible]. To her, and to her family's kind hospitality, [illegible] of the [illegible] associated with our holiday in the Adirondacks.

This holiday I [illegible] at Koster and Bial's. [illegible] direction of Charles [illegible] vacation. I was going [illegible] who had been seriously ill, [illegible] Atlantic might do her good, and so she consented to [illegible]. I offer this explanation because [illegible] [illegible] the columns of a New York paper:—

“Albert Chevalier has concluded not to go back to England at all this summer, but to spend his vacation in the Adirondacks. In this section board may be had upon an exceedingly inexpensive basis, and it does not cost as much to get there as it does to go across the water at this fashionable time of year. It is of course [illegible] that Mr. Chevalier has [illegible] experience.”

PART III

PART III

CHAPTER XV

LONG before I settled to appear at Koster and Bial's I had been approached by Charles Frohman, who wanted to run me in America. After my first night I received the following letter from him :—

"EMPIRE THEATRE, NEW YORK,
"*March* 24, 1893.

"MY DEAR CHEVALIER,—Let me congratulate you on your success last night, although I expected it. I have just sent the following cable to Lestocq. I wrote him a week ago that if you were successfully received here, I would cable him so that he could place it in the Green Room Club. I cabled him, *Chevalier Immense Success.*

"I hope that when you take up the question of appearing outside of New York, before closing any arrangement you will advise with me. I should very much like to undertake it. It would be a great mistake for you to rush through the country, one or two nights in each place. I should think now would be the time to talk over the scheme you had in

London—that is your own organisation—to appear in the very best places. I should very much like to take the matter up with you.

"Yours very truly,

"CHARLES FROHMAN."

We met a few days later, discussed terms, and in half an hour everything was practically arranged. My dealings with Charles Frohman, personally, were of the pleasantest in every way. He is a delightful man to deal with. He doesn't haggle. He knows what he wants, and the conditions under which he is prepared to do business. When the contract was to be drawn up, requiring some one to act for me, I remembered a letter of introduction which I had from a friend in England to an American lawyer. I presented the letter and was delighted to hear that it was from his dearest friend, "his vurry dearest friend." When I told him that I had come for his advice concerning a contract, he wouldn't hear of its being treated in the ordinary way, as a matter of business. "No, sir," he exclaimed, "you bring a letter from my dearest friend, my vurry dearest friend. I can't look on this in the light of business." He was so emphatic that I could not press the point. I had, I think, in all, three short interviews with him, and he sent a clerk down to witness the signing of the contract. A few days later I received a bill from him for two hundred dollars!

Under Frohman's management I visited all the principal cities in the United States and Canada, indulging for a time in a spell of "one-night stands" —the latter an experience to be avoided. Here is a

fair example of a few days' travelling taken at random from my diary :—

"Friday.—Arrived Ithaca 3.20 afternoon. Drove straight to theatre, then to hotel. Invitation to supper with Cornell students, from Professor Morse Stephens. Replied accepting. Show 7.30. Then to supper. Went to bed 3 a.m. Saturday.—Caught train for Rochester 8.15 a.m., arrived Rochester 1.15 p.m. Two performances. *Matinée* 2 o'clock and evening at 7.30. After the show drove to station to catch 11 o'clock train for Chicago. My bed in state-room over steam heating apparatus. Couldn't sleep. Arrived Chicago 3 p.m. Sunday, and opened at Hooley's Theatre the same night. Tired."

In all the big cities I was most kindly and generously received both by the Public and by the Press. In Boston and Chicago I was particularly successful. In some of the smaller towns the cockney dialect handicapped me. In Canada I had a great time. In Montreal the students of McGill University gave me a welcome which I am not likely to forget, as the following cutting from the local *Gazette* will prove :—

"At the conclusion of the performance the horses were removed from Mr. Chevalier's carriage, and, with Mrs. Chevalier, he was drawn to the hotel in state by the boys themselves. In front of the hotel he had to make another speech"—(oh, those speeches !)— "in which he thanked them most gracefully for their attendance and enthusiasm."

To show that I do not exaggerate the debt of gratitude I owe to the American Press, I may be forgiven for reproducing some of the headlines which

prefaced many columns of generous, and more than kind appreciation :—

AMERICAN PRESS HEADLINES.

"Great is Chevalier."—*N. Y. Advertiser*.

"The English singer creates a furor."—*N. Y. Mercury*.

"Chevalier makes a great hit."—*N. Y. Sun*.

"No more enthusiastic reception ever accorded to a foreign artist in New York."—*N. Y. World*.

"Mr. Chevalier's success immediate, unqualified, unexampled."—*N. Y. Herald*.

"The Unique in Art. Chevalier wins a Hollis audience."—*The Boston Traveller*.

"Chevalier is a Genius."—*Toronto Evening News*.

"An artist of the highest order."—*Chicago Post*.

"His art is universal."—*Chicago Journal*.

By way of contrast the following may be interesting. In Troy (a one night stand) they couldn't stand me for one night :—

". . . . presented a variety entertainment, but far below the standard of the ordinary American Vaudeville Company."—*The Troy Press*.

Here is another, kindly, but curious :—

"Chevalier is an instantaneous hit. He is one of the most comprehensive artists who ever stood on any stage anywhere. Still, if he had been a duffer, Mr. Bial had guaranteed him too big a salary to allow him to fail. Foreign artists will always do well to make a first appearance under a gigantic salary—if they can get it. It simplifies the hereafter."

Just one more, which appeared in a magazine two years after I had left America. I offer it as an example of how histories may be written. Accompanying the letterpress which is headed, "Frosts from England," there is a portrait of myself framed in icicles. I am described as "having been mildly successful at first, but like—here another "icy" Briton is mentioned—"too, too English to please us." This "criticism" has its place among the pages of more than favourable comment—the columns of generous appreciation, which appeared in almost every paper of importance published in the United States.

In the train travelling from Montreal to Toronto I met James Corbett, the pugilist. He was touring with a melodrama in which he played the hero, and played it very well indeed. What chance had three or four "powerful" stage villains against the redoubtable Jim? Corbett's stage heroics carried conviction with them. They were backed by a prize-ring reputation which was a factor not to be despised, when the moment came for Virtue (championed by the champion) to triumph over Vice.

It must have taxed the ingenuity of the dramatist to give Corbett an opportunity to exhibit his dexterity in punching the ball; but the opportunity was provided, much to the delight of the audience. I have seen many worse melodramatic heroes than Jim Corbett. He looked well, spoke his lines intelligently and with proper emphasis. He was not bombastic, and when he threatened to play at "ninepins" with a mob of stage roughs, you felt that for once in a way right was might, and that all directions as to

how that mob should behave were, under the circumstances, superfluous.

In private I found Corbett quiet, and gentlemanly. I asked him about Fitzsimmons, with whom he was to fight in a few months' time. He seemed quite confident about the result. He was not the least boastful. He said, "Fitzsimmons is a hard hitter, but I have the science. If he gets one in it will be rough on me, but I don't think he will get one in." I'm afraid Corbett underrated both his opponent's strength, and his skill.

Corbett and I went to a football match in Toronto. One of the players was terribly mauled and injured. As he was being carried off the field, Corbett turned to me and exclaimed, "Just look at that!"—a bundle of blood and bruises—"And they object to prize-fighting because it's brutal!"

In Chicago I was entertained at dinner by the Forty Club. A few speeches were made—the worst, as usual, by me. I never could make an impromptu speech, and I have always avoided attempting to do so, after an experience I had at the "Criterion," when I occupied the vice-chair at an Eccentric Club function. John Hollingshead was chairman. I had been faithfully promised that I should not be called on to speak, but this, like most promises, was broken. I started off with a very good idea, but in my anxiety and nervousness, I lost the thread of my story and collapsed ignominiously. I had hardly hidden my diminished head when a practised after-dinner speaker arose, and using the theme which I had failed to illustrate, made the biggest hit I have ever

known at a similar function, with one exception, and that was in Chicago at the Forty Club. A gentleman begged to be permitted to reply for the "absent guests." A portion of the speech ran as follows :—

"To the Absent Sweetheart—for on behalf of the Benedicks present I swear our wives shall be our sweethearts ever. A man without a wife is like a bird with one wing. His life is a question without an answer. As Prentice once said of George Francis Train, 'Such a man is a clock without hands, a cipher searching for a figure in order to mean something.' Gentlemen, it is Cupid's Sacrament—bumpers and no heel-taps!"

During my tour through the States I found the following rules pasted in the prompt entrance of a theatre. They were probably drawn up by a waggish professional, whose experience of travelling companies resembled Sam Weller's knowledge of London :—

"1. Each and every performer engaged is expected to do everything in his power to make it disagreeable for every one else connected with the aggregation, and to back cap the show and queer the performance on every possible occasion.

2. Salaries will be paid the second Saturday in the week, the same to be paid in stage money.

3. No performer is allowed to send money home. Keep it with you, as the management may need it.

4. In case a performer is fined by the management and he has no money coming to him, he must send home for it.

5. All wardrobes and costumes must be neglected as much as possible, and any member of the company

caught patronising a laundry will be immediately discharged.

6. In case rehearsal is called, each member of the company is expected to pay no attention to it.

7. All hotel bills will be settled next season.

8. The performers are expected to present the management with a diamond pin at least once a week.

9. The advance agent is expected to be at least five days behind the show, and must in all cases keep his business a profound secret.

10. Any performer caught obeying any of these rules will be fined.

11. Landlords following up this company for board-bills will be expected to sing a ballad each evening."

Photo by] [*B. Knight*

"PIERROT COSTER."

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CHAPTER XVI

AT one of the hotels where I stayed on tour, there was a young Englishman whose affectation of horseyness was a never-ending source of amusement to me. He walked about in riding-breeches and gaiters. Instead of a collar he wore a stock. He invariably carried a little cane or switch, with which, when talking to you, he would tap his gaiters, as if encouraging some refractory gee-gee to "hurry up." I only saw him go out riding once. A few of the visitors had arranged an outing. Some of them proposed to ride, and invited him to join their party. The invitation was accepted, and when the hired horses arrived outside the hotel, the young Englishman, assuming the air of a connoisseur, walked round the animals and examined them with a fiercely critical eye. He made no secret of his suspicions concerning one horse—a horse selected by a month-old bridegroom, whose anxious spouse implored him not to risk his life. After considerable persuasion he agreed to exchange with the young English "expert," who, declaring that "he had never met the horse he could not manage," mounted the "suspect" with—to give him his due—more pluck than science. The party rode off in the direction of some thickly wooded

country. In about an hour's time we saw several horsemen slowly wending their way towards the hotel, and somebody, or something, being carried home on a roughly constructed hurdle. As the procession came nearer, the hurdle was seen to contain the very much torn, bruised, and battered body of the young Englishman, who had fallen—or to quote his own words, when later on he volunteered some exciting details—"had been thrown from his saddle in consequence of an encounter with a bear, which had maddened the high-spirited animal he was riding." My own private opinion was, and is still, that he had other and less Quixotic reasons for the original exchange—that in his ignorance he had selected the wrong horse.

As to the bear story—well, one day I certainly did see a bear in the vicinity—on a chain—led to the hotel door by a person in Tyrolean attire who, to prove that it was not stuffed, jerked the chain, at the same time producing a hideous din from a combination of drum, bells, cymbals, and triangle. By some subtle arrangement of strings, and pulleys the whole combination was at once put in motion, the performance commenced, and the onlookers were privileged to speculate as to which was the brute.

In Quebec I had my first experience of tobogganning, and cannot say that I liked it. I call it my first experience because, although in the wilds of Earl's Court I had frequently braved the "slides," the Quebec arrangement showed me the difference between the real thing, and an imitation. We drove over one day to the Montmorenci Falls—picturesque

at any time, but particularly so in mid-winter, as it was when I saw them. The water falls from an enormous height—higher than Niagara, I believe—and in winter, on the lower level, the spray freezing forms itself into cones, upon which we were able to stand looking up at a view rendered doubly impressive by innumerable giant icicles, constantly varying in size and fantastic form. Contrasted with the snow and frost, the falling water, where it could be seen, looked like black oil slowly trickling over.

To commemorate my visit, I purchased some bead-work, which the vendor assured me was made by the Noble Red Man. On returning to my hotel I examined my purchase. As I was about to repack it, a label inside the box caught my eye, on which was printed the magic word "Birmingham."

THE RAINES BILL.

This Bill caused a great stir in New York. Its object was to close the drinking-saloons on Sundays. Unfortunately for its temperance sponsors, it was worded somewhat ambiguously. It stipulated that only hotel-keepers should be privileged to supply intoxicants on the Sabbath. The result was that the first Sunday on which the Bill came into operation there were more "hotels" to be found in New York than you would find in the whole of Europe. To convert an ordinary saloon into an hotel was a simple matter. It necessitated a large book, in which lodgers were supposed to register their names. Once registered, the "lodger" could slake his thirst with im-

punity, or any other poison. The simple way to obtain a drink was to walk up to the bar and call for "lunch." The Raines Bill allowed the hungry man to have a drink with his meal. Like most attempts to legislate for morality, it was a ridiculous failure—almost as absurd as our own efforts in Wales and Scotland, with that glorious satire, the preceding Saturday night, chuckling at our hypocrisy.

I have a vivid recollection of many Sundays spent in Scotland. On one of these dismal days—having nothing better to do, as it was snowing hard by way of adding to the gloom—I wrote, to a sympathetic friend in London, the following lines :—

"I'm far frae being tired, ye ken,
O' snow-tipped hills and kilted men;
I love the bonnie braes—the glen—
But no the pubs that close at ten!

And oh! the Sabbath is na gay—
(A dreadfu' purgatorial day!)
Sae full wi' gloom and horrors crammed,
I wonder—can a Scot be damned?

No joy, no play, no life, no work,
No anything but crêpe, and kirk
Wi' meenisters who love to tell
O' greater torments doon in hell.

I'm no a giddy, reckless youth;
I dinna suffer much frae dreuth [thirst];
But tae a Londoner by birth
The Lord's day here is hell on earth!"

I heard a good story concerning the Raines Sunday Closing Bill told by a New York comedian. He

related his experience in one of these suddenly transformed saloons. He called for lunch and a glass of beer. The waiter walked to the next table, at which was seated another "luncher," and, without asking permission, removed a suspiciously worn-out, tired-looking sandwich, placed it before the comedian, serving him at the same time with a glass of beer. Six more men came in and called for "lunch." The same sandwich was passed round and six glasses of beer supplied. Presently a tramp put in an appearance. He, too, called for "lunch"; but being more hungry than particular, he ate the hitherto despised sandwich. And the saloon had to close up.

In a melodrama touring through the States the big sensation scene consisted of a successful attempt to break open an iron safe. To give the necessary touch of realism, two burglars who had just served a long sentence for housebreaking were engaged, and starred as "The notorious Bill —— and Tom ——, who will nightly, in Act II., give an exhibition of their skill. The tools used in this scene are the identical tools with which they committed the crime for which they have recently been so severely punished."

When I was in America the craze for buttonhole decoration was at its height. Everybody wore an enamelled button of some sort or another. There was the "McKinley" button," the "Brian" button, &c. Everything and everybody were advertised on buttons. One day, as I was having something to eat in a restaurant, a gentleman called my waiter over to his table and asked him to present me with some-

thing. Need I say it was a button? The sender was a song-writer. He presented his compliments, begging me at the same time to accept and wear this little souvenir of his latest composition, on which was inscribed the title:

"Mommer's teeth are made of gold."

DELICATE TRIBUTE TO OUR ANCIENT ARISTOCRACY.

In a burlesque played at one of the New York theatres an English lord was introduced. You couldn't mistake him for anybody but a real live lord. He wore a frock-coat and a coronet. To emphasise his aristocratic descent, he never appeared without a little pug dog, which he led by a string. He was supposed to be out hunting—heiress-hunting. The heiress and her "Mommer," in the course of the play, were discussing the possibilities and advantages of becoming "my lady." I will endeavour to quote a portion of the spoken dialogue from memory:

Mommer. My dear, he comes of a real old English family.

Daughter. How old, Mommer?

Mommer. Well—real old.

Daughter. Say, Mommer, are these English families so very old?

Mommer. My dear! Why, some are so old that you can't stop in the same room with them!

In a part of London where the traffic is generally very congested, a hearse contrived to get in front of an omnibus, and so completely blocked the way.

The 'busman started "chipping" the hearse-driver, who, unusually conscious of the seriousness of his calling, maintained a dignified silence. If sarcasm could have withered, the hearse-driver would have gone inside, but he was proof against mere cockney flippancy. He didn't see his way clear to move, and so he remained where he was. His reticence, more than anything else, annoyed the 'busman, who at last, summoning up all his mental resources, shouted, "Git aht of the way, old man! *Your* fare ain't in no bloomin' 'urry!" This is a very old story, one which I have told over and over again. I shouldn't have repeated it here, but for the fact that it was retold to me in New York by a man who was introduced as Buffalo Bill's advance agent. He prefaced the story with the interesting information that the incident actually occurred to Buffalo Bill, as he was driving through Oxford Street on the top of a 'bus with the Prince of Wales.

I had only one disagreeable experience in America, and that happened in a place called Ogdensburg. It may be due to the association of ideas—to memories conjured up—but there is something in the very word —"Ogdensburg"—which does not suggest harmony. There were two ladies in the company, engaged by Mr. Frohman for my tour, two sisters, who, although no blame attaches to them for the misfortune, were born in Ogdensburg. This fact was duly boomed in the local press, prior to my visit. Indeed the majority of people who booked seats for my Recital there were either friends or relations of these sisters. Local interest had been worked up to such a pitch, that the

sisters' first appearance in their native city was quite the feature of the entertainment. Ogdensburg was on tiptoe with excitement to see what sort of a figure their old acquaintances would cut as stage performers. Ogdensburg was doomed to disappointment. The sisters were too ill to appear. As luck would have it, there was only one other lady in the company, and she had lost her voice, the result of a severe cold caught on a long railway journey. Night came, and the manager walked on to apologise. Here is a newspaper report of the proceedings. In all my experience, I have never passed through such an awful ordeal :—

" . . . The reception and treatment of this justly celebrated English actor is a monumental and eternal disgrace to the city of Ogdensburg. When Mr. Chevalier's manager advanced to the footlights before the performance began and announced that the —— Sisters—who come from the vicinity of Ogdensburg—were ill and could not appear, the gallery hissed vigorously. In vain did he read a certificate of sickness from a local physician—they would not be appeased. Not content with hissing Mr. Chevalier's manager, they hissed and disturbed other members of the company, Mr. Chevalier in particular. Mr. Chevalier stood it pluckily until an apple-core was thrown at him.

"Then he stopped and addressed the audience :

"'Ladies and gentlemen,—I have performed in America, from Canada to New Orleans, and until this evening have always been received with kindness and courtesy. No one regrets the non-appearance of the young ladies more than I do, but I am not responsible

for their absence. I have done the very best I can this evening, but I cannot go on with my entertainment.'

" . . . From start to finish the performers were harassed and discouraged by the blackguards in the gallery. . . . Think of the vast provincialism with which Ogdensburg is cursed! Because the —— Sisters happen to have a local interest and are absent through illness, the audience in cold blood insult an actor whose unique genius is heartily acknowledged by the best critics of America as well as of his native land! . . . His support was good all through, but they all suffered the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. . . ."

When my American engagements terminated I received a number of offers to reappear in the London music-halls; but having made up my mind to try my luck with the "Land of Nod"—to which piece I shall refer at length in the next chapter—I declined them all. I left America carrying with me a store of pleasant recollections. Since my return to England I have frequently been approached with a view to the renewal of my acquaintance with our transatlantic cousins. This I have been unable to accede to, in consequence of prior bookings. I am, however, most anxious to go back with my now considerably extended repertoire. I can only express the hope that, when I do go, my American friends will be as pleased to see me, as I shall be to have the honour of appearing before them once again.

CHAPTER XVII

IT has often been said that a knock-down blow does a man good now and then. Much depends upon the strength of the blow and the character of its recipient. I am not ashamed to own that I have received several severe knocks in the course of my career. Some years ago I was infamously let in for something like ten thousand pounds, by a man who at the present moment lives in swagger chambers, and is to all appearances distinctly prosperous. I sued him in a court of law. I won my case—oh yes! I won my case—but that was all. He still owes me the money. I might have followed his example, at the time, and have gone bankrupt. The law—that wonderful institution which enables the rogue, the clever rogue, to drive a coach-and-four through its so-called decisions—would have assisted me; but I preferred to go my own way. I worked for, and paid off every farthing. All the satisfaction the law afforded me, was a "judgment" for a sum of money—a "judgment" which the smart one merely laughed at, leaving me to settle debts which he knew, for my credit's sake, I would not leave unpaid, although the law had decided that he, as my partner, was liable to me for his moiety of the liabilities. So much for a single

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Photo by] [*B. Knight.*
"PROFESSOR PETER PINDER" IN "THE LAND OF NOD."

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experience. It was a blow, a hard blow, but I stiffened my back, and pulled through. Whatever benefit I may have derived from it, is difficult to realise, when I encounter this "gentleman," attired in faultlessly fitting Bond Street garments, dining at a most expensive restaurant, and waxing indignant with the waiter because his pint of Pontet Canet is "corked"! A sense of humour, however, comes to my rescue, and I could almost forgive him (as in my younger days I forgave Jingle and Dick Swiveller) because he makes me laugh. At the start of a career, to lose ten thousand pounds may be set down as a "blow." That was nothing, however, to one which I was to receive later on. In America a wealthy merchant offered to back me, if I could find a play which should contain a part to suit me. He owned a site on Broadway, where he proposed to build a theatre which should be called "Chevalier s," if I would agree to remain in New York for a term of years. I set to work and wrote the "Land of Nod." Alfred H. West composed the music. When the work was finished, my American would-be backer selected a committee of alleged experts, and invited them to hear me read, and to sit in judgment on, my play. In the result I was more than gratified. The verdict of the committee was distinctly favourable. A contract was drawn up, but when the moment came for me to sign, the prospect of being away from England for possibly another year made me hesitate. What with my provincial and American tours, I had not appeared in London for nearly three years. My wife wrote to me from home saying that all sorts of rumours were being

circulated—that my absence was being misinterpreted; and, to tell the truth, I was getting home-sick! I decided therefore to return to England and to produce my play there. As I was packing my trunks in Philadelphia, Richard Harding Davis called to wish me "goodbye." I told him about the "Land of Nod." He asked me to read it to him, and I had the temerity to comply with his request. I remember what he said when I had finished: "Why, it ought to be as big a success as the 'Pair of Spectacles.'" I don't mind repeating this now, because the play in London only ran a week! I just want to show that it was not a case of merely backing my own opinion. When I produced the piece in Liverpool, Sir Edward Russell (whose theatrical opinion extends over many years) came round to my dressing-room after the performance to personally offer his congratulations. In the course of an exhaustive criticism the *Liverpool Post* said:—

"The 'Land of Nod' is described as a musical comedy, but it is utterly unlike the average class of pieces catalogued under this comprehensive heading. . . . The idea is handled with remarkable cleverness, and there is displayed a freshness, and novelty in its treatment which makes the work no less striking than entertaining. . . . Sufficient has been said to indicate the original idea upon which this distinctly clever piece is based. . . . The author is to be congratulated upon having so successfully broken fresh ground."

