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Edwin Forrest



PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

OF THE

D R A M A

OR

THEATRICAL REMINISCENCES,

EMBRACING

Sketches of Prominent Actors and Actresses, their chief characteristics, original anecdotes of them, and incidents connected therewith.

BY

HENRY DICKINSON STONE,

~~~~~  
‘ To wake the soul by gentle strokes of art,  
To raise the genius and to mend the heart.’  
~~~~~

ALBANY, N. Y. :

CHARLES VAN BENTHUYSEN & SONS.

1873

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DEDICATION.

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TO THE

EDWIN FORREST "OLD GUARD,"

TO THE

MEMBERS *of the* ALBANY HISTRIONIC ASSOCIATION

AND THE

ADMIRERS OF THE LEGITIMATE DRAMA

GENERALLY,

THIS WORK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

## INTRODUCTORY.

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“VAIN IS HIS TASK WHO STRIVES TO PLEASE YE ALL.”

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AN apology for undertaking a work from some incompetency, is almost as common as a preface; yet such an apology the writer feels himself bound to offer, for he considers himself incompetent, for several reasons, with which he will not trouble the reader, to write WELL of the many shining dramatic lights that during the past half a century or more have graced the American stage. It might be asked, in the present flood of publications, why was a work of this kind attempted? and in answer to such a question we can truthfully say that it was not in exact accord with the feelings of the writer, but at the earnest solicitations of many kind friends, that the gathering of these Reminiscences was commenced, and even then with much reluctance and diffidence did we enter upon the task.

The preparation of the following pages has given us some pleasant employment for a number of leisure weeks. Whether they will prove as easy in the reading as they were in the writing, is another question, for aware that our state of health rendered all literary exertion impossible, we have not attempted to come within the limits of a pleasing purity of diction, but written these simple recollections in a “plain, unvarnished” manner, relying upon the indulgence of the

reader not to criticise them too closely, but remember that with us the inditing of this volume was a *pastime* not an *occupation*.

It has been our care to embrace as many historical sketches in this work as will be of general interest (in relation to the drama and its exponents) as possible, in order that its value may be for more than a day. A personal and gratifying intimacy with many of our most sterling actors, many of whom, alas! have "gone the way of all flesh," has enabled us to speak of their peculiarities and characteristics as perhaps few others can, and this knowledge, more than aught else, has given what especial interest there may be attached to these running chapters.

These few words of explanation being given, we have only to leave these sketches to produce their own impression. If they serve to while away a dull hour, our task will have been accomplished; if they are received with public favor, we shall indeed be gratified. These records are true to our own impressions; and secure in this main particular, we have no misgivings in offering them to readers whose curiosity and interest about the distinguished actors and actresses of their time, claim such satisfaction as any survivor like ourself may be able to give.

# EDWIN FORREST.

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## A QUESTION FOR GENEALOGISTS TO SOLVE.

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THERE are doubtless very many persons, even those accustomed to handle our Government paper currency, who have never taken particular notice of the engraving which embellishes the backs of the "TWENTY DOLLAR CURRENCY NOTES," or made themselves acquainted with the subject represented in the engraving. This engraving is a *fac-simile* of the original painting, which graces the walls of the Capitol at Washington, and represents the baptism of POCAHONTAS, at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1613, ten years previous to the landing of the "Mayflower" at Plymouth Rock. The *key* to this picture, which we have examined, gives the names of all the persons present at the