In Manchester, the *Courier* said:—

"He has written a work which admirably suits his

wonderful flexible personality, and with the delightful music by Mr. A. H. West, the performance is one which cannot fail to keep an audience alternately amazed by the splendour of its mountings, and convulsed with the humour with which it abounds."

The *Manchester Mail* said :—

"Mr. Chevalier, who has written the piece himself, deserves warm praise for its execution. It is too good to be called a musical comedy."

The *Manchester Guardian* said :—

"As Pinder, he is genuinely humorous, and his mingled terror and wonder in the scene in which the Hindoo shows him his previous existences, gradually reminding him of them, was remarkably fine—not unworthy indeed to be compared with the acting of Joseph Jefferson in a like scene."

I could fill three or four pages with excerpts from the provincial Press, all in a similar strain. In Brighton, Charles Warner saw the play through every night during my week's visit there. In Margate, Sidney Grundy, after sitting it out, came round and said the kindest and most encouraging things. Indeed, acting on his advice, I wrote a comedy, with which some day I may tempt fortune again. I very nearly settled with a syndicate to back me, but as one of its members suggested "taking out a policy on my life in case anything should happen to me," my suspicions were aroused, and I found that I was dealing with the notorious Monson!

H. E. Moss (of Hippodrome fame), after hearing the play read and the music played, offered to produce it at Terry's Theatre. My great regret now is that I

did not settle with him, but as the arrangement he suggested would have necessitated my becoming partly responsible financially, the matter fell through. I had already spent a lot of money on the provincial production. I had taken the initial risk in testing the chances of its success. What I wanted was to find some one who would engage me, in the usual way, at a salary, and pay a percentage on the receipts to Alfred West and myself, as composer and author. The then manager of the Royalty Theatre (representing a syndicate) approached me on these lines, and an agreement was signed. This agreement guaranteed me a six weeks' run. Six weeks' salary was to be paid to me before we opened. In a weak moment I yielded to a request to accept half this amount down, the balance to be paid during the first week of the run. I received no more. The notice went up in the middle of the week, and although most of the principals, and even the chorus, offered to play another week for nothing (so certain were they of ultimate success), the management could not afford to take the risk. The theatre closed and the syndicate wound up.

The play never had a chance at the Royalty. There was not room in the orchestra for the necessary number of players. On the first night West, who conducted, had in several instances to deal with deputies, instead of the musicians who had rehearsed. We had been working night and day. I was fagged out—at my very worst—when we opened. The piece didn't begin to go properly until about the third performance. The stage was too small, the lighting

(a most important feature) was bad. On the Saturday night—the last performance—it went better than it had ever gone in London. On the following Monday I made it my business to find out if any one, believing the theatre to be still open, turned up to book seats. More people came on that black Monday than on any previous occasion during the preceding memorable week!

The failure of the "Land of Nod," if failure it can fairly be called, was the biggest disappointment I have ever experienced. If, during its seven months provincial tour it had been invariably slated—if experienced men like Sidney Grundy, Hall Caine, William Mackintosh, Charles Warner, Richard Harding Davis, Sir Edward Russell, and many others had condemned it, I might not have been surprised at one of the London criticisms wherein the play was described as

"A farrago of nonsense."

But why, then, did another paper compare it with

"A poem by Edgar Allen Poe"?

If the Royalty management had been able to carry out the terms of their agreement—if the play had had the advantage of another week's run, it might have pulled itself together, as many a first-night failure has done. There were mistakes made in the casting. Singers, admirable singers, were engaged to play parts which called for acting, more than singing.

This was an error of judgment for which I blame nobody, but it was one which, in a week or two, might have been rectified.

I don't say the "Land of Nod" was a great work, but I do say that, if only from a musical point of view, it was infinitely better than many a so-called musical comedy which has worked up into a success. To substantiate this assertion, I would ask the sceptic to examine the following numbers in the published score: Opening Chorus, Act II., the song which, as Professor Pinder, I sang to my pre-existences in Act I.; the Ghosts' Chorus in Act I.; the coon song, "Dat Moon's Mighty High," in Act II.; the concerted number (17) in Act II.; Dr. Goodwin's song, "The Late Lamented"; Nadoura's two songs, "The Tarantella," and other dances, and the duet in Act II. between the Cockney and the Fairy, the words of which ran like this:—

DUET.*

Sims. Where do you come from, my pretty maid?
Nadoura. From the land of the ever-absent shade.
Sims. Do you think it would suit me, my pretty maid?

Nadoura. All sun and no shade?
I'm rather afraid
You'd sigh now and then for a few minutes' shade!

Sims. Where are you going to, my pretty maid?
Nadoura. To a land where the roses never fade,
Where Beauty is Law, and must be obeyed.

Sims. Are there many like you?
Nadoura. Well, only a few.

* *By permission of Messrs. Reynolds & Co., 13, Berners Street, W.*

Sims. *They* know what it means to be put in the shade!
Sims. Won't you remain here, my pretty maid?
Nadoura. I was going home but I may be delayed!
Sims. I promise you will not regret that you stayed—

Nadoura. It's far from the sun,—
But when all's said and done—
The sunshine is sunnier seen from the shade!

CHAPTER XVIII

AFTER my provincial tour with the "Land of Nod," before opening at the Royalty, I made my reappearance in London at Drury Lane Theatre, on the occasion of Nellie Farren's benefit. I was naturally very nervous, as I had been away from the Metropolis for nearly three years. Behind the scenes I happened to run up against Bram Stoker. He asked me how I was, and I replied, "Quaking." He laughed and said, "Well, you're in good company. The chief" (Sir Henry Irving) "is terribly nervous. He's going on next. I've just left him pacing up and down the dressing-room." When my turn came I received an extremely kind welcome. What a wonderful *matinée* that was! I don't remember ever seeing such a number of theatrical celebrities, as were literally packed together in the wings at Drury Lane that day. Round the stage-door the usual crowd of curious people waited to see the "pro's" arrive. I walked to the theatre. My dresser took my "props" on beforehand in a cab. When he arrived he received an enthusiastic welcome, to which, so I was informed by an eye-witness, he bowed his acknowledgments in the most approved fashion, shouldered the luggage, and dashed inside.

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Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"A FALLEN STAR."

Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"OH! 'AMPSTEAD!"

[*To face p.* 141.

On May 26, 1898, I gave the first of two Recitals at St. James's Hall, presenting a programme composed chiefly of impersonations which I had not previously attempted in London. Among others, I produced the two following items :—

A FALLEN STAR.*

MUSICAL MONOLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY ALBERT CHEVALIER. COMPOSED BY ALFRED H. WEST.

THIRTY years ago I was a favourite at the "Vic,"
A finished actor, not a Cuff and Collar shooting stick;
I roused the house to laughter, or called forth the silent tear,
And made enthusiastic gods vociferously cheer.
Those were the days, the palmy days, of Histrionic Art,
Without a moment's notice I'd go on for any part.
I do not wish to gas, I merely state in self-defence,
The denizens of New Cut thought my Hamlet was immense.
Thirty years ago! I can hear them shout "Bravo,"
When after fighting armies I could never show a scar;
That time, alas! is gone, and the light that erstwhile shone
Was the light of a falling star.

From patrons of the circle too, I had my meed of praise,
The ladies all admired me in those happy halcyon days.
My charm of manner, easy grace, and courtly old-world air,
Heroic bursts of eloquence, or villain's dark despair.
I thrilled my audience!—thrilled 'em! as they never had been thrilled!
And filled the theatre nightly as it never had been filled!
Right through the mighty gamut of emotions I could range,
From classic Julius Cæsar to the "Idiot of the Grange."
Thirty years ago! I was some one in the show,
And now I pass unrecognised in crowded street or bar!
The firmament of fame holds no record of my name,
The name of a fallen star.

* *By permission of Messrs. Reynolds & Co., 13, Berners Street, W.*

The dramas that I played in were not all upon the stage,
Nor did I in an hour become the petted of the age.
Oft in my youthful days I've sung "Hot Codlins" as the Clown,
And turned my face away to hide the tear-drops rolling down;
And when the pit and gallery saw I'd wiped the paint away,
They shouted "Go it, Joey! Ain't 'e funny? Hip hooray!"
My triumphs and my failures, my rise, and then my fall!
They've rung the bell, the curtain's down, I'm waiting for my call!

(*Producing old play-bills*)

Bills—not those I owe—but old play-bills of the show!
My name as Hamlet, Lear, Virginius, Shylock, Ingomar!
The laurel on my brow—a favourite—and now—
Forgotten! a fallen star.

'E CAN'T TAKE A ROISE OUT OF OI!*

WRITTEN BY ALBERT CHEVALIER. COMPOSED BY ALFRED H. WEST.

Oi've sarved a many masters, an' Oi've travelled in my toime,
Oi've been as fur as twenty moile from 'ere;
O'm eighty-four coom Christmas, an' Oi feels just in my proime,
An' never was moi yed an' thoughts more clear!
Moi son 'e left the village nigh on forty year ago,
An' drat un! 'e coom back 'ome t'other day:
'Tain't that Oi grumbles at, at all, tho' that theer were a blow—
It's 'is "Oi knows all about it" sort o' way!

Oi've been moindin' the farm 'ere fur forty-five years,
An' afore that, the pigs in the stye,
An' Oi knows wot Oi knows, an' Oi 'ears wot Oi 'ears,
An' 'e can't take a roise out of Oi!

E sez as Oi'm be'oind the toimes—wotever that may mean—
Becos Oi don't take kindly tew 'is ways,

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Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"'E CAN'T TAKE A ROISE OUT OF OI!"

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E tells about theayters, an' all sich like as 'e's seen,
An' sez as 'ow play-actin' bizness pays.
Lord sakes! Oi gits that roiled, as Oi could 'it un when 'e talks,
A-sayin' as 'ow actors roides in style,
Oi've seed un roide at circus, but on comin' out they walks.
'E laughs at Oi, an' that makes my blood bile!

For Oi've been moindin' the farm, &c.

'E musn't think as 'ow becos 'e's lived i' Lunnon town
'E's ev'rybody—*me* amongst the rest!
Oi've 'arf a moind to show un up, or reyther take un down,
Oi 'ardly knows which way ud be the best.
Soomtoimes I lets un talk, an' then Oi busts into a laugh,
Oi never did 'ear sich a pack o' loies.
'E sez as 'ow 'e's seed a thing they calls the "funnygraph!
You turns a 'andle, an' it talks an' croies!

Oi've been moindin' the farm, &c.

My object in taking St. James's Hall, instead of making my reappearance at a music-hall was, that I was as anxious to break new ground as I was when, for a similiar reason, I left the theatre, and broke away from a groove labelled either "low comedy and burlesque" or "crotchety old men." The limitations of a music-hall would not have afforded me the opportunity I now wanted, because there also a label was attached to me—a label to which I owe more than I can ever repay, as it enabled me to make a corner for myself in public favour. I have sometimes been reproached with discarding the bridge which, in reality, I am so deeply grateful to for carrying me

over. I did not, nor am I ever likely to, forget that but for the music-hall, I might never have made any headway as an entertainer. My appearance at St. James's Hall was, as a matter of fact, an acknowledgment of this debt; but there is a fascination in incurring some debts. I had experienced this fascination, and desired to increase my liabilities. That I should have received a hearty welcome on my return to the halls, I never for one moment doubted. Indeed, I was urged to make my reappearance in this way by music-hall managers, and by friends, who took an interest in me and my work. I felt, however, that once again I must decide for myself, having the courage of my convictions. I realised that much of my new work would miss fire in a music-hall, where a mere study of character is not what the audience expects. I had tried in the early days of "Knocked 'em in the Old Kent Road," "The Coster's Serenade," &c., to vary my programme by the introduction of other characters away from the cockney pure and simple, and I remembered that when I had finished my attempt, stentorian voices roared out, "Give us the old 'uns." This is very easy to explain. In the halls I was associated with coster songs only—I was a "coster singer," whatever may be the generic significance of the term. I was a specialist, and the penalty of my success was that I dared not, on pain of disappointing those who had paid to hear me "as labelled," try any experiments. The most curious experience I ever had, in this way, was at the Royal, in Holborn, where one Saturday afternoon I introduced a song in which I appeared, not as a coster, but

Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"THE COSTER'S SERENADE."

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as a "Johnnie." I took call after call. Several publishers who chanced to be in the front came round immediately after, all anxious to secure the copyright. There seemed to be no two opinions about it. "A sure publishing success" was the verdict of these experts. On all sides I heard nothing but praise concerning my new song. "It's capital! The best thing you've done yet in the Halls." "You think it will go?" I asked. "Go!" they exclaimed. "Didn't it go this afternoon? It'll be your trump card for some months to come." At night, that same night, I again included this item in my programme, not only at the Royal, but at the Pavilion, and—I came off without a hand! It was on this occasion that the attitude of the audience was made clear to me by cries of "Give us the old 'uns."

All sorts of stories have been circulated concerning the writing of my songs, sketches, &c. For some time I was supposed to employ a "ghost," who for a very modest weekly stipend reeled off, and kept me supplied with, the necessary material. As a matter of fact I have written two or three in collaboration, to which, on the published copies, joint names are attached. The majority, however, for better or for worse, I have perpetrated alone. I refer, of course, to the words. In one or two cases—"The Future Mrs. 'Awkins," for example — I have added a tune to the original offence. The song, "My Old Dutch" (for which my brother Ingle composed the melody), I wrote on the backs of some envelopes, as I was walking from Oxford Street to Islington :—

MY OLD DUTCH.*

WRITTEN BY ALBERT CHEVALIER. COMPOSED BY CHARLES INGLE.

I'VE got a pal,
 A reg'lar out an' outer,
She's a dear good old gal,
 I'll tell yer all about 'er.
It's many years since fust we met,
 'Er 'air was then as black as jet,
It's whiter now, but she don't fret,
 Not my old gal!

We've been together now for forty years,
 An' it don't seem a day too much;
There ain't a lady livin' in the land
 As I'd "swop" for my dear old Dutch!

I calls 'er Sal,
 'Er proper name is Sairer,
An' yer may find a gal
 As you'd consider fairer.
She ain't a angel—she can start
 A jawin' till it makes yer smart;
She's just a *woman*, bless 'er 'eart,
 Is my old gal!

We've been together, &c.

Sweet fine old gal,
 For worlds I wouldn't lose 'er;
She's a dear, good old gal,
 An' that's what made me choose 'er.
She's stuck to me through thick and thin,
When luck was out, when luck was in
Ah, wot a wife to me she's been,
 An' wot a *pal!*

We've been together, &c.

* *By permission of Messrs. Reynolds & Co.*, 13, *Berners Street, W.*

Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"MY OLD DUTCH."

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I sees yer Sal—
  Yer pretty ribbons sportin' !
Many years now, old gal,
  Since them young days of courtin
I ain't a coward, still I trust
  When we've to part, as part we must,
That Death may come and take me fust,
  To wait . . . . . . my pal !

We've been together, &c.

I remember the occasion well. It was a very foggy night. I lost my way, and for some considerable time attached myself to a friendly lamp-post, in the hope of being able to see some passer-by who possessed a fog-defying bump of locality. Waiting there, I scribbled two songs. The above one has since been offered to, and accepted by, the public. The other, for reasons which in a few moments will doubtless be sufficiently obvious, I have never submitted to any one outside the immediate home circle. It was written when the fog was blackest. That is all I can urge in its favour. It was the simple tribute of a grateful heart, dedicated to a light that did not fail in the wilderness of Clerkenwell, or thereabouts. I was forlorn, and my heart went out to the only thing I could see—the Lamp-post—the Lonely Lamp-post :

" 'I'm lonely,' said the Lamp-post,
  'I'm really very lonely,
I miss the strife of active life ;
  But oh ! 'tis not that only.

I never move, which goes to prove,
  I do not fetch and carry,
My grievance is, my line of "biz,"
  It is so stationary.'

'I'm weary,' said the Lamp-post,
  'I'm weary, dearie, weary,
For though at night I'm very bright
  The sunshine makes me dreary.
I blaze away, till dawn of day
  My brilliance renders dimmer;
And when put out, I never shout—
  My swear-word, is a glimmer!'"

"An Old Bachelor," "'E Can't Take a Roise Out of Oi," "It Gits Me Talked Abaht," were written in the train during railway journeys. "A Fallen Star" grew out of some notes which I jotted down many years ago. In its original form the "Fallen Star" was a broken-down fiddler. Here are the notes, as I came across them in an old portfolio :—

Music to introduce : Mendelssohn's Concerto. An old fiddler (make-up shabby. Head and hair like Beethoven, but face bloated—dissipated) discovered playing outside gorgeously illuminated gin palace somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Docks. View of Thames at back. Time : midnight. Sky overcast. Scene outside in strong contrast with the brilliantly lighted pub., inside which a crowd of noisy roughs are heard howling the chorus of a comic song, as the curtain rises. Fiddler's story to be told in three verses. He was once a great popular favourite. In his young days, in the height of his success, he fell in love with and married a woman, who, within a few

years, proved false to him. From that moment he lost all interest in life. He took to drink, falling gradually lower and lower in the social scale, until at last compelled to earn his living by playing in the streets, on the chance of picking up a few coppers. Broken in health and spirit, he is dying. Suddenly, from inside the pub. voices are heard calling to the fiddler to "play up." He mechanically attempts the tune which they have been bawling out. Weak and faint he staggers—then realising that life can last but a few moments longer, with a supreme effort he pulls himself together, and plays the opening strain of the Mendelssohn Concerto. He falls ; and as he is stretched lifeless on the stage, still clutching his violin, one of the strings is heard to snap, and the curtain slowly descends, as the rough, coarse voices roar out the refrain,

"Hi ! Hi ! clear the way for the Rowdy Dowdy Boys !'

This idea I abandoned, as it would have been difficult to carry out in my Recitals, on account of the scenic effects required. The above notes not only suggested "A Fallen Star"—in which sketch I made the character a broken-down, old-time tragedian—but they resulted in my writing another monologue entitled "M. Armand Thibault," which I am glad to say was equally well received. The two or three tunes which I have (to use a word with due apologies to Leipsic, Bayreuth, and other musical nurseries) "composed," have worried me quite as much as they have worried other people! For days before I wrote any words to

it, the tune of "The Future Mrs. 'Awkins," haunted me. I went to sleep humming it, and in the morning I bathed to it, shaved to it, dressed to it! I make this confession because of reproaches which have been hurled at me by friends, whose means were not equal to the strain of constantly bribing organ-grinders to "go into the next street." Just one word more about "Mrs. 'Awkins." I was "out of the bill" for some time in consequence of a severe cold. One day a friend called, and told me that he had travelled on a recent railway journey with a man who volunteered the following information concerning my indisposition: "It's all bunkum about Chevalier's cold. He's mad, that's what's the matter with him! He walks up and down a long gravel path in his garden for hours at a stretch, singing 'Oh! Lizer!' Of course the truth has been kept out of the papers, but they don't kid me! I had it from the doctor who's attending him!"

This incident reminds me of another, which reflects equal credit on the inventive faculty of that interesting type—the man who knows everything about everybody. Some years ago, my brother Bertram, trading under the name of Knight, was in business as a photographer, in the West End. One day a "sitter," whose portrait had just been taken, walked out of the studio into an adjoining waiting-room, where, on the walls, hung a number of my photographs, in various characters. Casually casting his eye round, the gentleman remarked, "Good likenesses of Chevalier. I know him very well indeed. Ah! he's got on—hasn't he? Why I remember the time when he and his

father used to go round with a barrow. Many a cabbage he's supplied us with in the old days!"

Not a word was said until the "well-informed" gentleman was about to take his leave. Then my brother said, "I shall be seeing Albert at the Pavilion to-night. He'll be interested in what you have just told me. Would you mind giving me the address of his old customers?" "Who's Albert?" queried the knowing one. "My brother, Albert Chevalier." The gentleman picked up his hat, and made a wild rush out into the street. My brother lost a customer. He did not call back for his photos, as he had arranged to do.

Many songs and sketches of mine, which failed in the music-halls, have been most successful in my Recitals—proving, if proof were needed, how much an actor is at the mercy of the conditions under which he presents his work. The particular items to which I refer, always safe cards in my Recitals, never really appealed to music-hall patrons. Sometimes they went fairly well, but as a rule they were anything but big successes. Perhaps they were not sufficiently obvious. The fancy of a music-hall audience must be caught at once. It won't wait to be tickled. There is very little "working up" possible, as an actor understands the process. By the time you've worked up to an effect, the chances are that the greater part of your audience has retired for refreshment! You must start in with an effect. The present-day music-hall is essentially a place of amusement. The theatre—with all due deference to the superior person who is so fond of saying that "actors take themselves too seriously"—is, or should

be, occasionally, something more. The fact that Shakespeare wrote his plays to be acted, surely proves this for all time. It is the artist's duty to do the best he can—the best that is in him to do. Under the circumstances he cannot take himself too seriously. Above all he must have the courage of his opinions.

By way of encouragement to those who are fighting the up-hill fight, let me relate a little personal experience. The first time I ever sang one of my songs in Glasgow, was at a benefit performance. I came off, as I had gone on, in dead silence. The next time I appeared in that city, the advance booking for my recital at St. Andrew's Hall was bigger than for Paderewski!—a fact which the curiously inclined may verify for themselves by applying to Messrs. Paterson, who were my bookers on the occasion in question.

Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"THE NIPPER'S LULLABY."

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CHAPTER XIX

THE result of my two Recitals at St. James's Hall more than realised my most sanguine hopes. On each occasion I had a full house, and an enthusiastic audience. All my new impersonations were received, both by the Press and the public, as kindly as any of my earlier efforts. I had many offers from London and provincial music-hall managers. Charles Morton suggested that I should repeat my St. James's Hall experiment at a Palace *matinée*. This I settled to do, as I thought my new work would stand a better chance of succeeding at the Palace than at any other music-hall. In the matter of terms he was more than generous. He found the theatre, the orchestra, the staff, a company of artists, paid also for all advertisements, and gave me 25 per cent. of the gross receipts. The *matinée* was so successful that several more were given, and I arranged to go into the night bill for a short season, prior to opening at the Royalty in the "Land of Nod." At the Palace the night and *matinée* audiences were quite distinct. During the *matinées*, even the veteran Charles Morton was surprised at the number of fresh faces to be seen in the auditorium. Theatrical and music-hall managers had often laughed at me for saying that they did not

cater for *all* entertainment seekers. Apart from Charles Morton, the only managers I can call to mind who were at all inclined to think that my dream of catering for, to them, an unknown quantity, was not absolutely crazy, were H. E. Moss and the late Newsome Smith. On different occasions I had talked the matter over with them, and it is possible that if Newsome Smith had lived, he would have attempted to run a show on lines suggested by me—indeed he promised me that he would do so. I wanted him to try the experiment at the Tivoli, when he first took over the management of that hall. The Tivoli would have answered the purpose admirably, as it was practically a new hall. It had no traditions; it was in an important thoroughfare. But although he approved of the programme I suggested—a programme, the sole aim and object of which should not be simply to crowd in a number of turns, but which should form a real variety entertainment, in the sense that at some of the big theatrical benefits the turns are really varied—he could not see his way then to carry out the scheme. My suggestion was that the bill should include the best procurable—not only in the music-halls, but from the theatres, and the concert platform. Good music (not necessarily incomprehensible!) selections from masters like Beethoven, Mozart, Schumann, Chopin—masters who did not ignore melody in their compositions. Short burlesques—operettas (not boiled-down old plays), written by established authors, and composers, played by experienced people and properly stage-managed. The instalment of a stage-manager, and the institution of

rehearsals, as they are conducted in a well-regulated theatre, to be a *sine quâ non.* All songs produced by the regular music-hall performers to be subject to the same amount of careful rehearsing, instead of the slipshod humming of a tune into the conductor's ear, and his fatal assurance that "it will be all right at night.' What an entertainment—a real variety entertainment—could be presented under these conditions! To obtain the best, the best must have some assurance that it will not lose caste by appearing in the halls. There is no reason why an artist, say, like the inimitable Dan Leno, should not be followed, or *vice versâ*, by, say, Hollman, Ben Davies, Blauvelt, or Kirkby Lunn. Sims Reeves in his old age appeared in the halls, but it was in his old age. There should be no stigma attaching to "variety." I feel sure that certain so-called "high class" Saturday concerts would be all the better for a little "high class" variety. Such an attempt has been made occasionally, a fitful, feeble attempt, but it carried no conviction with it because it was half-hearted. Variety of the best would surely prove more attractive than monotony of the best. As I pointed out earlier, the term "variety" has been so misapplied, that it no longer conveys any definite assurance that a programme, so headed, shall not be merely a pot-pourri of good, and very bad—tasteful and distasteful—harmless, and unwholesome—graceful and disgraceful. I don't for one moment mean to say that all so-called variety entertainments come under any of these headings. What I desire to emphasise is, that the majority of variety programmes offer no guarantee that they contain nothing which

shall offend, and such a guarantee should be insisted upon. It would be impossible to overrate the benefit which would accrue to music-hall artists under these conditions. Once establish a proper standard of work, and it will be the aim and object of each, and every performer to reach that standard—not to fall below it.

A certain London manager—a typical theatrical speculator—approached me shortly after my St. James's Hall Recitals. This particular manager having, strange to say, loads of money at his command, was under the impression that he had only to make a sufficiently tempting monetary bid, for any performer to immediately fall down, and grovel before the golden prospect. Here are some letters and telegrams which passed between us :—

"—— THEATRE.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have a very fine part in my next production which I would like you to play. . . . Please understand from the outset that I do not want you for your name, but simply for your talent. . . . I don't want you as a draw, simply because I don't believe that any artist draws. . . . You would be one of the crowd, not starred in any way. . . . Kindly drop me a line to-day.

"Yours truly,

"Y. Z."

Here is my reply, sent by return post :—

"MY DEAR SIR,—It is very good of you to say that you want me 'for my talent'; but my experience is that, by managers, an artist's 'talent' is estimated

according to his drawing powers ; and that he is only offered 'fine parts' when he is in demand—in other words, when he is a draw. I am at present on my tenth Recital tour. In defiance of your theories, I actually 'star' my own name, and, curiously enough, business continues to be excellent. . . . I do not feel inclined to give you, or any other manager, the opportunity to inform the public that in future I am to be regarded as 'one of the crowd'—even if that crowd be yours. I am writing thus candidly, because you have addressed me in a similar way. My letter is simply Labour replying to Capital—an interchange of compliments between a Great Employer and a humble worker.

"Yours truly,

"ALBERT CHEVALIER."

Immediately on receipt of my letter, the "Great Employer" wired to me as follows :—

"As I must settle soon, can we continue to interchange compliments at luncheon to-day one-thirty sharp at theatre? Please wire to theatre. . . ."

To which I wired back : —

"Sorry, but I leave town for Devonshire midday. Shall be away all the week. The humble labourer has recently had other offers. His intention is to wait for the most advantageous. This is the Great Employer's opportunity. Just ordered fresh stock of special printing, star bills, &c. Address as before, Chevalier,

Compliment Exchange Bureau. Letters answered with neatness and dispatch."

In December, 1898, Robert Newman was arranging some Christmas entertainments at the Large Queen's Hall. Little thinking that it would lead to anything more important, I settled an engagement with him for three weeks. I had often thought, particularly after my St. James's Hall and Palace Recitals, of trying to revive a kind of German Reed show. I realised that the death of Corney Grain and the sudden, sad, collapse of the St. George's Hall entertainment had left a gap which, though impossible in some ways to refill, offered an opportunity for an experiment on slightly different lines. A large section of the London public remained uncatered for—the people who would not go to a theatre or a music-hall. Theatrical and music-hall managers have no idea what an enormous number of people there are of this class; and yet it is an amusement-loving class—all it requires is to be carefully catered for. It would go to the theatre—to the music-hall, perhaps—if it could be quite sure that it would not be shocked. It will come over and over again, once it feels absolutely sure of seeing or hearing nothing that will offend. If it only knew, there are theatres to which it might flock, and be entertained delightfully, intellectually; but it has no experience of theatres. All it knows about them is what it has heard—and it has heard lots from people who couldn't tell the stage door from the box office! It is an extremely cautious class. Are its demands so very unreasonable, after all? My contention

has always been that, given a clean, wholesome entertainment, anybody can go to it. Given an entertainment where variety means the clean and wholesome served up as meat in the innuendo sandwich, and you not only rob a whole class of amusement, but you keep out those who would be your staunchest supporters.

During the Christmas show at Queen's Hall I had several chats with Robert Newman on the subject of trying to establish, in the Small Hall, an entertainment, if not exactly on the lines of the late German Reed's, on lines which might appeal equally to that large section of the public which at present does not go to theatre or music-hall, and that section which patronises both.

We decided to make the attempt in a small way, and the fact that the thousandth performance is near at hand, entitles us to some little credit for the faith we had in receiving support from the public. Please don't run away with the notion that I consider my particular entertainment an ideal variety one! All I claim for it is that it does not offend; and it is still running—for which I am truly grateful. The conditions under which I am able to produce my work at Queen's Hall are to me delightful. The audiences come there to be entertained. Remarkable audiences they are, too—"variety" audiences in the best sense of the word: Theatre goers and non-theatre goers; music-hall frequenters, and people who have never been inside a music-hall; a big percentage of Mr. Newman's own following (these lovers of symphony and other classical concerts), and visitors from the country—friends, if I may be allowed to call them so —who have "sampled" my entertainments on tour.

My Recitals started at the Small Queen's Hall, January 16, 1899. My own opening programme consisted of "'E Can't Take a Roise Out of Oi," "Our Bazaar," "A Fallen Star," "Dat Moon's Mighty High" (coon song from the "Land of Nod"), "The Coster's Courtship," "I've Got 'Er 'At," "Burlesque French Song," and "Knocked 'em in the Old Kent Road." During this, my first season, the managers' bugbear, the London County Council, was once again to the fore with a fresh budget of well-intentioned restrictions. Robert Newman particularly had for some time smarted under a succession of pin-pricks inflicted by the L.C.C. Opinions may differ—they always will on every subject—as to the advisability of giving Sunday concerts. That, however, they supplied a want, Mr. Newman proved at Queen's Hall, notwithstanding certain passages-at-arms which he had with the Licensing Committee. I ventured to side with him, and in a feeble parody of "Sally in our Alley," taking liberties with both tune, rhyme, and rhythm, I presented, as an item in my programme, the following protest:—

SUNDAY IN OUR ALLEY.*

Of all the days that are in the week,
  I really do dread one day;
That's—if it be well so to speak—
  A County Council Sunday;
For then I'm dressed all in my best
  To roam abroad with Sally:
She is the darling of my heart;
  We walk out "casu*ally*."

* *By permission of Messrs. Reynolds & Co.*, 13, *Berners Street W.*

The Licensing Committee all
  Are guardians of that one day.
Show me the man who'd overhaul
  A County Council Sunday.
Ah! think what joy, for girl or boy—
  East Ender or "Pall Mally"—
They breathe the air, but must not dare
  To breathe it un-convention*ally*.

We do not cry; we would not sigh
  For pantomime or ballet,
But just to hear—say—Meyerbeer,
  Blauvelt, or Lady Hallé.
Explain to me, great L.C.C.—
  Explain it logic*ally*—
If it be wrong to hear a song,
  What price your Sunday bands, old pally?

Let's hope ere seven long years are o'er
  (As fairy tales say, one day)
There'll be no County Council for
  To regulate our Sunday.
Ah! then, perhaps, these kill-joy chaps
  Will frown at me and Sally;
And who shall say?—we may that day
  Thank Heaven mutu*ally*!

The arrogance of this body, as represented by the "Theatres and Entertainments Committee," is only equalled by the ignorance it displays where essentials are concerned. As an entertainment "guardian angel," as moral policeman, the L.C.C. is a miserable failure, which is not surprising, considering that many of its members give one the impression of being, in their hearts, opposed to laughter, and all that causes it, save their own bigoted, narrow-minded attitude. Surely the man who "pays the piper" has the right

to decide whether he may be allowed to purchase a drink inside a place of entertainment, instead of being put to the discomfort of having to go outside, and so allow a public-house proprietor to reap the benefit of patronage catered for by another speculator? The flagrant absurdity of these restrictions, was never more forcibly brought home to rational-minded people than in Manchester, at the Palace. When I was there, you could not drink inside the building, but there was a public-house across the way, which, in the interval, did a thriving trade. Tell a man that he must not do a thing, and his desire increases according to the force opposing it. This is only human nature. Hundreds who would have remained seated, without wanting to drink, suddenly became thirsty when the interval reminded them that there was a place outside, where they could obtain what was prohibited within the precincts of the hall! We are not a nation of teetotalers; and however temperate we may become, it is doubtful if we shall ever be—or desire to be—more than temperate in the matter of alcoholic stimulants. The man in the street is alive to the incongruous, paradoxical condition of things whereby our Government permits, and grants licenses for the sale of a certain article, deriving therefrom an enormous revenue, and at the same time hypocritically sanctions an outcry against its consumption. The man in the street is a long-suffering, easy-going person. He really represents all that is truly tolerant in this country. He smiles when the Faddist threatens. He believes in the common sense of the majority; but he forgets that he represents the majority—that

majority which will not—or, up to the present, has not—united to protest against the tyranny of teetotalism. I know men who cannot take a glass of beer without becoming temporarily imbecile. I also know men who cannot eat cucumber without courting the pangs of dyspepsia. To each of these I would say—without preaching—avoid beer, avoid cucumber; but I should not deprive others, differently constituted, of benefits, real or imaginary, which they may derive from the consumption of either beer or cucumber. I should not feel justified in unreasonably restricting the sale of these articles, to the detriment of capitalists who are prepared to pay according to the tariff imposed by our law-makers.

Has it ever struck theatrical and music-hall entertainment caterers, what an enormous amount of ground is covered by the industry they represent? Here are a few of the trades, professions, and arts directly and indirectly interested: playwrights, actors, singers, orchestral players, supers, dancers, scenic artists, gymnasts, acrobats, carpenters, electricians, refreshment caterers, printers, music and other publishers, advertising contractors, builders, decorators, furnishers, gasmen, scene-shifters, flymen, firemen, check-takers, programme-sellers, clerks, typewriters, music copyists, costumiers, wig-makers. All these, and many more, derive incomes from work supplied by theatre, music-hall, and other entertainment caterers. If delegates representing these united workers would call a meeting, to protest against the rough-shod riding of faddists over their legitimate hunting-ground, what chance would the faddists stand?

I simply put the question for the consideration of those in power, who do not know how nearly they have approached that last straw which may break the camel's back, only to substitute a very much stiffer backbone.

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Photo by] [*Hubert.*

"M. ARMAND THIBAULT."

Photo by] [*Hubert.*

"'ANKY PANKY."

[*To face p.* 165.

CHAPTER XX

AFTER my first season at Queen's Hall, I went as usual on tour in the provinces, returning to Langham Place in October. I reopened with the following additions to my repertoire: "M. Armand Thibault," "It Gits Me Talked Abaht," and "'Anky Panky, or The Quickness of the 'And Deceives the Heye." I had often contemplated a stage representation of the street corner, and racecourse conjurer. I had frequently watched him at work—having a little weakness for sleight-of-hand myself—but I had never been able to quite see how to present the character in my entertainment. I built up the sketch on tour, giving it for the first time in Gloucester. It went so well that I decided to elaborate it. In Leamington I added to his list of accomplishments, that of one-stringed fiddle Virtuoso. This enabled me to burlesque the airs and graces of certain long-haired instrumentalists. In a building where this type of musician is not quite a stranger, my caricature was, I am glad to say, most successful. The origin of my monologue, "M. Armand Thibault," I have explained elsewhere. "It Gits Me Talked Abaht," I had had by me ever since I came back from America. Shortly

after the commencement of my second season, the South African war broke out, and the patriotic reciter loomed large on the theatrical horizon. Rudyard Kipling set him, and her, going with the "Absent-Minded Beggar." About this time I was inundated with letters from aspiring histrions, and vocalists, who were organising entertainments "in aid of the good cause." Many of these were simply bunkum, so far as real patriotism was concerned. A novice wanted a good "send-off"—the following was his, or her, plan of campaign: he, or she, wrote to certain artists whose names would be of value from a business point of view, asking if they would give their services at a concert, which he, or she, (the aspiring one) was organising for the "Absent-Minded Beggar Fund." The artists applied to, in many cases, agreed to give their services. An attractive programme was drawn up. The organiser not only succeeded in obtaining a *début* under exceptionally favourable circumstances, but in addition derived no little *kudos* as organiser. This occasional misuse of the term "Patriotism" for purposes of advertisement, and the fact also that many of our old-established charitable institutions at home, suffered in consequence of money being poured into one channel, to the serious detriment of others, no less deserving, tempted me to paraphrase, or parody, Rudyard Kipling's poem. Here is the parody as I gave it in my entertainment at Queen's Hall. I introduced it into my "'Anky Panky" sketch. The "professor" explained, that being unable to afford a copy of the original, he had "dodged up some verses on his own":—

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Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"OUR COURT BALL."

[*To face p.* 166.

"OWED TO KIPLING."*

ABSENT-MINDEDLY WRITTEN AND RECITED BY ALBERT CHEVALIER.

You've done something for reciters! They're an absent-minded lot!
But they've turned up in a crowd to strike the iron now it's hot]
When I first thought of doing it, folks talked about an "ad,"
And looked at from that point of view, it's not so very bad!

Cook's son, duke's son, son of a belted earl,
Stage-struck Johnnie or dramatist, dude or society girl,
Do a good turn for a music-hall, or work it into a play,
Well, or atrociously rendered, it's sure to pay! pay! pay!

If you want a handsome sal'ry, you can have it, name your terms,
Ev'ry detail shall be given to the advertising firms;
Then to make the show effective we must have a martial air,
Drums to imitate the cannon—oh! the booming must be there.

Duke's job, cook's job, gardener, baronet, groom,
Side-drum, kettle-drum, make it a big, big boom;
And some of us may be knighted for popularising the lay,
As I said before, if we must have war, it shall pay! pay! pay!

I'm an absent-minded beggar—I forgot to tell you that—
Oh! the cause is great and noble—to the cause I raise my hat;
But Kip.'s looking after Tommy, so I ve half made up my mind
To take out a poet's licence for some fighters left behind.

Brave fight! vain fight! fight that the strong would shun!
Fight without hope or glory—fight that is never won;
Battle in filth and squalor—sordid, spiritless fray!
Through the roll of the drum hear the cry from the slum, and pay! pay! pay!

* *By permission of Messrs. Reynolds & Co., 13, Berners Street, W.*

One of the parts I wanted to play, when I was acting in the theatres, was Achille Talma Dufard in the "First Night." Over and over again I have been going to appear in this character, but something has invariably cropped up to prevent my doing so. I allude to this because, but for my desire to play Achille, I might never have written, or impersonated, Armand Thibault. I hope my performance has given no kind friend cause to deplore the desire which inspired it! I first produced this little monologue at Ilfracombe. My natural nervousness was accentuated by the knowledge that I had to play a few bars on the violin—an instrument on which I could at one time, "strum" fairly well by ear. I understand nothing of musical technique—an admission which those who know me will doubtless consider superfluous. The playing of those few bars worried me for weeks beforehand. The actual impersonation was comparatively easy, because I knew my man. To make matters worse, it was necessary for the audience to believe that Thibault, in his day, had been a fine performer. When the moment came for me to play I could hardly hold the fiddle under my chin. Possibly, the kindly disposed audience made extra allowance for the poor old "has been." Anyway, it took me a week to overcome the dread of appearing as a soloist. And even then, there was a deal more tremolo in my playing than the musical phrase actually called for. If I put the sketch aside for a few nights, all the worst symptoms of my nervousness would again remorselessly seize me!

Before I Forget——

MONSIEUR ARMAND THIBAULT.

MONOLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY ALBERT CHEVALIER.

(SCENE.—*Shabby room; table and two chairs* R.C.; *chair with hat hanging on it up stage* L.; *on table violin case. Thibault discovered tuning violin. Pianist off playing* "*Killarney*" *very badly.*)

THIBAULT. Oh! dat man! Alvays de same tune! alvays de same tune! He is Irish. He vill only play de national melody. I love de national melody, but when it start at eight o'clock in de morning et finish only at eleven o'clock at night—ah! but one can have too much Irish! (*Examining string*) Et dis string, mais how is it dis string 'as crack three times dis week, eh? but it is not crack, dis string. It is cut! Ah! mais pourquoi? Perhaps I practice too much—I know de gentleman upstairs he complain dat I interfere vid his piano studies. He has a piano—oh! yes! he has a piano—he cannot play 'im, but dat is noting! (*sits* L. *of table*) I also, I had a piano once—it is . . . (*looking regretfully at violin case*) it is vid my Stradivarius. It break my heart to part vid my violin. I get twenty pounds for 'im three months ago from—from one of my pupils. I 'ave not de twenty pounds now, oh! no! but he gave me dis ticket (*takes pawnticket from pocket*). It was very good of him. Oh! ve had had von previous transaction—about de piano! et me voila maintenant—Armand Thibault membre du conservatoire de Paris—leader of de Franz Schubert Orchestre, and dis (*looking at violin*) dis is all I have to remind me of de past. It is a poor substitute for de instrument at . . . at my pupil's. Ah! dey say I am too old to play! Parbleu! de gout it take me in de hand sometimes, mais vat of dat? Ven it leave me I am de same Armand Thibault! (*placing violin under his chin as if about to play—gets twinge of gout—puts violin down*). Ah! I vas laid up tree times during my last engagement, et dis season, de first for twenty years, my place in de Franz Schubert Orchestre is taken by anoder! and worse dan dat — my instrument—my Stradivarius is — is at my pupil's! Ingrat dat I am! I have live on dat instrument for tree months! De last of dat is gone dis morning—'alf for my breakfast, and 'alf for a new string! (*rising, violin in hand,*

tuning violin. Pianist starts outside again). Ah ! de tone, de tone is not de same !—but den my fingers vere getting so stiff. (*Listens.*) Ah ! de gentleman upstairs ! (*Style of playing now better.*) Non ! dat is not de Irish gentleman ! Dat is de master ! Dat is better. (*Looking at string*) Et dis string ?—mais somebody 'as cut it—Ah ! it is ce malheureux ! (*looking off*). You cut my string ! You don't wish me to cure me of de gout ? You play piano ? You shall accompany me ! (*tries to play—gets twinge of gout*). Oh ! . . . 'cré nom d'un petit bon homme bleu ! If it is absolument necessary dat I s'all have de gout, mais vy must I have it in de hand ? vy not in de foot ? A musician does not vant a foot ! I know tree trombone, a bassoon, a clarinette all vid de gout, but in de foot only ! (*breaks down*). Ah ! dey vere right, dey vere right. I am too old ! (*sinks in chair*). Ah ! if only I 'ad my Stradivarius to remind me of fame dat is gone !—Oh ! je suis lâche ! I am a coward ! Courage ! Courage ! (*Knock outside.*) Mais vat is dat ? Ah! perhaps de little girl—de little girl to know if I take dinner at home to-day ! No ! (*turning towards door* R.) not to-day—not to-day (*trying to conceal emotion*)—I dine dis evening, vid some friends at a little soirée musicale. (*Aside*) Oh ! que j'ai faim ! (*Knock outside.*) Comment ! you insist ? but I tell you . . . (*going towards door*) I tell you I go out—I . . . (*Thibault takes letter which is handed in to him*). A letter for me ? . . . (*examines envelope*) ' Franz Schubert Orchestre ! " But vat . . . vat can dey have to write to me again ? (*opens letter and reads. Music outside*). "My dear M. Thibault,—I have much pleasure in enclosing you a cheque, which I beg you to receive as the first instalment of a pension " . . . Pension ! Cheque ! (*looking towards violin case*) Oh ! vere is de ticket ? (*feels in pocket, finds pawnticket*). Dere it is ! dere it is ! (*calling*) Marianne ! Marianne ! (*closing and fastening empty case, leaving violin on table*) I change my mind—I—I dine at home to-day ! (*takes hat off chair, mumbling*) I dine at home to-day. But first I go out ! (*Going off, turns round and calls out*) Lay for two, Marianne—for *two*—I bring back an old friend !

Curtain.

Shortly after the production of this sketch, the following lines were sent to me :—

ARMAND THIBAULT.

FROM mood to mood you pass, from soul to soul,
  From smiles to tears, from throbbing heart to heart
Breathing life's breath through many a varying *rôle*
  In this great tragi-comedy of Art.

Chameleon-like you change: and now I see
  The old musician—he whose soul's regret
Enthrals us like a haunting melody—
  Fate's trio led by Love—a quaint quartet.

Armand Thibault! We greet you, sir, to-day,
  Maëstro, in whose art sweet truths are blent:
You know the rhythms of the heart, and play
  On life as on a perfect instrument.

EDINBORO', *December* 16, 1899. G. F. R. ANDERSON.

People often ask me which of my songs, sketches, and monologues I like the best. It is a very difficult question to answer, because if I did not like a song, a sketch, or a monologue, I should not produce it. If I have any particular favourites out of a repertoire of quite one hundred items, they are: "A Fallen Star," "My Old Dutch," "My Country Cousin," "Mrs. 'Awkins," "Our Little Nipper," "Wot's the Good of Hanyfink? Why, Nuffink!" "Our Bazaar," "Burlesque Lectures," delivered as the curate, "M. Armand Thibault," "'Anky Panky," "Blue Ribbon Jane," "Our Court Ball," "The Lag's Lament," "Tick-Tock," "An Old Bachelor," "'E Can't Take a Roise Out of Oi," "Mafekin' Night," and "Knocked 'em in the Old Kent Road." I am also frequently asked if I find the old songs go better than the new, to which I truthfully reply, "The new songs go better—when they are old."

Just before Christmas, 1899, I received a note from John Hollingshead asking me to appear at his first and only benefit. Instead of giving an item from my repertoire, it was arranged that I should write and deliver a kind of "address." This I did, made up as one of Hollingshead s old Gaiety Gallery Boys. Speaking of my effort, the *Morning Post*, in the course of some extremely kind comments, remarked:—

"Incidentally Mr. Chevalier received a very fine compliment. A lady who, from her sex and profession, must know the resources of making-up, muttered, 'Poor Mr. Chevalier, he has aged!' It quite escaped her that Mr. Chevalier would never sing of the things of twenty years ago as a coster of twenty-five, and his make-up and delivery were so simple, and so natural, that she never suspected them to be in any way assumed."

Here is the "address" as spoken by me at the Hollingshead benefit, Empire Theatre, January 30, 1900:—

I CAN'T go back to what they call the good old palmy days,
And if I could, perhaps my song would not be one of praise.
Somewhere about the sixties is as far as I can go;
But since that time I've been a reg'lar patron of the show.
I've looked so often on the stage, and wondered what 'twas like
To earn the Pit's approval or the Gallery's chy-ike
That now I'm 'ere a-looking up, instead of looking down,
I almost wish I'd gone in front, and paid my 'alf a crown!
I've cast myself for Mercury—a gentleman as plods
With messages—that's it! I bring a message from the Gods—
The boys 'oo paid their tanners when John Hollingshead was King.
The boys 'oo made the rafters with their merry laughter ring.
When John was King we knew no "cult," no morbid Ibsen craze
(I don't remember seeing Toole in any problem plays);

'E gave us of the very best, and there were giants then,
Whose like, I only 'ope that we may look upon again.
I never saw your Garricks, your Macreadys, or your Footes;
But I've laughed at Edward Terry, and I've whistled Meyer Lutz!
I've shouted "Bravo Nellie!"—'ow the recollection thrills!
I begs the lady's pardon—"Miss N. Farren" on the bills.
Sam Phelps, and Arthur Williams—You may think I've got 'em
    mixed;
But each one 'as 'is place, and in my memory is fixed.
Chas. Mathews, and the Billingtons—Elton—Teddy Royce—
You paid your money, and you 'ad a very 'andsome choice.
'Oo brought us Sairey Bernhardt, and the brothers Coquelin too,
John Drew and Ada Rehan in the "Taming of the Shrew"?
Kate Vaughan, that Queen of Dancers, dear old Johnny Toole
    in "Dot"?
Burlesque, Farce, Drama, Comedy—'e gave us all the lot.
He catered for all tastes, and if a certain light outshone,
Us Gods should be the very last to round on honest John.
Within that lamp—that sacred lamp—which 'e so proudly lit,
There burned no low-flash oil, but bright Burnand-Byronic wit.
Burlesque has not so much improved—I'm but a gall'ry boy—
Still "little Dr. Faust" wants beating—so does "Robbing Roy."
But there! no matter what 'e did, I'm 'ere to-day to tell
That ev'rything 'e did 'e always tried to do it well.
He may 'ave 'ad 'is failures, they were few and far between.
Good work enough 'e leaves be'ind to keep his mem'ry green.

(*Beckons towards wings.*)

John 'Ollingshead, the "practical," they dubbed you long ago.
The Great B.P. is practical, as I intend to show.
The G.B.P. is mindful of a debt it owes to you;
As mouthpiece of one section I am proud to pay it too.
We've got no pow'r to make you a K.G. or K.C.B.
But being G.B.P. ourselves, we'll make you G.B.P.
You ain't been knighted, honest John, but to us Gods you shall
Be always known as G.B.P.—that is, the Gods' Best Pal!

A night or two before the benefit I called on John Hollingshead to run through the above. I was not

quite certain about some of the people mentioned—whether my memory served me faithfully as to their connection with the Gaiety. I was alone with Hollingshead for an hour or so. It did not dawn on me until I began to read, how a simple record of his triumphs, and his failures, would appeal to the person immediately concerned. Practical John showed me how deep-rooted is the sentiment springing from associations, in which a man has put his whole heart, and brain, and energies. Practical John broke down! I'm sure he will forgive me for mentioning it, but I do so, because it gave me a further insight into human nature, and it increased my admiration for a man, who had had his ups and downs on the see-saw of theatrical enterprise—a "plucked 'un"—practical, but withal, a man of deep sentiment. In relating this incident I know I am giving the "will-be-funny-at-any-price" wag an opportunity. I am quite prepared to hear that I am mixing up cause and effect. Let me assure the "will-be" that this side of the picture, this humorous view of the situation, did not escape me; but I am too old a hand to make a mistake under conditions such as I have endeavoured to describe.

Behind the scenes at the Empire there was the usual scramble, almost invariably associated with similar functions. Some alteration in the programme had to be made at the last moment, in order to facilitate the setting of a scene. A front cloth was dropped, and I walked on to speak my "piece." I could hardly hear my own voice for the din behind. I very nearly "dried up," as we call it in theatrical parlance. Indeed, so distracting was the noise, that

at one point I had to refresh my memory with a peep at the manuscript, which I had taken the precaution to carry on, concealed in a newspaper. A few minutes before my turn, some one dashed up to me, requesting that I would, after my address, present Hollingshead with a portrait of himself, specially painted, as a souvenir of the occasion. Needless to say, this did not help to lessen my nervousness. When the picture was brought on by two attendants, I prepared to make the presentation. To my surprise, and also relief, Charles Morton stepped forward at the same moment. I immediately retired, not knowing quite what was going to happen. Morton congratulated Hollingshead on the success of his first and only benefit, and begged his acceptance of a little souvenir—the oil painting. I discovered afterwards that according to the original arrangement, Morton was to have made the presentation, but as he had not been seen in the building I was approached with a view to deputising for him. He turned up just in time—only just—another second he and I would have appeared, for the first time on any stage, as Presentation Duettists!

CHAPTER XXI

BEFORE the termination of my season in June, 1900, I introduced two new items in my entertainment—"An Old Bachelor," and "Mafekin' Night." I was in the habit of running down to Margate, where I had a little house on the sea front, from Saturday to Monday. In the train, returning to town for my usual *matinée* at Queen's Hall, I wrote the words of "An Old Bachelor." West set them to music, and I presented my new musical monologue for the first time at Beckenham in the course of a Recital which I was giving there:—

AN OLD BACHELOR.*

MUSICAL MONOLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY ALBERT CHEVALIER. COMPOSED BY ALFRED H. WEST.

THEY call me an old bachelor
I'm known as poor old bachelor,
Although I'm really rich in what this world considers wealth,
But money can't buy everything,
No! money is not everything,
It cannot bring you happiness, it cannot purchase health.
I'm hale and very hearty too,
Play poker and écarté too,

* *By permission of Messrs. Reynolds & Co., 13, Berners Street W.*

Before I Forget——

To pass the time away at home—my only home—the Club!
The boys all know my Christian name—
They call me by my Christian name,
And if they're running short of cash and want a modest sub:

They know I've more than I can spend,
I may say that I will not lend,
But still they get it in the end
From a poor old bachelor.

They say I save my money up—
I scrape, and hoard my money up,
Why don't I have a trifle on a gee-gee now and then?
A modest little flutter—
Yes, it's called, I think, a "flutter"
By some of my acquaintances, who pose as sporting men.
"You're old," they say, and "out of date,
A trifle slow at any rate!"
I tell them they're so go-ahead, and p'raps I've lived too long;
I only back the winners—
And I do pick out the winners,
Although before the race they always tell me that I'm wrong.

They envy me my luck, they say,
And I? Well, I can only pray
That know my luck they never may!
A poor old bachelor!

I've been advised to settle down,
To choose a wife and settle down,
To find some homely body who is sensible and good,
A tempting combination!
An unusual combination!
I only smile and say, "I would not marry if I could."
They little guess, when chaffingly
They question me, and laughingly
I answer; how each thoughtless word recalls a dream of youth,
A dream from which I cannot wake!
Of life lived for remembrance sake
They call me woman hater!—if they only knew the truth!

That somewhere, where the flowers are seen,
A white cross marks the spot I mean,
Who keeps a little grave so green?
  A poor old bachelor.

Although the new number was well received, I was not satisfied with my own work. I therefore put it aside for a time. When next I attempted it, I made up differently, and delivered most of the lines sitting down—trying to convey the impression that I was an old gentleman—an old bachelor—musing alone in the smoke-room of his club. In many ways I then re-read the song. In both the "Fallen Star," and "An Old Bachelor," I have made considerable alterations, and I hope improvements, since I first delivered them in public. In each case I knew, in the beginning, pretty well what effects I wanted to produce, where they should occur, and I may even say, how to get them; but for some weeks nervousness robbed me of that self-control which is so essential in presenting finished stage-work. As in the case of "A Fallen Star," "Thibault," &c., on its production in London, "An Old Bachelor" at once became an important addition to my list of semi-serious items.

After the performance one Saturday night, as I was in my room dressing to go home, West asked me to listen to a tune composed years ago, which he had suddenly recalled, and which he thought would work up into a good song of the rollicking order. He played it over. Newman, who happened to be present, was struck with its brightness and "go," and so was I. In order to remember the rhythm, and the melody if

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[*Photo by*] [*B. Knight*

"MAFEKIN' NIGHT."

[*To face p.* 179.

possible, I jotted down some nonsense lines. This occurred a few days after the never-to-be-forgotten Relief of Mafeking celebrations in London. On the night that the glorious news arrived, Newman and I had roamed the streets watching the revellers. I rather think the suggestion of a Mafeking song came from Newman. Anyway I wrote "Mafekin' Night" to the tune West had played over, going down to Margate on the Sunday, and within three days produced it at Queen's Hall with the most gratifying result.

Although the event which suggested my ditty no longer calls for the immediate purchase of penny trumpets, and Union Jacks; although the wild excitement of Mafeking night is almost a matter of ancient history now—so rapidly do we hear, see, and sometimes remember nowadays—no present programme of mine would be considered complete if it did not include the costermonger's description of his outing, and shouting, on that memorable occasion. I quite look on this song as I used to look on the "Old Kent Road"—a safe number with which to wind up my entertainment.

One day a gentleman entered my dressing-room and proceeded to examine the bumps on my head. A curtailed version of the result of his inquiries I now reproduce (by permission) as published in the *Popular Phrenologist*. Beyond providing the necessary phrenological material, I am in no way responsible for Professor Severn's summary of my attributes and characteristics. I wish he hadn't started with a remark about the size of my head, and I hope that

the Professor's remarks concerning any abnormal development may be accepted as containing no subtle vein of cynicism :—

"Mr. Chevalier, though not much above the medium height, possesses physically a strong, manly, vigorous organisation.

"His head is large—twenty-three inches in circumference measurement—wide in the regions of the executive powers, well developed in the perceptive, reasoning, and social group of organs. He possesses a most harmonious blending of the temperaments, and considerably above the average mental powers. His faults will result from too great activity of sympathy and sociability rather than from a deficiency of any mental organ.

"Though possessing a well-balanced brain and intellect, he has some pronounced mental characteristics : Mirthfulness, Imitation, Friendship, Agreeableness, Ideality, Tune, Constructiveness, Causality, Comparison, Benevolence and Executiveness are all very powerful organs, and act influentially in making him the man he is publicly known to be. One rarely examines an individual with so powerful a degree of Mirthfulness combined with large Imitation, and Agreeableness or Adaptability ; and so high a degree of refinement with so robust and executive a character. The possession of these qualities gives him unique abilities.

"Few men could be so thoroughly adapted to their own particular line of work as he is. Those fine human touches given especially in his pathetic pieces, and in

his representations of old folk, are the products of an ingeniousness which is innate. Having fairly large Approbativeness, Mr. Chevalier is not indifferent to praise, he values it greatly, is grateful of the appreciation bestowed upon him by the vast number of his admiring patrons, but this alone is not his greatest incentive to effort. He glories in his art; it is a constant source of stimulus to him.

"His perceptive faculties being large make him very observant, and give a strong practical bent to his mind. He sees much that under the same conditions would escape many another's notice, and he has a good memory. He is systematic in his methods, has a good head to plan and organise work and business affairs, and the organs giving width to his head indicate the possession of a great amount of energy, force, and executiveness which he manages to put into whatever he does.

"His large Ideality and well-marked intellect give considerable refinement to his nature. He has a very susceptible organisation, and possesses strong inward emotions, but he is too practical and self-possessed to allow these feelings generally to take sway. His large Tune gives him a marked appreciation of music, and he has talent to be able to produce it. He has good powers of contrivance, creative and constructive talent; ability for literary and musical compositions, and his large Mirthfulness and Comparison enable him quickly to perceive the ludicrous and absurd. He has no difficulty in imitating what he sees, yet he displays originality in all that he does. He possesses a wonderful amount of adaptation, which quality is

strongly manifested both in his professional and social life.

After my *matinée* at Queen's Hall I contrive to pay a flying visit, now and then, to outlying districts such as Richmond, Surbiton, Beckenham, &c. Sometimes I even go so far away as Reading, or Ipswich. One night I gave a Recital in Kettering, when I submitted a programme similar to that given at Queen's Hall. A local critic, probably pressed for time, did not avail himself of the Press tickets sent in the usual way to his office. Here is his report of my Recital as it eventually appeared in the paper which he "represented":—

"Albert Chevalier attracted a crowded audience to the Corn Exchange on Monday evening. Mr. Chevalier was supported by a talented company of artistes, who performed a musical comedy, written by himself, entitled the 'Land of Nod,' in a manner which called forth repeated applause from the audience. Mr. Chevalier himself is the central figure in the piece, and he carried out his humorous part in a manner which stamped him an actor of great skill."

I forgot to mention that two years before this I performed the "Land of Nod" in Kettering for the first and *only* [time there. Perhaps the critic was doing penance for a previous omission! If so, he selected an unfortunate occasion to use up a two-year old notice!

During this season I gave a special entertainment, under unique and delightful conditions. Mr. *Punch* (who originally christened me "A Chevalier

d'Industrie") was redecorating and refurnishing his historic premises, and to celebrate the event his proprietors issued invitations to a house-warming. Accompanied by Alfred West, I gave a performance lasting about an hour in the celebrated room where each week the editor meets his staff, to discuss the serious business of jokes for the forthcoming number. Looking across the footlights of the little stage specially erected I saw, as I walked on, F. C. Burnand, Phil May, Conan Doyle, Sir Philip Agnew; indeed, everybody present was somebody of importance, the majority, of course, representing either the literary or artistic world. What an audience to play to! I wish I could travel with it! I received the following kind letter, a few days afterwards, from Sir Philip Agnew:—

"DEAR MR. CHEVALIER,—I must send you a line to express, on behalf of the *Punch* proprietors, our great gratitude to you for so generously offering your services to us last Wednesday evening. Your performance was a delight to all who were privileged to witness it, and did more than anything to make the evening a success.

"It would give me great pleasure if you would accept the accompanying volume of pictures from *Punch*. I regard this merely as a memento of the occasion, and not at all as representing the measure of our thanks to you.

"I am, dear Mr. Chevalier,

"Yours very truly,

"PHILIP AGNEW."

1894 is a long while ago. But as so much has occurred since then to show that music-hall managers are not infallible, I will, for the first time, tell of a communication which I received in that year from a gentleman representing the London Pavilion Board of Directors. This letter is interesting, as again illustrating the importance of the conditions under which a performer presents his work. In 1894 I returned to the halls with a new budget of songs, including "Wot's the Good of Hanyfink?" "'Appy 'Ampstead," "Blue Ribbon Jane," "Tick-Tock," and "The Nipper's Lullaby"—songs which, in my Recitals on tour, had invariably been most successful. Later on, in America, nothing I did was more keenly appreciated than "Tick-Tock." When I revived it at my Palace *matinées*, it met with the unstinted approval of both press and public; and the same thing can, with equal truth, be said of its reception more recently at Queen's Hall.

The letter from which I am about to quote is one which I treasure because it showed me, before it was too late, that I should receive little encouragement from those in authority, if a tipsy youth in the gallery, or a *blasé* young man in the stalls, objected to work submitted by me. The fact that the majority, the respectable majority, accepted—if only by way of variety—an item which had not a chorus of the "Hi tiddley hi ti" order, was altogether ignored by the Syndicate of Popes.

The letter referred to began like this:—

"My co-directors and I have had so many

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Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"TICK TOCK."

[*To face p.* 184.

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Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"TICK TOCK."

[*To face p.* 185.

complaints brought to our notice from the public as to the songs you are now singing."

The communication then became prophetic, stating in positive terms that the result of my work must be "injurious, both to their interests and to my reputation."

The satire of the whole thing was all the more striking, when I compared this song with some of the choice, and tasteful, "gags" indulged in by other contributors to the programme! I was appearing, at this time, also at the Metropolitan. There, when I sang "Tick-Tock," nothing else that I did went half so well. "Tick-Tock," however, was not the only song which I was requested to withdraw. "Wot's the Good of Hanyfink?" and the "Lullaby" were others which the Piccadilly Pavilion Papacy objected to. I did not reply to the above-quoted letter, although I might have answered that I was trying to do good, clean, wholesome work—work which might not mix well with certain suggestive items, winked at by the tactful objectors—but work which deserved, at their hands, at all events, some recognition, other than the misapplication of a dead-letter programme footnote, as contained in the protest they thought proper to address to me.

I am not the author of "Tick-Tock," so I may be permitted to speak of it as containing a simple, pretty idea—reminiscent, perhaps, of Longfellow's "Clock on the Stairs," but surely none the worse for that It was charmingly and characteristically set to music by Alfred H. West, and at the present time, after

a lapse of seven years, regardless of all prophecy, it is still an important feature in my repertoire. I don't think its original production did much serious harm. If any reputation has suffered, it must surely be the reputation of that prophet who warned the singer of "Tick-Tock," and other similar ditties, that in submitting such items, he was jeopardising his own chances of success, and damaging the best interests of the music-hall!

CHAPTER XXII

I HAVE recently been informed, through the medium of the Press, that my favourite "hobbies" are fishing and theology!

This must have been written by the gentleman who originated the saying that actors take themselves too seriously. Fishing and theology! Well, Peter was a fisherman, so perhaps, after all, there is not much harm in the connection. Fishing was a good guess, although when I come to think of it, I may have been seen up the river in a punt trying to snare the wily roach. Fishing is not merely a hobby with me, it is a mania. I am an exceptionally bad fisherman, but in the matter of enthusiasm I would not give in—to Isaac Walton!

I have a little fishing of my own in North Devon. My cottage stands on a hill, commanding a panoramic view of some of the most glorious scenery in that most beautiful county. My holiday is a real lazy time True, I did write a three-act play one year, when I was supposed to be resting; but as a rule, I just loaf around with my rod and camera, being almost as bad a photographer as I am a fisherman. Oh, the delight of loafing, to a man who is used to the excitement of stage life!—and stage life is still exciting to me. I'm not too old to be enthusiastic—I was forty last March.

Speaking of my age, reminds me of a conversation overheard recently by a member of my company on tour. Two people were arguing about me. One said, "How long has he been at it?" "Oh, years!" answered the other. "How old do you suppose he is?" "Well, he must be over sixty." "How do you know?" "Know? Why, you can tell it by his voice!" I had just made my exit as the old yokel.

Another story—before I forget—typical of those people who always know more about you than you know about yourself. At a friend's house I took a lady, a stranger, down to dinner. Our introduction had been very hurried, and she evidently had not caught my name. During dinner she began to talk about "Chevalier." For the fun of the thing, I ran myself down as a performer. She, much to my amusement, resented my "criticism." I was going to throw a little light on the subject, when, turning round suddenly, after saying something particularly complimentary about my stage work, she exclaimed, "Ah! but he's a bad man—a really bad man. I know for a fact, that some years ago, he deserted his wife and three children—left them to starve!" Then I explained that I was not, and never had been married. When I eventually did enter the matrimonial state, I told my wife this story. I thought it advisable to do so!

But I was talking about "hobbies." Yes, I am an enthusiastic fisherman—as enthusiastic as I am in my profession, or in anything else that interests me. Thank goodness I retain my enthusiasm. Instead of losing it, it seems to increase as I grow older.

It is one of the greatest boons a man can possess. Without it, life is simply an existence—a monotonous filling out of the allotted span. With it, even failure serves as a spur. There may be, doubtless there are, penalties attaching to enthusiasm. Well, so there are attaching to existence; but enthusiasm lifts existence into the sphere of life. It is the great stimulus—it is Nature's tonic. No man ever yet achieved anything without enthusiasm. Some people think the right thing is to repress it—knowing it to be contagious. But then some people are such slaves to "good form." They use the language of enthusiasm in a flabby, fish-like manner, as I heard two ladies once say, speaking of a mutual friend: "Oh! yes, dear, Maude plays the violin divinely. She's a pupil of Joachim."

"Really! You don't say so? *How exciting!*"

Here is another instance of heartfelt sentiment: A young "Johnnie" came up to me in the smoke-room of an hotel where I was staying, and said, "Mr. Chevalier, I believe? You really must forgive me for addressing you without an introduction, but I do so want your autograph. You sent it to another 'Johnnie' I know, who wrote to you. Will you let me have it? *Do!* It will give me the greatest pleasure *unhung!*"

There is nothing more loathsome than affectation, and there is no more horrible form of affectation than assumed enthusiasm. If I had to choose between a veneer of enthusiasm, and a wet blanket, I should select the wet blanket!

Again I've wandered from my hobbies! Not more so, however, than the gentleman who originally gave

theology as one of them. Sometimes it is very difficult to trace information of this kind to its source. Sometimes it is quite an easy matter. In this particular case it is simplicity itself. America has not a monopoly of the journalistic Autolycus. Fleet Street is equally well, or badly, represented. One of these "snappers up" called to see me some time ago, and I received him in my "den." He looked round the bookshelves, and patronisingly expressed surprise that they were not filled with "lighter literature." He saw "copy" for an article on "Chevalier, Theologian," and suggested, after careful inspection of one particular shelf, that he should, there and then, interview me on the subject, which, from a certain collection of books, he assumed to be my pet "hobby," as he called it. Needless to say, I refused point-blank, telling him at the same time that what I chose to read in the privacy of my own room was a matter concerning me only, and one which I had no intention of discussing for purposes of publication. He went away, and within a few days, running short, I suppose, of legitimate material, he utilised his surreptitiously obtained "copy."

That is all I have to say about Theology, as one of my "hobbies."

CHAPTER XXIII

AFTER a month's rest in Devonshire I toured from August Bank Holiday until the middle of October, spending most of the time on the south coast, working round by way of Bristol into Wales, where I had a funny experience one night.

My brother Ingle was, as usual, superintending the arrangements in front of the house. The performance had not commenced. Ingle, from the pay-box window, saw a solemn-looking individual staring curiously at a picture of me, as the parson in "Our Bazaar." With an eye to business, Ingle asked him if he wished to go in? "What's it all about?" queried the sad-eyed Welshman. "Oh!" said Ingle, "Chevalier Recital." "What's that?" asked the doubtful one. "Well," said Ingle, "you can find out for a shilling—but you'll have to stand—all the seats are sold." Though this statement startled, it decided him. He paid his money, went in, and religiously stood it out.

After the show Ingle asked him how he had enjoyed himself?

"Oh! very well indeed," was the reply; "but—I prefer Oratorio!"

In Wrexham I produced a monologue written by Bart Kennedy (author of "Darab's Wine Cup," "A

Man Adrift,' &c.), and set to music by Alfred H. West. It was beautifully written, and set, but I failed to make it effective as a stage representation. I worked hard at it, and included it in my first *matinée* programme, when I reopened at Queen's Hall, with, I regret to say, the same result. Many of my first-night failures have eventually worked up into popular successes. Indeed, I generally approach a new sketch, or song, in fear and trembling. It takes me a night or two to feel my way. I never cut an item out of my programme, simply because it does not happen to go on its first production. I work at it, alter it, and try it before different audiences. The failure of "Laces" was mine, and not the result of any fault attributable either to the author or composer. In its place I substituted an old published song of mine—one which I had never publicly performed—entitled "The Lag's Lament." The music to this was founded on an old flash tune of the Jack Sheppard period. The late Bond Andrews (for some time solo pianist, and accompanist on my Recital tours) arranged, and harmonised the melody. The "Poet," and the "Yankee in London," originally produced in Worcester, where I finished my tour, were two other items, successfully added to my repertoire, during my London season.

I also introduced a slightly revised edition of a song, written some years ago, with music by Edward Jones, entitled "The Cockney Tragedian," the words of which, as altered, I reproduce, by permission of Messrs. Reynolds and Co., Music Publishers.

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Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"THE LAG'S LAMENT."

[*To face p.* 192.

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Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"THE COCKNEY TRAGEDIAN."

[*To face p.* 193.

THE COCKNEY TRAGEDIAN.

WRITTEN BY ALBERT CHEVALIER. MUSIC BY EDWARD JONES.

I USED to wheel a barrow for my father down the "Cut,"
Until I saw a drama at the Brit. wot turned my nut,
About a bloke in Manchester, unfortunately dumb,
Then like the villain in the play, sez I, "A time will come!"
I got a job to super at I think a bob a night,
I waved a banner proudly as I entered from the right.
Since then I've played a lot of parts, but life ain't been too smooth;
They say, tho' unlike Irvin', that my style suggests a Booth!
An' I've played Rosencranz in 'Amlet, an' the crowd in Julius Cæsar;
An' Polonius, the Bard of Avon's fav'rite ancient geezer.
I've often made a big 'it, as a 'aughty Spanish Don;
I'm a real dramatic 'Andy Man—Still I don't git on!

I travelled round the country wiv a Ghost Show for a week,
But chucked it 'cos they cut the only line I 'ad to speak.
I 'ired a little 'all an' give a round of Shakespeare's plays,
An' 'ad 'em acted just as in the good old palmy days!
I thought wiv my experience the best fing I could do
Was to advertise for novices, I did git one or two.
I taught 'em wot I knew, which they declared was simply "cod,"
But all I got for teachin' 'em was eighteen months in quod!
They even 'ad the cheek to ask me why my name was starred?
An' called my elocution rotten, which was very 'ard.
Why! I played Richard, Lear, an' Shylock, in one night at Newport, Mon.
Wiv 'Amlet just to finish up—Still I don't git on!

The Press too ain't been kind to me, I've copped it from 'em 'ot;
I've 'ad a pile of notices, not one good in the lot,
They said when I played Shylock, that it wasn't Shakespeare's Jew;
They talked about my mannerisms—well, p'raps I 'ave a few;
They said I dropped my H's when I played the wicked Bart,
But H's don't make artists, an' there ain't no H in Art!

They oughter seen me waller in the murky pool of blood,
When I was starred for "'eavies," down at Slocum-in-the-mud,
Where I played Rosencranz, in 'Amlet, an' the crowd, in Julius
Cæsar,
An' Polonius, the Bard of Avon's favourite ancient geezer.
I'm told as Dunkin in Mackbeff, I very brightly shone—
I've played Touchistone, in "If You Like It"—Still I don't git
on !

At Christmas I thought of playing a dramatised version of "The Christmas Carol," by Charles Dickens ; but certain difficulties in connection with the room at our disposal, on the small Queen's Hall stage, made it impossible to attempt this. I therefore wrote a little fantastic operetta entitled, "A Christmas Night's Dream," in the musical setting of which West utilised several numbers from the "Land of Nod" score. My song, "Our Restorong," originally figured as "My Sunday Out" in Act I. of that piece. The duet also —quoted elsewhere in these memoirs—between the Fairy and Timothy Trotters, was given exactly as written for the "Land of Nod." To show "how soon we all forget these little things," not one critic referred to the fact. For "A Christmas Night's Dream" we had a tiny orchestra, consisting of strings and reeds, with West at the piano. That this item was successful, may be gathered from the fact that we played to record business during its run. Suddenly the nation was plunged into sorrow by the Royal demise. This calamity, coming in the midst of the terrible South African campaign, was a serious blow to entertainment caterers.

It is curious to reflect that in times of distress, the people whose services are particularly in demand when

Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"OUR RESTORONG."

[*To face p.* 194.

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Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"A CHRISTMAS NIGHT'S DREAM."

[*To face p.* 195.

the question of how to raise funds presents itself, should belong to a profession which, perhaps more immediately than any other, feels the effects of national, or international trouble. There is no disguising the fact, that since the outbreak of hostilities in the Transvaal, the whole entertainment world has had a struggle to keep its head above water. I do not, of course, include those patriotic managers who sailed with the wind. Just one more curious point concerning the theatrical and musical professions. They have suffered much at the hands of the ignorant and the bigoted; but ignorance and bigotry should be reminded that no other trades, or professions are so frequently asked to give something for nothing, and more often than not by these very bigots! How our big jewellers, and furniture manufacturers would stare if Lady —— dropped a casual note, containing a request for the gift of a few diamond rings, or a suite of furniture, to be sold for the benefit of the Widows' and Orphans' Fund! It was this occasional ostracising of the profession, to which I have the honour to belong, varied by the courting of its services when coffers needed refilling, which I endeavoured to satirise in "Our Bazaar."

Here is an example of broad-minded charity as displayed by a clergyman. He wrote me a letter asking for a contribution towards some church decoration fund, enclosing at the same time the following "advice" to his parishioners for "the forthcoming Lenten season":—

"Not to take part in social entertainments or public amusements during Lent."

Did it ever strike this reverend gentleman that actors, and singers, have homes to support, and that if they remained idle during Lent their wives, and families, might be deprived of the necessaries of existence? Sunday concerts may be right, or they may be wrong, but what would this—doubtless well-meaning—parson say if Sunday concert caterers issued pamphlets, setting forth the advantages of their entertainments to the detriment of customary church attendance? If there were no congregations there would be no clergymen. If there are no audiences there can be no living for the actor, or any other public performer. Notwithstanding this "pastoral" letter, I went on tour through Lent, returning to Queen's Hall on Easter Monday, when I produced a cockney ditty entitled, "My Country Cousin." This I had had on the shelf for a long time. I wrote it some years ago; but like the "Old Bachelor" and the "Fallen Star," I put it on one side until I saw my way to satisfy myself in its performance.

My programme also included the following duologue :—

THE WINGS OF MEMORY.

WRITTEN BY ALBERT CHEVALIER. MUSIC BY ALFRED H. WEST.

EDWARD STRICKLAND.
JESSIE STRICKLAND (*his daughter*).

SCENE.—*A room in* STRICKLAND'S *house. Curios about the room in cabinets and on small tables, skeletons, fossils, &c. Time about five o'clock on a winter's afternoon. Lamp alight.*

TIME: *December*, 1889.

JESSIE (*arranging fossils*). It's no good! Poor old Dad! A nice muddle I'm making of his collection. I can't help it. I can

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Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"MY COUNTRY COUSIN."

[*To face p.* 196.

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remember nothing, think of nothing, but that I love. Ah! what's the use of thinking about it? I shouldn't if—if George wouldn't remind me of it. He wants me to break the news to Dad. That's the only fault I have to find with George. He's afraid of Dad. It's cowardly!—and so I suppose I'm doomed to spend the remainder of my life looking after Dad's fossils. I've a horrible suspicion that I put half an ichthyosaurus into the meteoric stone case (*picks up a pebble*). Now, what on earth is this? or rather, what in the earth was it? Of course, it's prehistoric; everything in this house is. I wonder where you come from? (*examining pebble*). You're very, very old. What a lot you must have seen!

JESSIE. SONG.

Weave a story allegoric
Round this fossil prehistoric.
  Weave a story
  Full of glory
Wrung from out a heart of stone.
Dainty feet have pressed this pebble
Dainty feet of timid rebel.
  Tell me pebble
  Was that rebel
Wise a conquered self to own?
  Did she love him—
  Really love him?
Was it but a passing whim?
Was he all to her? and, tell me,
Was she all in all to him?

Tell me, was it too ideal?
Did it last? Ah! was it real?
  In the living
  Was the giving
His and hers, or hers alone?
Find a tongue and whisper, pebble—
Did she once again turn rebel?
  Tell me, pebble,
  Was that rebel

Wise a conquered self to own?
Did she love him—
Really love him—
Was it but a passing whim?
Was he all to her? and, tell me,
Was she all in all to him?

Enter STRICKLAND.

STRICKLAND. Ah, Jessie, my child! Did you find those papers I spoke to you about—a bundle of papers marked "notes for my new treatise"?

JESSIE. Yes, Dad, they were hidden away in a corner of your old bureau upstairs. Here they are (*gives him bundle of MSS.*).

STRICKLAND. Thankee, my child, thankee (*puts bundle on table and picks up geological specimen*). Look here, Jessie, you've made a mistake. You've labelled this specimen "Neolithic"—it should have been "Paleolithic."

JESSIE. Dear, dear, how careless of me!

STRICKLAND (*looking curiously at her*). You must have lost your head, my dear.

JESSIE (*quickly*). No, I haven't!

STRICKLAND. Don't contradict me, miss! I never make mistakes.

JESSIE. Well, Papa, may you not be mistaken, this time, anatomically?

STRICKLAND. Eh?

JESSIE. Perhaps it's my heart I've lost.

STRICKLAND. That would simply corroborate my statement; but woman-like you reverse the sequential order. Head loss follows heart loss; it does not precede it.

JESSIE. Dear old Dad! Is there no limit to your knowledge? I didn't know you were an authority on love.

STRICKLAND. Love? Ah! "Si jeunesse voulait! Si vieillesse pouvait!" Man and woman cannot understand that most elusive of passions until—until——

JESSIE. Until the affinities meet?

STRICKLAND. No! I was about to utter what may sound like a paradox: until they are too old to appreciate it.

JESSIE (*gently*). You married late in life, Daddy?

STRICKLAND (*quickly*). No; I was only fifty.

Jessie. Mother died when I was a baby. But I know you loved her, Daddy.

Strickland. Loved her? (*Aside*) Loved her? Yes, I loved her. (*Aloud, quickly*) But there was no romantic nonsense about us.

Jessie. Love without romance?

Strickland. Certainly.

Jessie (*taking up picture of her mother from table*). Poor mother!

Strickland. How dare you, miss!

Jessie. Here is her picture. No romance? Are you sure?

Strickland. Eh?

Jessie (*placing picture before him*). Perhaps you have forgotten.

Strickland (*sadly*). Forgotten? (*Takes picture and looks at it wistfully.* Jessie *exits, looking back at her father, who sits gazing at the picture.*)

Strickland. Song.

I remember quite distinctly
Just as if 'twere yesterday,
The eloquence I stored up
Which my lips refused to say.
Tis many years ago, and I
Was then no longer young;
Yet something beating in my breast
Quite paralysed my tongue!

Refrain.

How soon we all forget these little things,
Or seem to, till we find that mem'ry clings;
The striking of an hour,
The fragrance of a flower,
Recalls the greatness of these little things.

You left me broken-hearted, but
Your gift in death was life.
Our child!—her place was second in
My heart to yours, sweet wife.
Think not because I saw a gleam
Of hope pierce through the rift,
That I did not distinguish 'twixt
The giver and the gift.

Refrain.

Ah! Time, and Cupid, both make use of wings
Since human joy from source Eternal springs.
The cloud of death above
May be the dew of Love;
And life but one of Nature s little things.

Little things! Ah, how often we make the greatest troubles out of the really little ones! Before the great ones we develop moral backbone. We face them and we conquer. With the little ones we procrastinate until they assume proportions to which they are not and never were entitled. They are the bullies in the school of life! Mine is a case in point. I'd made up my mind not to reproach Jessie with her infatuation for George Dexter. I determined that I would treat the whole thing as a joke, and, above all, that I would not permit it to cause me any anxiety—and why? Now, Ned Strickland, be honest—why? Because you're a selfish old brute! Jessie is your right hand—that's it! You're unreasonable, and Jessie knows it. She must see it! She's far too sensible not to see it! And yet—and yet—to let her go—to be at the tender mercy of a housekeeper who wouldn't know a protoplasm from a stethoscope! (*Picks up bundle of notes.*) I wonder what set me thinking about these? I'd forgotten their very existence until yesterday. It must be quite twenty years since I jotted down these notes: a chance thought recalled them to my memory, and in a dilemma they come to my rescue now! Strange! (*Selects one which has dropped out.*) What's this? (*Looks for glasses.*) Where are my glasses? (*Fails to find them and tries to read without them.*) "Meet me in the garden at 6 this evening. Papa remains obdurate, but I mean to wheedle him round to our way of thinking. Fondest love and kisses.—Jessie." I must be dreaming! Where are those glasses? (*Fails again to find them. Reads again by candle-light.*) No! I'm awake! She's deceived me! (*Drops note on desk.*) "In the garden at 6 o'clock." (*Looks at watch.*) Where's my hat?—My stick? (*Finds both.*) Where's that note? (*Looks for it and comes across spectacles.*) Ah! (*Puts on specs.*) There must be no mistake (*Reads.*) "Meet—me — in — the — garden —at — 6 — this — evening!" What's this scribbled in the corner? Oh! the date, I suppose. (*Reads.*) June? —June? Why, it's December! Oh, the girl's quite mad! (*Reads again.*) June, 1869! (*Staggered—then speaking with emotion.*)

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Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"THE YANKEE IN LONDON."

[*To face p.* 201.

Why, this was from—— this was to me! (*Looks at his wife's picture. Then sinks in chair staring at note. Pause.* JESSIE *nervously enters, holding a letter in her hand.*)

JESSIE. Daddy!

(STRICKLAND *looks up. She kneels before him. He takes her face between his hands tenderly and looks at her.*)

STRICKLAND. You have something to tell me, dearie?

JESSIE (*giving him letter*). George asked me to give you this. He has just called. He was afraid you might be angry if you saw him. . . . He loves me—and——

STRICKLAND. And——

JESSIE. I love him! (*Hides her face.*)

STRICKLAND (*gently*). Send him to me

JESSIE (*surprised*). You—you are not angry?

STRICKLAND. I shall miss you, dearie.

JESSIE. I sha'n't leave you, Daddy! George won't take me away —if—if you'll have us both with you.

STRICKLAND (*kissing her*). Send him to me.

(JESSIE *rises, goes towards the door smiling. Looks back wonderingly.*)

JESSIE. I was so afraid he would be angry.

STRICKLAND (*gazing thoughtfully at his wife's letter*). How soon we all forget these little things!

(*Pause.* JESSIE *beckons some one to enter. Curtain slowly descends*).

(For Strickland's song I rewrote the verses, using the title and the melody of Pinder's first song in the "Land of Nod.")

Here is a complete list of items new to London, which I have added to my repertoire since starting my Recitals at Queen's Hall, or rather, since my return from America:—

"A Fallen Star," "'E Can't Take a Roise Out of Oi," "We Did 'Ave a Time," "M. Armand Thibault," "An Old Bachelor," "Mafekin' Night," "I've Got 'Er 'At," "The Poet," "The Lag's Lament," "The Yankee in London," "Laces," "The Cockney Tragedian," "My

Country Cousin," "Three Burlesque Lectures," "A Christmas Night's Dream," "The Wings of Memory," "The Critic," "Owed to Kipling," "Sunday in Our Alley," "The Waxwork Show," "It Gits Me Talked Abaht," "Burlesque French Song." And I have at present, by me, about fifty more waiting to be produced.

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Photo by] "THE POET." [*B. Knight.*

Photo by] "THE POET." [*B. Knight.*

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CHAPTER XXIV

SOME years ago, during a period of "resting," I was commissioned by George Edwardes to "dodge up" a scene in a burlesque, which was then running at the Gaiety. He told me what he required, and I brought it to him the following day. The scene was to be played by two actors, who were impersonating subordinate characters, and its object was really to make the story a little bit clearer. Edwardes took the manuscript from me, and, after examining it very carefully, observed, "It's capital" —I saw visions of a cheque, which I badly wanted at the time—"but," he added, to my disappointment, "it's too funny for So-and-so," mentioning one of the comedians for whom I had been asked to write the scene; "it won't do as it is," said Edwardes positively. "Fred Leslie, and Nellie Farren, are the funny people engaged here. So-and-so comes on to tell the story. I'm very sorry, but, as I said before, it's too funny for So-and-so. You'll have to alter it." I went home and ruthlessly eliminated "So-and-so's" share of the "fun"—a proceeding which, with all due deference to the opinion expressed by George Edwardes, did not entail much mental strain. The revised scene was accepted and played. The sequel

to this incident happened within the next six months. While the same play was still running, I received another note from Edwardes, asking me to call at the Gaiety on a matter of business. When I arrived there he said, "Look here, Chevalier, I've often wanted you in my theatre, but no suitable opportunity has ever presented itself. Now, however, I have a part to offer you—a fine part. The man who's been playing it is going on tour. It's full of funny "gags" and business. You'll be delighted with it. *It's the best part in the piece.*" I was curious to know who was leaving the cast. It was "So-and-so"!

I mildly suggested that I knew the possibilities of this particular part, as I had been specially employed to make it unfunny! He stared at me for a minute, then, remembering our former conversation, he burst out laughing. He kindly proposed that I should restore the "fun," which he had originally desired me to eliminate; but even this bribe would not tempt me to become "first story-teller" at the Gaiety, and negotiations fell through.

One of the most interesting tasks I ever undertook was the writing, and the production, of a play without words. It may sound like a paradox to speak of writing a play without words, but those who saw "l'Enfant Prodigue" when it was presented in London will understand what such a work means. I took an old story and wrote a play in dialogue—dialogue which the actors, instead of speaking, could express in pantomime. To those who only believe in the purely literary drama, this may appear a very simple thing to do. Let me, however, undeceive them. It

was extremely difficult. Lines had to be written, and rewritten, over and over again, so that their pantomimic expression could not be misinterpreted. Edward Jones composed the music, and his score, both from the melodic and orchestral point of view, was delightful. The actors were silent, but the music spoke. Edward Jones and I were together for weeks doing this work. He would sit at the piano and improvise, while I read over the lines. When he had fitted them to his satisfaction, I reduced them to pantomime. I superintended all the rehearsals, and I learned a great deal more than I taught. The little play was produced in the theatre at the Earl's Court German Exhibition in 1891.

I once impersonated a Frenchman in a play. A critic hauled me over the coals for my supposed mispronunciation of certain French words. Among other kind things, he asked, "What shall we say of this cockney Frenchman, whose accent comes from the Boulevards, filtered through Bermondsey?" It so happened that after the first night, I dropped into the Savage Club, and there I met another critic, who prepared me for the above onslaught.

Critic No. 2 was an excellent French scholar. Critic No. 1 knew very little of the language—certainly not enough to pose as an expert in the matter of pronunciation. No. 2 was aware of this. During an *entr'acte* he had discussed the play, and the performance, with his *confrère*. For reasons of his own, which I will explain later on, he had hinted that my French accent was obviously a home product, and that it reeked of Cockneydom. I failed to see what

advantage I could possibly derive from such an assertion, but he laughingly exclaimed, "No. 1 is sure to repeat my words in his notice of the piece to-morrow; then I'll take the cudgels up for you and expose his ignorance! I've had to wait a long time for this chance to pay back an old grudge, but it's all right now! I shall score, and so will you!" I thought he was over-sanguine, and dismissed the matter from my mind, until I read the above sentence in No. 1's criticism next morning. Then No. 2 was as good as his word. He wrote for several papers, in the columns of which he did not spare the gentleman who had nibbled at his bait.

Many years after this I met Critic No. 1 and his wife out at supper. In the course of the evening I was asked to sing a song, and I, not without due consideration, responded with a little ditty in French. When I had finished, Mrs. Critic, who was seated near the piano, exclaimed, "But, Mr. Chevalier, why don't you sing French songs in public?" Then, appealing to her husband, she asked, "Hasn't he a perfect accent?" There was a moment's awkward pause. The critic didn't look any too happy, and I thought he scowled as, turning to him, I said, "I am half French. *You* know that, don't you?"

There were two men—two types. A. was supposed to be very lazy; B. very selfish. A. called to see me one morning. He looked haggard, worn, and altogether upset. I asked him what was the matter. "Oh!" said he, "I had an awful dream last night." For a long time the recollection so pained him that he could not go into details. Suddenly, sinking into a chair

with a terrified expression, he exclaimed, "A horrible dream! Don't try to guess, old man! I'll tell you in a minute. . . . Think of it! I was working!!" B. informed me that for years he had experienced curious symptoms, which pointed to an incurable disease. He had only just discovered what it was. "I am suffering," said he, "from total loss of all will power—to do what is distasteful to me!"

In November, 1893, I received an invitation to a banquet given at the Mansion House, in honour of Music. At first I thought there must be some mistake; but as I was reflecting, a barrel-organ outside reproachfully struck up "Oh! Lizer!"—so I accepted the invitation. I was not the only composer present —Oh! No, no! All the others were there. We mustered in force—Sir Alexander Mackenzie, and the rest of us!

Lord (then General) Roberts responded to the toast of "The Army." He seemed rather at a loss to know how he could work something about music into his speech; but he got out of the difficulty remarkably well—although it must have taxed even his unfathomable resource to do it. He started by saying that his knowledge of music was limited, and wound up with a tribute to the Bagpipes. His evident sincerity, in speaking of this instrument as "inspiring," almost tempted me to invest in a set. I noticed, however, that he emphasised the necessity of distance, as an aid to appreciation. When I broke the news at home, of my intention to become a Piper, my wife quite fell in with Lord Roberts's view, as to the importance of the conditions under which such music

can best appeal. She did not urge a formal separation, but living in London, she suggested Glasgow as a suitable rehearsal ground. Owing to prior bookings down south, I was unable to carry out my threat; but some day I hope to add a "wee bit Scotch" to my repertoire.

Two friends went to the races. A. would insist on wearing a particularly large and valuable scarf-pin. Before starting for the course B. hinted that it might be advisable to leave this ornament at home. A. however ridiculed the idea that any thief could possibly take it away from him—he knew all about racecourse thieves, and their methods. *He* was all right. After the first race B. suddenly stared at his friend's necktie, and asked him what he had done with his pin? It had disappeared. In great distress A. sought the advice of a bookmaker, with whom he was slightly acquainted, and who was under an obligation to him for certain favours, which need not be detailed here. The bookmaker said he would do what he could. "The 'boys' are in great force here to-day. Of course I know 'em all. They'll stretch a point to oblige me. Come back after the next race. Meanwhile I'll see what I can do." A. returned as requested, and the bookie informed him that there was a chance—just a chance—of regaining his lost property. How much was he prepared to "spring"? A. replied that he wasn't going to be fleeced. "Look here," said the bookie, "you want your pin back, don't you? Well, if it's worth a tenner, go over there" (indicating a certain spot on the course), "in ten minutes from now, and

wait—that's all I can do for you." Long before the ten minutes had elapsed A. was on the spot, tenner in hand — very tightly in hand. An eminently respectable-looking, middle-aged man, attired in semi-clerical garb, approached and called him by his name, saying, with a slight suspicion of sadness in his voice, "You are Mr. A.? Ah! I thought so! I hear that you have met with an accident?" A., restraining his wrath, replied, "I've lost a valuable pin, if that's what you mean. Do you know anything about it?" A leer illumined the eminently respectable gentleman's face, as he inquired, "What are you prepared to spring?" "Ten pounds," was the reply. After a slight pause the following conversation ensued :—

EM. RESP. GENT. Hand us over the tenner.

A. (*indignantly*). Not till I get my pin!

EM. RESP. GENT. Honour among thieves, cockey! Give us the tenner fust, or I'll sling my 'ook.

A. (*desperately*). All right (*handing him a ten-pound note*). If you try any of your tricks now, look out for squalls.

EM. RESP. GENT. (*carefully examining note with the air of a connoisseur, and hiding it away with equal care*). "You needn't cut up rough, guv'nor. It would have meant a lot more to me; but I owe ——" (mentioning the bookmaker) "a good turn. Now then," and opening his coat to conceal a collection of scarf-pins, which he held in his hand, he nervously exclaimed, "I'm in a bit of a muddle myself. Which is it?"

I happened to be at Netley Station when some wounded soldiers arrived from Egypt. Needless to say that a sympathetic crowd freely and generously condoled with the sufferers. One case in particular excited—shall I say—my curiosity. It was that of a warrior whose injuries were, apparently, so serious that he had to be carried on a stretcher. There were bandaged heads, and bandaged arms. There were Herculean forms limping along with the aid of crutches, but the centre of attraction was the above-mentioned hero, to whom crutches were, seemingly, useless. A blanket was thrown over the recumbent one, and many looking on wept. I was not near enough to question him personally, so I begged one of his less injured comrades to give me a few details. He said, "We all 'as to show up at Netley—leastways all as is invalided, or 'as been. 'E's a ''as been!' 'E's all right now."

"Then why are they carrying him on a stretcher?" I asked.

"Why?—'cos 'e's lost 'is boots!"

I was talking to a cockney whose views on things political were more decided than convincing. He particularly prided himself upon being very much up-to-date. It was shortly after Lord Roberts returned from South Africa, and my cockney friend, taking time by the forelock, volunteered the following—not as a mere rumour, but as an absolute fact: "Straight tip," said he, "no 'ank! The Americans think so 'ighly of Bobs that, now 'e's out of a job, they've telegrarfed to know if 'e'll go aht to Cuber an' settle the Philistines!"

I used to go fishing with a curious old character, who, for so much per diem, punted me about from roach swim to roach swim on the river Thames. Airing his views one day on the Spanish-American war, he laid down the law as follows: "It ain't fighting nowadays! In olden times they did fight! Cross-bows, and halibuts"—he meant halberds, but he was a fisherman—"an' battle-axes, and them things. Ah! that was somethin' like playin' the game! Wot do they do now? They gits 'old of some of them there bombs, fills 'em with *linoleum* an' blows yer to blazes! An' they calls that fightin'! Ugh!!"

I was looking round the Oriental department at Maple's one day, when a considerate and courteous attendant asked me if I would care to see a Japanese praying cabinet which had only recently been imported. He took a lot of trouble over the matter —fetched the key, unlocked the outer wooden case, disclosing inside some magnificent specimens of that wonderful lacquer work for which the Jap is so justly celebrated. He was evidently an authority in this particular department—Japanese art was his specialty. This I gathered from the lavish way in which he interspersed his remarks with technicalities. "All this," he said, pointing to the interior lacquer work "is purely Oriental. This," he observed, as he closed the cabinet, and affectionately patted its polished wooden surface—"this is Maple." Having my doubts, I spell the word with a capital.

I was playing one night to a particularly appreciative audience. Among other items, my programme

included "A Fallen Star." As the curtain fell, one of the attendants heard a lady sitting in the reserved seats exclaim to a friend, "How did he manage those tears?" "Oh!" answered the friend, after a moment's thought, "Perhaps he keeps a sponge under his hat."

I was appearing in a West End hall, and had just finished the second verse of a song when a loud report was heard off the stage, followed by a cloud of smoke wafted over the footlights, into the auditorium. A smell of something burning did not help to make matters more pleasant. I never remember singing such a long last verse. I could see the audience looking round anxiously towards the exits, wondering if they should keep their seats, or follow the example of some twenty nervous people who, terror-stricken, had hurriedly left the building. I realised that if I stopped, or even hesitated, it would be taken as evidence of danger, and although I was as anxious as anybody else, I managed to keep cool. At the end of my song the curtain dropped, and I rushed off to find out what had happened. There had been an explosion of gas in connection with the limelight. The explosion itself might not have caused very much alarm, but unfortunately some of the indiarubber tubing had become disconnected, and the gas escaping from it caught fire. Instead of stamping on the tube and so arresting the escape, some excited stage-hand had seized a blanket—supposed always to be kept wet—and had thrown it on the flame! The blanket, as dry as tinder, immediately began to smoulder, and it was this that was responsible for the smell of burning,

and the cloud of smoke, which might have resulted in a general panic. Curiously enough, a few nights after, as I was singing "My Old Dutch" at the Pavilion, I heard a roar at the back of the stage, and simultaneously the scene received a violent shaking. Fortunately for me, in one way, when this occurred I was finishing my song. As the curtain dropped the commotion behind became more pronounced. Some performing elephants were being led in from the street, through an iron door, and this door had closed on the trunk of one animal, who, bellowing in pain, startled the others. Every way I looked I saw nothing but elephant! The Pavilion stage at that time was very small, and a few elephants made a big show! The extraordinary part of the business was, that the trainer's influence over these mammoth beasts was so great, that all, including the trunk-nipped one, went through the performance as usual.

In the days when my salary was thirty shillings weekly I was very anxious to make my brother professionals believe that I earned considerably more. Actors are not greater liars than other men, but if, in conversation, they do occasionally add a nought to the stipend they really earn—it means nothing! At the time of which I am writing, I was young enough to think it meant a lot. When I came out of treasury, carrying my thirty shillings (thirty "white," in theatrical parlance) in a silk purse, I really imagined that my assumed indignation, because the acting manager had insisted on paying me in gold, instead of notes, caused a flutter of envy to disturb the equanimity of my *confrères!* Well, one Saturday I came out of

treasury holding my silk purse in my hand (I had noticed that the leading man always carried a silk purse!); I had my usual grumble concerning the pig-headedness of the manager, and his predilection for paying salaries in gold instead of notes. By way of emphasising my annoyance I tossed my purse in the air. Failing, however, to catch it, it fell on to the stage, burst, and the assembled company picked up, and restored to me my thirty "white."

I remember being in a company where a very old actor was engaged to play a small part. He only had one line to speak, but, unfortunately, he was so deaf that a spoken cue was useless to him. His only chance was to watch the lips of the person addressing him. One night something took the old man's attention off this particular actor, and he missed his usual cue. I saw him looking anxiously for that movement of the lips, which was his warning to get ready. The old man's face was a study. He could not, and did not, realise that he had allowed his opportunity to slip. Every one walked off the stage with the exception of this bewildered old actor who, to prove himself a conscientious artist, remained facing the audience, alone. Watching from the wings, we beckoned him to come off. This he ultimately did, but not until he had shouted in a stentorian voice, "Bravo, William!"—his one line, which should have been spoken some ten minutes earlier!

The most curious correspondence I ever had was with a music-hall manager shortly after my return from America. It originated in his suggestion that I should accept certain contracts to appear in the

music-halls, subject to which condition, he, and another manager, would run my Recitals in London, as later on I arranged with Robert Newman to give them at Queen's Hall. This particular manager was a bit of a character. He had read Herbert Spencer, and loved nothing better than to dilate on the comfort, and advantage, he had derived from perusing the works of his favourite author. He was the only music-hall manager I had ever encountered with a metaphysical turn of mind. I was anxious to "draw" him, and with this object in view I interspersed my reply to his offer with, more or less, philosophical "bait." In one letter, discussing the class of entertainment contemplated by me in my Recitals, he said :—

"When securely established, and properly worked, such a scheme as you suggest would, in my opinion, be successful; but it is the establishment of these things that requires effective preparation and time. The best seed ever put into the most suitable soil requires time to flourish. . . . It is as fallacious, in my opinion, to suppose that the kind of entertainment hitherto associated with St. George's Hall is bound to be successful there as it would be to suppose the fine traditions of Sadler's Wells Theatre make tragedy the staple for success at that theatre."

I seized my opportunity, or, rather, made it, out of the above none too promising material, and replied, baiting the ground as follows :—

"I quite realise the truth contained in your remarks

about Sadler's Wells, and I also see that these remarks apply, in a way, to St. George's Hall, or any other neglected shelter for fugitive entertainments. Your parable of the seed planted in suitable soil appeals to me very forcibly. At Sadler's Wells Phelps planted the good seed, and it brought forth 'Barnum's Beauty.' Several present-day theatres were originally chapels. . . . I am, as I think you are, a firm believer in the survival of the fittest; but here we are brought face to face with a curious paradox. Revelation does not help us, for are we not told that out of evil cometh good? To discover the why and the wherefore, we must throw the searchlight of intelligent inquiry into the chaos of theological speculation, and explain the very origin of evil, arriving ultimately at the conclusion that if out of evil good cometh, then in evil there must be some good, consequently evil is not evil as we understand evil, but good in degree. We can only judge by results. I hope you will gather from the foregoing that I am not a prophet, even if I do want to plant a seed. I cannot read the future, neither could Phelps. . . . I would no more dream of reviving the old German Reed show, than 'Barnum's Beauty' would think of putting up 'Timon of Athens' for a run at Sadler's Wells—even under an alliterative title. . . ."

The metaphysician nibbled, and by return of post sent me the following:—

" . . . Yes, I believe in the survival of the fittest, interpreting 'fittest' to mean that which is best

adapted to meet the requirements of its environment, or the force of circumstances, and possesses the greatest amount of adaptability to the changes ever operating in such environment. Those are the statics and dynamics of my fittest. . . . Your biblical illustration does not strike me as being paradoxical, because the reasoning contains a fallacy in omitting the limiting word 'some,' as it is obviously meant that out of *some* evil good may come, not out of *all* evil, and the portion out of which good does not come is the intrinsically evil. . . ."

To which I immediately replied, with more bait, to this effect:—

"Your desire to prove my biblical illustration fallacious has led you into error. The absence of the limiting word 'some' in the quotation you criticise is so important that I cannot accept its addition thus late in the day. . . . You say the reasoning contains a fallacy. It is not my reasoning, it is Revelation, and with all due respect, I cannot admit your right to interpolate, or to suggest the interpolation, of a word which so materially alters the sense of the original, in order to show me what you consider is obviously meant. If, as you say, 'the portion of evil out of which good does not come is intrinsically evil,' then there is a portion of evil which is evil and a portion which is not! You might apply the same argument to good."

Next day I received the following:—

"The reasoning was yours from the biblical quotation consisting of words abstracted from a translation. That translation is admittedly the work of man; . . . the translators into English are responsible for the phrasing which admits of the *reductio ad absurdum*. . . ."

To which I replied:—

". . . I take the translation as it stands. . . . It is not my fault—neither is it yours—if we each see the apparent necessity of adding a word for the purpose of emphasis. I cannot help thinking, however, that my reading is the more reasonable. For example: If your contracts stipulate that artists engaged must submit their songs to you before singing them in your hall, you mean *all* artists, not *some* artists. *All* their songs, not *some* of their songs. You may possibly argue that a music-hall contract is not a Revelation in the biblical sense, which would be an admirable instance of the *reductio ad absurdum*. *Pax vobiscum*.

"Yours sincerely,

"ALBERT CHEVALIER."

CHAPTER XXV

BOHEMIA is not entirely wiped off the map of London, although the polite prefix "Upper" has done much to rob it of many delightful attributes. "Upper" Bohemia is a poor place, where the rich and dilettante endeavour to reproduce an atmosphere which they have never breathed.

Within the last few years many of the old haunts have disappeared. The Pelican—unique in Clubland, after a chequered career—suddenly, and in defiance of the eternal fitness of things—like the old Prince of Wales's and Grecian Theatres—had its premises stormed, and taken, by the Salvation Army. To go down a step or two in the social scale, the Spooferies, the Gardenia, the Supper, the Nell Gwynne, and other similar clubs, which catered for certain independent spirits, who rejoiced in the chance offered in these places to defy the Licensing, and other laws, all belong to last century. There has been no true history written of Bohemian life in London during the past twenty years. We often hear that one half of the world does not know how the other half lives. If we divide these halves into those who go to bed before midnight, and those who begin to spend the evening as the clock strikes 12 p.m., it will help to explain the mystery.

Respectable paterfamilias, preparatory to quitting his suburban home for the daily routine of city life, reads occasionally of a raid on some dreadful establishment where, after midnight, a crowd of people were discovered dancing, and singing, drinking, eating, and even gambling. He puffs and blows in his indignation. He never in his life heard the clock strike 2 a.m. To him it is awful that anybody but a policeman should keep such hours ; and yet paterfamilias probably belongs to a club where, although dancing and singing are unheard-of delights, there is a card-room. Paterfamilias may, or may not, indulge now and then in a "flutter" at Poker or Bridge, but he (in common with many who legislate for morality) pays his annual subscription to support an establishment, where the laws of the land may be dodged.

I can remember Cremorne and the Argyle. What good did the closing of those places do? Within a very few years, out of their scattered ashes, we revived the same opportunities, only on a much more elaborate scale, not a hundred miles from defunct Cremorne. I am speaking now of the seamy side ; but neither in the seamy, nor the healthy side, can the Pharisee exist. The very vices of Bohemia produce a virtue. "The greatest of these"—Charity. I have seen some of the kindest acts performed by the disowned—the pariahs of society—the fringe of Bohemia.

How many people living in the West of London know anything of that vast district the East End? There are theatrical companies whose sole source of income is the East End club, where on Sunday evenings performances take place, at stated intervals,

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Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

"THE POET."

[*To face p.* 221.

during the season. These companies are seldom seen away from East End Clubland. They have their stars, their tragedians, and their funny men. It is doubtful if anywhere in the United Kingdom the Bard of Avon is more sure to draw than at one of these functions. I often laugh when I encounter the "Johnnie" who, from his acquaintance with the outer rim, imagines that he has explored Bohemia, from its fringe to its centre, and right through to the other side.

"Upper" Bohemia is a mockery, because the "Upper" Bohemian is only at home within its exclusive circle. The real Bohemian shuns it, and its affectations, as he shuns all other shams. I am not pleading for the old days of sanded floors, pewter pots, hard seats, and long clay pipes. I am quite willing to admit the superiority of modern furnishing, from the point of view of comfort; but a club is very like some men. A new coat makes a lot of difference. It develops side, and there is no side in real Bohemia. The Savage Club is Bohemia at its best. It has survived the ordeals of refurnishing, and change of premises; but then its list of members still boasts the name of E. J. Odell, the doyen of Bohemians.

Of late years it has been the aim and object of certain actors to get into "Society." No criticism, however favourable, affords them more pleasure than the paragraphs in which their names are bracketed with the leaders of fashion. I am glad to say that this type does not represent the majority. In his heart of hearts, the actor is not in sympathy with what is termed, the "smart set." It may tickle his

vanity, but he cannot serve two masters. Once let Society get the upper hand, and the actor (or any other professional) develops into a snob of the most pronounced order. The swell amateur is mainly responsible for this absurd condition of things. The swell amateur is the curse of the modern stage. He has never done really good work in, or for, the theatre. No actor can afford to be exclusive, he must rub shoulders with all sorts and conditions of men. I have frequently been asked to take part in "swagger"—I believe that is the correct term —performances in the cause of charity, the organisers of these entertainments urging, as an inducement, that it would be "such fun"! There is the whole thing in a nutshell. To the swell amateur acting is "such fun."

I have the greatest contempt for the actor whose success is due to the fact that he has been "taken up" by Society. It savours unpleasantly of the—thank goodness!—departed days of patronage, when no artist could hope to make headway, without the approval, and protection, of some titled nonentity. There is nothing more pathetic in the history of Art than the "Dedications" written by poets, and dramatists, in days gone by. They are the essence of snobbery.

The social status of the actor has improved, because of the work done to raise it to its proper level by men like Henry Irving—not because of paragraphs in the *Era* informing brother pro's that "Mr. So-and-so is at present enjoying a pleasant holiday with Lord and Lady —— at —— Castle."

The real Bohemian is not necessarily a lazy ne'er-do-well because he chafes under the restrictions of life as it is lived by the majority of his fellow-creatures. The real Bohemian does not lose his head when success comes to him. He has seen too much to overestimate the value of applause. He accepts it gratefully, as a reward for which he has striven. I hold the theory that most men know when they do good work, and the success of their mediocre achievements, does not blind them to the inherent weakness of such productions. There are great poets, painters, and dramatists, whose reputations, so far as popular fancy is concerned, rest on anything but their best works, but, having caught the popular taste, they can afford to appeal to the exclusive ring of red-taped culture. No profession is more overcrowded than the theatrical, and, oddly enough, for the reason that it is supposed to be "so easy," "such a jolly life." This overcrowding is the only possible excuse—a lame one, but still an excuse—for seeking the near cut—the Royal Road which has produced the Society actor. It is in itself evidence of the difficulties which beset the earnest worker. In the course of a year I receive many letters from aspiring histrions, and, since I have been at Queen's Hall, from vocalists and instrumentalists. I am not sure that a school of Dramatic Art would ever succeed in England; but if its establishment only proved that the theatre is not to be counted on to provide employment for the failures in other professions, it would be doing some good—it would save much disappointment to the army of incompetents.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE life of an actor, to an actor, has a charm which only the actor can appreciate. Nowadays, thanks in a large measure to the Actors' Association, the theatrical profession is very much better off than it was when I first entered it. I have a vivid recollection of being engaged many years ago to play Claude Melnotte (!) and Conn the Shaughraun ; but the night we were to open our manager was not sufficiently in funds to pay five shillings deposit on the gas—although from his conversation, when engaging me, I should never have anticipated that such a contingency would have stopped any performance in which he was interested. The Actors' Association has done much to check the bogus manager. By bogus manager I do not mean the man who takes a company out, and after a month's disastrous business finds his small capital exhausted—I mean the rogue who starts with no capital, save a few pounds for preliminary expenses but unlimited bounce, and who trusts solely on the weekly returns to meet his liabilities. I was once with a company, the manager of which started out with sufficient capital to meet very heavy expenses for about six weeks. Business was awful. The company agreed to a reduction of salaries. When I say the

company, I mean the actors. We travelled with an orchestra. The musicians would not budge an inch. They insisted on receiving the salaries they were originally engaged at, and, sooner than disband, the actors submitted. We contrived to go on for about another month. The only people who received full salaries were the musicians. From a working point of view there is no better Union than the orchestral players'. In a theatre the orchestral player is always the first artist to kick, when the hard-up, but ingenious manager suggests summer salaries—half salaries—or any remuneration not in accordance with the rules, and regulations, of the Union. There is no talking over the orchestra. The actor gives two or three, and sometimes more, weeks' rehearsals. So precarious is the theatrical profession that—I am speaking from personal experience—he will sometimes give six weeks when his engagement is only for the run of the piece. I gave eight weeks once, and the play ran six nights. Comparatively speaking, the orchestral player in a theatre gives very few rehearsals. At Queen's Hall an extra band rehearsal costs Robert Newman something like £60. It is unreasonable not to pay actors for rehearsals. The work is really much harder than the actual performance at night. Rehearsing is the most tedious work. I remember years ago in London attending rehearsals for three days in succession, hanging about the theatre from ten till four, during which time the stage-manager, and the leading lady, discussed whether a chair or a stool should be used in a certain scene. On the fourth day some inspired person suggested that a

couch might meet the case ; and we proceeded to make some progress. I can't help thinking that this waste of time would not have occurred if the time so wasted had been paid for.

In the theatre, and out of it, actors and members of the orchestra see very little of one another. The band-room, and the green-room are quite distinct. I have been in a theatre for months, and it has only been quite by chance that I have met one of the orchestra. Almost the same condition of things may be said to exist between the actor, and the music-hall artist. I cannot call to mind the name of a music-hall performer who belongs to any representative Theatrical Club. The lists of members contain the names of many actors who have migrated to the halls, but they were actors first. When I was in the music-halls there was no Music Hall Club. The "turns" driving home had their regular houses of call, and even to-day it is no uncommon thing to find a string of broughams, late at night, outside these favourite resorts where the "Boys" drop in for a "final." The Bohemian element is very strong in Music Hall Land. There is no "Society" music-hall artist as the term "Society" applies to the actor. It is only within the last eight or ten years that Variety agents have ventured to establish offices in the West End ; and Waterloo Road is still the great market. The York Hotel, is to the music-hall artist, what the Gaiety Bar, and the Occidental, were to the actor some fifteen or twenty years ago—viz., a meeting-place, a club, where performers drop in to learn the latest professional news, and perhaps to hear

of "turns wanted." There is a spot in Waterloo Road—"Poverty Corner" as it is pathetically known to the unsuccessful—which would have afforded Dickens a great opportunity. It is a wonderful place—an object-lesson in the ups and downs of life. It truly represents "variety." The comic singer who yesterday was earning a more than precarious living, by singing at smoking, and other occasional concerts for a fee of half a crown, or five shillings, suddenly bursts upon the town with a chorus song, and is billed as the "Great." He seldom loses his head to the extent of cutting his old pals. He still drops into the "York." He may drive up in his own trap or brougham — but he is hail-fellow-well-met with the boys. He stands drinks—a severe test of his sterling qualities!—and he seldom refuses a loan. His Bohemianism may be rough, it is decidedly not "Upper" as the Johnnie knows it, but it is very genuine—it has heart—it is not anæmic. Much of the so-called improvidence with which the music-hall pro. is so frequently charged springs from no worse source than a delight in being able to help the less fortunate. The "Great" may be a trifle conspicuous in the matter of attire. He may develop a weakness for diamond rings, elaborate scarf-pins designed as an advertisement, and massive cable watch-chains, but he has seen too much of the seamy side not to know that these articles have a value, apart from emphasising the "security" of his position as a popular favourite. I once met, at the seaside, a prosperous comic singer "got up regardless." He wore a frock-coat, white vest with gilt buttons, flannel

trousers, patent leather boots, a red tie, and a straw hat. Strange to say everybody looked round—and, stranger still, he did not seem to mind. He knew his business! Oh! I forgot to mention, that for a scarf-pin, he had his initials worked in diamonds; and it was almost large enough to conceal his necktie.

If music-hall artists are not great club men, they have their Benevolent Societies—the "Rats," the "Terriers," and others too numerous to mention; and many an unfortunate "brother" has reason to be grateful for the existence of these societies. There is of course the Music Hall Benevolent Fund, but the work done by the societies I have named is perhaps more the spontaneous outcome of a fellow-feeling for those in distress. I do not say that the M.H.B.F. is not actuated by similar motives, but societies like the two first mentioned are, generally speaking, controlled by artists only—and after all their knowledge is more valuable, and more likely to lead to practical results, than that of the best-intentioned non-professional philanthropist. In the ranks of the music-hall profession, charity is better understood, and appreciated, than is often the case in other, and more "serious" walks in life. "Help a lame dog over the stile" is included in every music-hall artist's repertoire, and it is worth more than the proverbial "song."

There are many comic singers earning very good livings who have never appeared in a West End music-hall. These confine their attention to smoking concerts held during the winter season in hotels, public-houses, clubs, and institutes in every part of

London and the suburbs. I knew one of these performers who could earn as much as ten or fifteen pounds weekly during the season, and whose annual benefit, which took place at Cannon Street Hotel, realised nearly £100. This class of vocalist as a rule makes it his business to study the method, and mannerisms, of some popular favourite—sings all his songs—and to the uninitiated is also "Great." For the benefit of would-be "histrions" let me relate an incident which came under my notice some years ago. Those who think the theatrical profession is "such good fun" can turn this over in their minds—it is absolutely true. In a certain London theatre where I was engaged, the manager was at his wits' end to find somebody to play a tiny but most important part—the part of a very feeble old dame. She only appeared in one scene, but that scene, so far as she was concerned, required the most delicate handling. Some one recommended an old provincial actress for the part. She was quite unknown to the younger generation, even in the country, and we were told that she had never before played in London. Nobody in the theatre had ever heard of her. In extreme old age she made her *début* before a West End audience. Her performance was one of the hits in the piece. At nearly eighty, old and decrepit, she succeeded, not because she could act, but because she was herself in the part, a human wreck.

CHAPTER XXVII

SHORTLY after my return from America I received the following characteristic letter from Miss Ellen Terry:—

"The National Society for the
"Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

"Dear Mr. Chevalier,—I wonder whether you *will, if you* can, do something to help me in a performance I am giving in aid of the above Society at the Lyceum Theatre in June—date not quite settled yet—possibly the 15th or thereabouts.

"*One* little song! or let me play a coster girl with you!!

"Will you send me a line in reply as soon as possible, even if you have to say *no;* do it firmly and quickly and put me out of my misery quickly!!

"Pray forgive me asking you this favour. I *couldn't do it* if it were for my own benefit.

"Yours sincerely,
"Ellen Terry."

I replied, saying that I should be delighted to assist her; but preferably as Cockney Romeo to her Juliet! She immediately wrote back:—

"DEAR MR. CHEVALIER,—My best-est thanks. I didn't mean it when I suggested playing Doner—Dona —Donah (? which ?) DONA with you—but it is a splendid idea, a coster "Romeo and Juliet"—(or Faust and Margaret? Their first meeting!!)—and if YOU think I could act it I should love to try—but I fear—I fear!—

"*Anyhow on this particular occasion* I will ask you to sing one of your own delightful songs "all alone," as the children say—and AFTER, on some future fine day, I will (*if you think after rehearsing I can do it well*), I will act a coster girl with you with much pleasure.

"Yours gratefully,

"ELLEN TERRY."

As no suitable idea occurred to me at the time, the matter fell through. I have recently, however, written a duologue (the outcome of the suggestion contained in Miss Terry's letter) which, some day, I hope to produce as an item in my Recitals; but, alas! I fear, *not* with Miss Terry in the cast! It is entitled—

THE GOD AND THE STAR.

DUOLOGUE BY ALBERT CHEVALIER.

CHARACTERS.

NELL PERRY (*a popular actress*).
'ENERY 'AWKINS (*a costermonger*).

SCENE.—*Covent Garden*, 4 a.m.

(*Enter* 'ENERY 'AWKINS.)

'AWKINS.—Lor lumme! Wot a lot of toffs there is abaht! One o' them fancy dress balls at the Garding last night. Ain't the boys been a-chivvyin' some on 'em!—Them as can't git cabs to take 'em 'ome! I've just left King Charles an' Oliver Cromwell 'avin' a

cup o' thick an' a doorstep at the corfee stall. King Charles was oft 'is peck, but 'adn't 'e got a thirst on 'im! Lor! couldn't he shift the corfee! 'Ere! this won't do! I can't afford ter do the eavy an' lounge abaht! my time's valuable. If I buys cheap an' sells dear, I'm a-goin' to take the doner to the theatre to-night to see Nell Perry act—an' she can act! Lor! when I see 'er play Desdemoner, I wanted to git dahn an' prop Otheller, an' I would too if Lizer 'adn't clawed 'old of me. Lizer finks I'm stuck on Nell Perry! but as I sez, I admires 'er as a hartist, but it don't foller 'cos I blews a bob for a front seat in the Gawds of a Saturday night as I'm goin' ter hoffer 'er marriage. Not me! Lizer's my form. On a Bank 'oliday she looks a treat! Nell Perry's ore right in 'er business, varry good; but for Eppin' or 'Ampstead, or for a 'op rahnd in front of a barril orgin, give me Lizer!

(*Enter Nell Perry, dressed as a coster girl on Bank Holiday—hat, feathers, &c., handkerchief round neck, earrings, &c.*)

NELL (*frightened*). Oh! what shall I do? Some one has gone off with my brougham! I suppose it must have been the other coster girl! There were two of us at the ball last night. She left first. I stopped behind to claim my prize—she took her revenge, and my brougham! Dear, dear! Not a cab to be seen. I shall have to walk (*crying*) to Bedford Park!

'AWK. (*turning round*). 'Ullo! a female in distress! (*sees costume*). Lor lumme! If Lizer could only see that 'at!

NELL (*seeing him staring*). I beg your pardon?

'AWK. (*aside*). Jumpin' Moses! if it ain't Nell Perry! 'Ere's a lark!

NELL. Sir!

'AWK. Wot Oh!

NELL (*astonished, then looking at her dress, smiles*). (*Aside*) He takes me for a coster girl. (*Aloud, pretending to talk as a cockney*) Wot Oh! Cully!

'AWK. (*laughing to himself*). Oh! that's yer little game, is it? You're goin' to hact to me, are yer? A special performance for Bill 'Awkins! Ore right! I'm hon! (*To Nell*) Well, Ria! 'ow are yer comin' hup?

NELL. G'arn! Git away!

'AWK. Not me! 'Tain't hev'ry day as I comes acrost hanyfink quite so tasty! Wouldn't you knock 'em at the 'Arp!

NELL. The——

'Awk. The 'Arp ! The "Welsh 'Arp" !

Nell (*innocently*). Which is Hendon way?

'Awk. Yuss, of course. Where do yer fink it is? I've 'arf a mind to chuck my day's work an' treat yer to a run dahn in the shay.

Nell (*alarmed*). Oh ! I shouldn't—(*assuming cockney accent*)—Wotcher torkin' abaht? If my bloke came along you'd 'ave a 'igh old time, I can tell yer.

'Awk. Oh, I'd take my chance in a up an' a dahner for your sake, Ria ! Yer name is Ria, ain't it?—Ria ! (*sidling up to her*).

Nell (*swinging her hat shyly*). Yuss.

Awk. I fought it was ! Sumfink told me as it wasn't Hemmer !

Nell. I'm so glad it isn't Hemmer !

'Awk. My name's 'Arry.

Nell. Is it, though? How romantic

'Awk. Yuss. 'Arry; some calls me 'Enery.

Nell. May I call you 'Enery. (*He looks at her, then slouches towards barrow, sits—whistles to her—she looks inquiringly. He slaps the barrow as if to indicate that there is a vacant seat at his side. She takes no notice.*)

'Awk. Come 'ere.

Nell. What for?

'Awk. Come 'ere an' set dahn.

Nell. Is it safe?

'Awk. Safe ! Wot the barrer? Yuss, safe as 'ouses. (*Nell gingerly mounts—pause—they dangle their legs over side of cart, and sit grinning at each other. He looks admiringly at her costume*). You've got 'em all on, ain't yer?

Nell (*anxiously*). I hope so !

'Awk. (*mimicking her*). Hi hope so! Ain't we toney this mornin' ! 'Ad yer breakfast?

Nell. N—no !—not yet !

'Awk. 'As it on yer way to business, I suppose?

Nell. Yes—I mean (*correcting herself*) yuss !

'Awk. That's better! Fought you was a-puttin' hon hedge agin. Wot yer say to a peck? You can 'ave 'arf my rasher (*shows rasher of bacon*). If you'll mind the barrer I'll run an' git yer some corfee at the stall. You can come with me if you'll promise not ter make heyes at the blokes.

Nell. I think I'll stay here.

'AWK. Can't trust yerself, eh? Well, I'd sooner keep my hoptic hon yer, so we'll have the rasher neat (*showing rasher*). Ain't it a beauty?

NELL. It's a darling!

'AWK. 'Ere, 'old 'ard! If there's any darlin's a-knockin' abaht, don't forgit yer 'umble.

NELL. I shall never forget you!

'AWK. Wish I'd a concertiner 'ere (*sings "The Maid oj the Mill"*).

> "You'll not forgit me,
> You'll not forgit me!
> Fink sometimes of me still.
> When the moon breaks,
> An' the thistle awakes
> Remember the maid hof the mill!
> Ta-ra-ra-ra-ra-ra-ra
> Do not—— "

NELL (*hand to her ears*). Don't!

'AWK. You ain't fond of 'armony! Say Ria, wot's yer uvver name?

NELL (*aside*). Oh dear! What is generally a coster girl's other name? (*Brilliant idea strikes her—aloud*) Hawkins.

'AWK. Git away! You know sumfink, you do! Want ter change it already, do yer? Well, of all the artful cats. . . .

NELL. Sir!

'AWK. 'Ere, 'old 'ard; keep yer maulers off! Don't you start clumpin'. That's the wust of you gals; you're so 'andy with yer dooks!

NELL. I—I'll—(*as if suddenly remembering slang*) I'll dot you on the crumpit!

'AWK. You do, that's all! You do, an' I'll pinch yer 'at!

NELL (*alarmed*). What does he mean? (*Aloud*) You brute! You'd pinch an unprotected female—

'AWK. No, not *you!* Yer *'at!* Yer cadie! Yer tile! Yer *tosh!*

NELL (*relieved*). Oh, I beg your pardon! Now I understand.

'AWK. That's better. Nah you're torkin'. 'Ow did yer git 'ere?

NELL (*aside*). How did I get here? (*Aloud*) Walker! Shanks's pony. (*Shows boots*) Pipe my trotter cases!

'Awk (*admiringly*). They're Ha 1. What did they stick yer for 'em?

Nell. Eh?

'Awk. 'Ow much? Not a stiver less than 'arf a finnuff.

Nell (*in despair*). Oh, dear no! Much more than half a—what you said.

'Awk. You must 'ave plenty of splosh! You do chuck it abaht! Business pretty flourishin'?

Nell. They—they've raised my salary.

'Awk. (*disappointed*). Oh, you've got a guv'nor! You ain't hon yer own?

Nell (*aside*). What does he mean?

'Awk. Of course, there's less risk workin' that way. I suppose you're very well known rahnd abaht Chiswick?

Nell. Yuss, *varry* well!

'Awk. I ain't stuck on Chiswick! I likes 'Oundsditch. Wot's your favourite part?

Nell (*absent-mindedly*). Desdemona!

'Awk. Is that far from 'ere? You do git abaht, don't yer?

Nell. No. That is, I mean (*talking cockney*)—Look 'ere, 'Arry, when you've done with that there rasher, p'raps you won't mind tellin' me 'ow I'm a-goin' ter git ter Chiswick.

'Awk. You're a nice beauty, you are! You come 'ere from Chiswick, an' yer don't know yer way back!

Nell. Yes I do—but I'm so tired!

'Awk. Wot! ore ready? An' you ain't done yer markitin'!

Nell. Nor have you.

'Awk. Me? I ain't a-goin' ter do no markitin' ter day. I've got sumfink better hon!

Nell. You're not going to leave me! alone—in Covent Garden dressed like this, Harry? (*He takes no notice.*) 'Arry! (*He turns and puts his arm round her waist.*)

'Awk. (*sentimentally*). Ria!

Nell. You'll find me a cab, won't you?

'Awk. A cab? Wot? An' 'ansim? Won't run to 'ansims! Besides, there ain't a cab to be seen for miles rahnd! No, not heven a perishin' growler. There was a ball at the Garding last night.

Nell (*innocently*). Was there?

'Awk. Yuss, an' hevery bloomin' cab's hengaged! Besides, the

likes of huss can't ride abaht in cabs. I'll give yer a lift in the barrer

NELL (*horrified*). Oh! I couldn't!

'AWK. Couldn't! Wotcher torkin' abaht? 'Tain't the fust time you've ridden in a shaller, is it?

NELL (*at a loss*). No, indeed, I prefer it to a Victoria.

'AWK. Oreright then. I've got the moke rahnd the corner.

NELL (*startled*). The moke!

'AWK. Yuss, the moke. My old pal Neddy, the Jerusalem Cuckoo.

NELL. Drive to Chiswick in a donkey cart?

'AWK. Yuss, an' we'll be there in less than no time. The road's clear. It's hearly yet, only just a little arter four; and I'll tell yer wot—when you gits 'ome I'll run over to the "Pack 'Orse," give the moke a feed, 'ave 'arf pint an' a smoke, while you 'as a doss, call back for yer abaht ten, an' we'll spend the day together at 'Ampstead 'Eath!

(*Exits singing 'Appy 'Ampstead.*)

NELL. Drive to Chiswick in a donkey cart with a costermonger! Oh, what shall I do? He thinks I'm a coster girl. He'll be calling for me on Sundays to take me out! (*cries*).

'AWK. (*outside, as if addressing donkey*). Ah! Would yer? Steady there! Woa back!

(*Re-enter.*)

'E'll be ready in 'arf a tick. One of the boys is a-puttin' hon 'is 'arness (*sees her crying*). 'Ullo! Wot's hup, old gal?

NELL (*tearfully*). You—you'll drive carefully?

'AWK. Don't yer worry abaht that. 'Ere, turn it hup! There ain't nuffink to cry abaht!

NELL. I'm not crying!

'AWK. Wotcher hup to then? Givin' a himitation? (*Calls off.*) Ore right! 'arf a jiff! I'll fetch 'im.

(*Exit.*)

(*Talks outside.*) Woa back, there! Ah! Would yer? 'Ere you are. . . .

(*Enter with donkey in cart.*)

Shall I give you a leg up?

NELL. Thank you very much, but I think I can manage without. (*Climbs into cart, taking 'Awk's hand.*)

'AWK (*sitting by her and taking reins*). Nobby turn aht, ain't it

NELL. Yuss.

'AWK. Beg parding?

NELL. I said "Yuss."

'AWK. That's oreright! Now then, Miss Perry, where to?

NELL (*starting up*). What! you know me?

'AWK. Know yer? I should rather fink I do. Not a Saturday night goes by, when it'll run to it, as I don' 'ave a bob's-worth in the Gawds! Nell, I ain't given to flattery, but your Desdemoner's a knock aht!

NELL. Thank you so much. It's so kind of you to see me home.

'AWK. Kind of me? It's you as does me prahd! It's a *h*onour!

NELL. I shall never be able to repay you.

'AWK. Yuss you will, Miss. Two pit orders for to-night will square the job.

NELL (*gratefully*). I'll see that you are put on the free list from this day.

'AWK. You will? D'ye 'ear that, Neddy? We're hon the free list! Horf you go, my beauty!

(*Drives off shouting and singing.*)

(*Curtain.*)

CHAPTER XXVIII

SOME years ago, in one of the outlying districts, not more than six or seven miles from Hyde Park Corner, there was a booth dignified by the name of theatre, which catered for a particularly rough class of playgoers. This Temple of the Drama served a double purpose. In the daytime it was a jam factory. I happened to pass the place one night—a real old-fashioned "gag" bill written, or rather painted by hand, occupied a conspicuous position immediately under a placard, setting forth the merits of ——'s "whole fruit Strawberry." The performance, according to the bill, was to consist of a thrilling domestic drama entitled, "The Lowly Cottage Girl." I paid my money and went in. The stalls, which cost sixpence each, turned out to be wooden benches covered with strips of old carpet. I wanted a programme, but only oranges were sold in the auditorium. Following the example of certain fashionable West End theatres, the orchestra was concealed—presumably stored away with the jam. Under any circumstances this hiding of the orchestra is an ingenious arrangement, but particularly so when the band consists of one fiddle, played by the conductor, a cornet, a piano, and a drum. Speculation as to numerical strength can only

then be based on the volume of sound produced. On this occasion it would have baffled a combination of brass bands to have produced more noise. When the overture finished, there was a wait, during which I had a short chat with the conductor. He sat on a chair, pushed through a trap, in front of the footlights. I explained to him that I had been unable to procure a programme, and he very kindly "ducked" his head through the trap, shouted to somebody under the stage, and came up with a piece of paper and a pencil. In a few seconds he scribbled down, and handed me some details. Somebody in the prompt entrance whistled, the conductor lunged underneath the stage with his bow, and to slow music the curtain rose. Two rustics were discovered knocking one another about with stuffed sticks. This, to the intense delight of the audience, lasted some five or ten minutes. Suddenly the conductor, bow in hand, dived fiercely under the stage; once more the orchestra responded with a sustained tremolo chord, and the hero appeared. Having cuffed both yokels, he proceeded to take the audience into his confidence. He was a man of about fifty-five. Naturally, he was bald, but to simulate youth he had painted his own scalp, which, thus decorated, looked like a bladder of lard, streaked by a curry-comb dipped in ink. He wore a very seedy frock-coat, the lappels of which were crimped with age, his trousers, baggy at the knees, were too short to conceal odd socks, his boots were down at heel, and turned up at the toes. When he threw himself into a chair, and with an assumption of lordly languor crossed his legs, the

soles of his boots, thus exposed to view, were in a deplorable condition. It was some time before he spoke, so that I rashly summed him up as a tramp impersonator. Judge, then, of my surprise when, rising suddenly, he walked straight down to the footlights, saying, "I am Clitheroe, Lord of Castledane. I mix in the best society, and have earls at my table. I love the lowly cottage girl. I fain would pluck the rose that blossoms in this dainty nook." He did not know a single line! In theatrical parlance he "ponged." He had a good memory—for other plays; and the way he contrived to get through with a bit from this drama—a speech from that—lengths from Shakespeare—and yards from the old comedies, was something to see and marvel at. The wonderful part of the business was that, to the audience, it didn't matter what he said so long as he shouted it. He talked of things which had nothing whatever to do with the play he was performing in. He was supposed to be the virtuous hero, but had to fill out so much time, and if he couldn't do it virtuously, he did not hesitate to become vicious. He told of ships he'd scuttled, of children he'd kidnapped, and when he suddenly remembered that such conduct was hardly what one might expect from a virtuous hero, he would pause, smile and exclaim, "All this and more I *might* have done, but for the love of Kate, the lowly cottage girl." That put matters right! He didn't care. He'd filled up the time somehow, and the audience cheered. Needless to say, no one had the faintest idea as to what the play was all about. The youthful heroine was played by the leading lady. In the matter of

age she might have given Clitheroe, Lord of Castledane, five years. At the conclusion of Act I. I gathered that Clitheroe and the lowly Kate had gone off to be married. I arrived at this conclusion because of the sudden appearance of one of the stuffed stick combatants, arrayed in clerical clothing, who shouted, "Hail! the bride and bridegroom." In Act II. we were introduced to "East Lynne," or sufficient of it to enable the lowly Kate to become suspicious of her lord and master, and to elope with the villain. This was rattled through in fine style by the leading lady, and the other First Act yokel, now disguised as a black-moustached gentleman, whose overtures, for a time, so stirred Kate's sense of honour that, horror-stricken, she exclaimed, "Go, sir! Though I was but a lowly cottage girl, I now am wife to Clitheroe, Lord of Castledane. You forget yourself! Leave me, sir! You are very rude, and most ungentlemanly!" He did not, however, leave her, but pressed his suit (which, like Clitheroe's, needed it) so successfully that she swooned away and was carried off the stage by the villain. Once again, prodded by the conductor, the orchestra struck up some very mysterious music, and Clitheroe appeared. Although he entered immediately after the guilty couple went off, and by the same door, he expressed surprise at not finding Kate. He favoured us in this scene with scraps from "Hamlet" and the "School for Scandal," winding up with an expression of horror, when somebody in the wings shouted out, "Your wife is nowhere to be found." Then he raved, and stormed, and told of mighty deeds—the courage of

his ancestors. How at Agincourt and Waterloo (his dates were a trifle mixed, but as he shouted, this was overlooked) his grandsire had fought with Marlborough, and General Monk. With such blood coursing through his veins, was he the one to sit down tamely under the sting of injury? No!—a thousand times no! The desire for a weapon, with which to slay his rival, carried him back to the classic drama, whereupon he reeled off the dagger scene from Macbeth. Having worked up to an effective climax, he winked at the conductor who, taking the tip, lunged again under the stage, and the orchestra played fortissimo as the curtain fell on Act II.

Act III. was supposed to take place in California. The scene, however, was identical with Kate's lowly cottage in Act I. The furniture had been rearranged, and chair-covers added. Between Acts II. and III. ten years had elapsed, so Clitheroe informed the audience. As the curtain went up the Lord of Castledane was discovered reading his letters. He played most of this scene holding a letter in his hand ; and as I gathered more of the story from this scene than from any other, I think I am entitled to conclude that the letter contained more than " mere news from the old country." Clitheroe told us that he had found peace and rest in the love of another woman ; but that from his heart of hearts, " nothing could ever tear the image of Kate, the lowly cottage girl." (Big round of applause.) He still treasured his only link with the past—the child of his former marriage—a delicate child, for whom he had engaged a new nurse. All these details he gave off, casually,

as he conned his letter "from the old country." Suddenly he rose, walked to the wings, and snapped his fingers. Returning to his chair, he gazed anxiously in the direction of the prompt entrance, and a little boy walked, or rather skipped, on, trying to look oh! so happy. Overcome by paternal affection, Clitheroe clasped the child in his arms, at the same time whispering something in an undertone. What the question was, thus privately asked, I do not know. The child, however, gasped out, "What ring?" Whereupon Clitheroe somewhat roughly escorted his offspring to the door, and as if by way of apology to the audience exclaimed, "You should have brought me on a ring—but you have forgotten it. Go to your mother, child!" Clitheroe junior started howling, and I could hear him, after he had made his exit, gulping out between his sobs, to some one in the wings, "'E never told me to take on no ring!" Clitheroe, Lord of Castledane, glared "off," and the sobbing stopped. Then Kate, the lowly cottage girl, entered, disguised as a governess. Blue spectacles were all that she considered necessary, to conceal her identity from her former husband. A long, and "touching," scene followed, in which Clitheroe, for no apparent reason, repeated the statement that, "though wedded to another, his heart still pined for Kate." Wiping her eyes, or rather the outside of her blue spectacles, the lowly cottage girl tottered towards the door, and made a pathetic exit, to slow music, blowing farewell kisses at Clitheroe's back. Left alone, Clitheroe once more tried to fill out time with a soliloquy. His memory for other

plays failing him, he snapped his fingers, and the small boy once more appeared exclaiming, "Daddy! daddy! the new governess has gone out on the lake for a row." Suddenly the old fire came into Clitheroe's eye as it fell upon the letter from "the old country," which he had dropped on the table. Seizing it feverishly, he gave the audience an elaborate description of Castledane, the home of his ancestors—a description which led me to believe that Claude Melnothe must have stolen the original design for his "Palace by the Lake of Como." Clitheroe had exhausted the entire premises, and was falling back on the "beautiful grounds," when the child again entered, announcing, "Daddy! daddy! the new governess is drowned." Following immediately on this announcement came a procession, consisting of the black-moustached villain, and the clergyman, back in their yokel garments of Act I. (regardless of California) carrying the supposed governess on a stretcher. Slowly approaching the body, and saying "Hush!" to the awful child, who was now giggling, Clitheroe tore away the blue spectacles—they hadn't been washed off—started back, gasped, and proceeding to the exact centre of the stage, exclaimed, "My heart told me so. Yes! it is Kate, the lowly cottage girl!" and the curtain fell.

CHAPTER XXIX

AFTER a delightful month in my favourite Devonshire I have just resumed business on tour. I am writing this in Deal, where, in spite of the tropical heat, I have played a most successful two nights' engagement. My tour, which started last Monday, July 29th, will continue till October 19th. I return to Queen's Hall, October 21st, when I hope to bring back several additions to my repertoire. Here is my latest burlesque lecture, to be delivered as the Curate :—

BAA ! BAA ! BLACK SHEEP.

Baa ! baa ! black sheep, have you any wool ?
Yes, sir ! yes, sir ! three bags full.
One for the master, one for the dame,
And one for the little boy who lives in the lane.

I will acknowledge that, examined superficially, these lines call neither for special nor serious consideration. The underlying sentiment is delicate and elusive, and must be diligently sought for. Presumably "Baa ! baa !" (the first words of the poem) were spoken by the sheep. In those two monosyllables the animal may be said to have exhausted its known vocabulary. That the sheep uttered any articulate

sound is, after all, but a surmise. Many learned writers advance the theory that the animal did not speak, others that "Baa! baa!" is equivalent to 'Pooh! pooh!" Let us, however, soar above the quagmire of scepticism, and place ourselves in the position of one, whose perfervid temperament leans ever towards the apparently impossible, rather than to the obviously probable. I must own, that I myself am not too clear as to the actual intention—the esoteric meaning of these remarkable lines. When reason joins issue with the imaginative faculty, the chance of enlightenment trembles in the balance. Unscrupulous commentators speak of this animal as the Pariah of the Fold, simply because it was a black sheep; but we will not take advantage of the mere accident of colour. Let us, in no carping spirit, analyse the effusion calmly, charitably, and without prejudice. "Baa! baa! black sheep, have you any wool?" Here is a query, an indisputable interrogative. "Yes, sir! yes, sir! three bags full." Surely this is a reply, an intelligent reply, beyond the power of any sheep, black, blue, pink, or magenta. Then, as if to emphasise the fact, the verse continues: "One for the master, one for the dame, and one for the little boy who lives in the lane."

Now, why does the brain reel before this appalling assertion? Simply because it is an assertion—a blind, my dear friends! a mere blind, a blind to pull down—or rather, I should say, to conceal the identity of the youth, whose testimony alone could have been of any real, or lasting value—that youth, for whom the thoughtful sheep had, in reserve, one bag full.

Photo by] [*B. Knight.*

AT QUEEN'S HALL. A FEW OF MY PROPS.

[*To face p.* 246

But obstacles were made to be surmounted, and the fact that he did not live, according to the poet, in *a* lane, but in *the* lane, is a straw to grasp at and cleave to with the tenacity of forlorn hope. 'Twas not a case of great cry, and little wool. Oh, no! The cry may have been little, but there was much wool, even three bags, which we are told "Baa! Baa! black sheep," rising superior to mere commercial considerations, elected to distribute as follows :—

> "One for the master, one for the dame,
> And one for the little boy who lives in the lane."

In a little place like the Small Queen's Hall we must depend more or less on a following. The box-office can prove that the same people come several times during each season. We have had to get this following together. Advertising, as it is understood by theatrical and music-hall managers, would be out of the question, because the holding capacity of our hall would not justify anything like such expenditure. It is all the more gratifying to think that we have been able to do what we have done, as the result is mainly due to what theatrical managers call "lip advertisement." This kind of advertisement is really the best in the long run, and to ensure a long run. Not being in a main thoroughfare, we get little chance custom, but, as I said before, we are nearing the one-thousandth performance, and our following, I am glad to say, increases with each season. In Robert Newman I have found one of the kindest, and most

considerate of managers. That our association in business has been a pleasant one may be gathered from the following extract from a letter which he wrote to me concerning the renewal of our contract: " . . . In all my experience I have never had a more pleasant working arrangement with any one, and I trust that it will long remain so"—a sentiment which I, in all sincerity, echo. I have received many offers to return to America, and also to visit Australia and the Colonies. I don't quite know when I shall be able to arrange for these trips. I have long contemplated an Australian, and Colonial tour. When the Transvaal war first broke out, I received an offer from a South African manager, who begged me "not to be scared by rumours of war, as hostilities would cease in a few weeks." Not being quite of his opinion, I declined—fortunately for me—to visit the Cape "just yet." When I go I shall probably include India in my bookings. At present my home is in Langham Place, where I hope for some time to come I may be able to entertain the public, whose encouragement has made it possible for me to work under delightfully congenial conditions.

PART IV

PART IV

APPENDIX

"FROM MY SCRAP-BOOK"

Made in Germany.

THE following excerpts are taken from some printed directions given away with a box of conjuring tricks, which bore the superfluous legend, "Made in Germany":—

The Magic Grains which produce suddenly Fine Flowers during every Season of the Year.—Place a vase filled with garden mould upon which are grains, on a table, telling that this magic field only with some warmness will produce very fine flowers; with a semblance of producing warmness cover the vase with the cylindre, after removing of which beautiful flowers will appear.

Explication: Place the small vase with garden mould on the table and strew some grains on it, whilst the vase with the flowers is hidden under the cylindre, place the latter over the small vase, apparently to make warm, when removing with precaution the cylindre the flower-vase will appear.

The Captive.—The performance of this trik which will turn out to a very comical effect, is the following. Open the box, thow to your friend the captive and promise to remove him from the prison, if he will show you one of his 4 companions who is to occupy the place of the former prisoner. This matter being arranged, fold the paper, close the box, and whilst you pronounce some magic words turn cleverly and without being seen from anybody the whole box. On opening again the first prisoner will be disappeared and the other one will be on his place.

The Magnetical Stick.—In order to prepare your audience you must narrate that you are possessed of magnetical qualities declaring

at some time that you feel inclined, to show them a proof there of, though your doing so is accompanied by considerable pains for you.

Now rubbing over your left hand in a mysterious manner, stretch it out whit opene fingers over the staff lying at the table, and embrace the wrist with your right hand, with the supposed view of alleviating pains, but in fact it serves merely to seize secretly the stick with the index of the right hand, and to press it against the palm of the left one. Seen from top side the stick seems to be affixed by mysterious magnetism.

The Dangerous Hollow Pipe.—You are to presente to anyone the hollow pipe for sticking in each opening a finger, and allow to get rid of himself, that is possible in no other manner than by shoving together the hollow pipe.

The Pocket Book.—Some piece of money not too big is placed inside the paper compartment, then the pocket book closed, after the magic formula being spoken, you tourn the pocket book quickly, and when it is reopened the money is gone. In order to make it reappear, pone the pocket book again from side to side.

* * *

THE ORATOR'S LAMENT.

There are moments when an orator is conscious of his strength,
When some interesting subject he is arguing at length,
When, it may be that by accident, he solves a knotty point
And he puts his fierce opponent's nasal organ out of joint.
There are moments when an orator feels singularly weak,
When in spite of mental effort, he is powerless to speak,
When his erudition fails him, and the words he would have said
Irresponsibly, chaotically, wander from his head.

> Ah! the things he might have said,
> Quoting authors long since dead,
> Some epigram appropriate—in rhyme.
> Ah! the hit he might have made
> And the scores he could have paid
> If he'd only said the right thing at the time!

There are moments when an ordinary mortal feels the same,
When his courage oozes from him and his repartee is tame.
When his dignity deserts him and he makes it an excuse
To let fly at his opponent with a shower of abuse.

Had he only kept his temper and been merely moved to mirth,
He would possibly have witheringly wiped him off the earth.
But he foolishly allows his opportunity to slip
As he sacrifices satire for the sake of giving "jip."

Ah! the things he might have said
If he hadn't lost his head.
To throw away such chances is a crime, &c.

A. C.

(*The above was originally written for the "Land of Nod."*)

*　　*　　*

ACROSTIC.

By EDGAR BATEMAN. (Reprinted from *To-Day.*)

An earnest actor with his art in touch,
Long may he give us *genre* quite old Dutch.
Begone sore throats! ye fogs and vapours flee!
East winds to him but little nippers be!
Retail us Mile End maxims, morals, modes,
Thou quaint Colossus of the Old Kent Rhodes!

Charm us with melodies which seem to say,
Hark! 'tis an harp from up Olympus way;
Eschew aught "shallow," teach both gods and "stalls,
Vivacious lion, Chingford bred, of halls!
Adored of 'Arriet, loved by 'Liza true,
Long may both think him such a nice man, too;
In wondrous garb sing 'Appy 'Ampstead praise,
Entwine the paper wreath with poet's bays,
Reaching Parnassus by the "pearly" ways!

*　　*　　*

The accompanying sonnet, written by M. A. Raffalovitch, appeared in a London paper:—

ALBERT CHEVALIER.

Rags, relics, love's old clothes, dead people's dreams,
Art ready-made, and artificial flowers,
Are good enough for most of us, it seems;
We are not worthy of this world of ours,

We are not worthy of our matchless London ;
Our snobbishness of soul, our lack of training,
Our fears of being sneered at, have half undone
The beauty we should all behold disclaiming
What we are told of, for what is : come, then,
And learn of him to love and understand
Mirth, laughter, passion, love of modern men,
And more than third-rate Romeo's third-hand
Juliets, his coster pals, his coster girls—
His pearlies more than Cleopatra's pearls.

* * *

From the *Pall Mall Gazette*, May 26, 1900 :—

PROUD MOTHER.

Small wonder that thy children love thee well,
For time has added magic to thy spell.
Thy name a watchword where the fight is worst,
Crowned woman—Queen !—but good, true woman first.
Thou art the type-ideal for whose sake
In common clay heroic souls awake,
Who proudly feel their deeds have helped to start
The mighty throbbing of an Empire's heart !

ALBERT CHEVALIER.

Queen's Birthday, 1900.

* * *

The following was printed in the programme of Mr. Newman's Testimonial Concert at Queen's Hall, December 13, 1899 :—

QUEEN'S HALL,
LANGHAM PLACE, W.
December 9, 1899.

MY DEAR MR. NEWMAN,—Circumstances over which I have no control compel me to decline your kind offer to appear as principal tenor on the occasion of your Benefit next Wednesday ! I recently attempted a top C in the presence of a County Councillor, who (with that watchful interest over Public welfare so characteristic of

the body he represents) threatened to close the church where I am engaged as chorister—urging, as an excuse, that if I remained, it might drive the congregation to your Sunday Concerts. He sent me this testimonial free of charge. True, it places me *hors de combat*, as a vocalist; but the pen is mightier than any C—tenor or L.C.C.—and so—I send you an Acrostic.

Every good wish,
Yours sincerely,
Albert Chevalier.

To Robert Newman.

(An Acrostic, by Albert Chevalier.)

R are business tact with love of art combined
O nly amongst the very few we find;
B ut I can place my finger on a man
E xactly built on this ideal plan.
R esourceful when unlawfully attacked;
T o bear the brunt he's luckily broad-backed.

N o feeble fighter, pandering to "cranks";
E xpecting favours, and returning thanks!
W hene'er the "Chadbands" and the "Pecksniffs" meet,
M ay he be there to witness their defeat!
A rt must be free—all fettered art is bad;
N one fear the issue—Music *versus* Fad!

* * *

Last season I received a very interesting letter from a son of the late Sam Cowell (of "Lord Lovell" and "Billy Barlow" fame.) Speaking of my song "E Can't Take a Roise Out of Oi," he said:

"In a collection of Humour, Wit, and Satire of the Seventeenth Century (which I have from Mudie's) on p. 246, there is a song headed—

"'Come buy this new Ballad before you doe goe,
If you raile at the Author, I know what I know,'

which last is the refrain of nineteen verses of quaint semi-political turn. The first goes—

'It is an old saying
  That few words are best,
And he that says little
  Shall live more at rest!
And I by experience
  Doe finde it right so
Therefore I'll spare speech,
  But I know what I know.

—Verses on ambitious people, Foxes and Sheepes, the Church, Wealthy folk, Upstarts, Officers, etc.—

Last Verse.

"I know there be many
  Will carpe at this Ballet
Because it is like
  Sowre sauce to their Pallet;
But he, she, or they,
  Let me tell ere I goe,
If they speak against this song
  I know what I know.

Printed by the assignees of Thomas Symcocke. Published in 1620.

* * *

List of songs, with which my name is associated either as singer, author, or part author:—

Our 'Armonic Club.
The Coster's Courtship.
'Ave a Glass Along o' Me.
He Knew It!
Glad to get Back.
What Price That?
A Dream of Yesterday.
Two Pathways.
The Coster's Serenade.
The Future Mrs. 'Awkins.
Sich a Nice Man Too.
The Nasty Way 'e Sez It
The Goody Goody Times.
The Everflowing Brook.
A Mistake.
Oh! the Langwidge!
'Is Mind's a Puffick Blank.
He J. Hann.
Our Little Nipper.
An Old Bachelor.
A Fallen Star.
'E Can't Take a Roise Out of Oi.
The Yankee in London.
The Poet.

The Lag's Lament.
I've Got 'Er 'At!
We Did 'Ave a Time!
Come Back to Me.
Pierrot Coster.
Love is a Mystery.
Tink a Tin.
Alice.
Blue Ribbon Jane.
Dat Moon's Mighty High.
My Old Dutch.
'Appy 'Ampstead.
Our Bazaar.
Our Court Ball.
Funny without Being Vulgar.
Peculiar.
The Birdcatcher.
The Candid Man.
The Coster's 'Oneymoon.
The Coster's Lullaby.
The Dotty Poet.
The Johnnie's Serenade.
The Rose of Our Alley.
Our Ugly Boy.
The Villains at the Vic.
The Waxwork Show.
Tick-Tock.
Who'll Buy?
Wot Cher! or, Knocked 'Em in the Old Kent Road.
Wot's the Good of Hanyfink? Why, Nuffink!
Yer Never Arsked 'Im for it.
Yours, Etc.
Volume of Parodies.
'Anky Panky.
M. Armand Thibault.
Six Burlesque Lectures.
In the Good Old Days.
Ave Sumfink?
It Gits Me Talked Abaht.
'E Ain't Got the Shadder of a Notion.
Laces.
Burlesque French Song.
My Sunday Out.
How Soon We All Forget These Little Things!
A Tasty Lot.
Our Restorong.
Mafekin' Night.
My Country Cousin.
The Cockney Tragedian.
Suit the Action to the Word.
The Late Lamented.
Nellie Mine.
The Occult King.
God Guard Victoria.
A Peri's Love.
With Me.
Not Me! 'Tain't Likely! Would You?
Not a Bit of Good.
Black's de Colour.
The Toymaker's Tragedy.

Plays, &c.:—

Peebles. (Produced in Glasgow.)
Called Back Again. (Produced in Plymouth.)
Shattered 'Un. (Produced at a Vaudeville *matinée.*)
Shylock & Co. (Produced at a Criterion *matinée.*)
Cycling. (Produced at the Strand.)
When Widow's Wooed. (Produced at Queen's Hall.)
Her Reappearance. (Produced in Northampton. First played,

in private, by Miss Kate Phillips and Mr. John Beauchamp.)

Begging the Question. (Produced at the Athenæum, Shepherd's Bush, 1882.)

A Christmas Night's Dream. (Produced at Queen's Hall.)

The Wings of Memory. (Produced at Queen's Hall.)

The Land of Nod. (Produced in the Provinces at Lincoln, and in London at the Royalty Theatre.)

A Caught Card. (Produced in Darlington.)

The Favourite. (Produced in Ryde.)

The Scapegrace. (Produced at German Exhibition, Earl's Court, 1891.)

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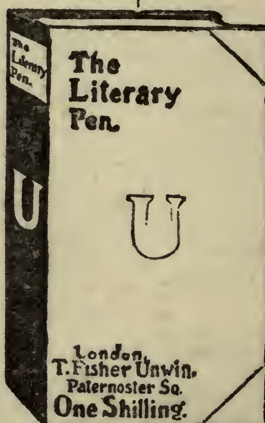

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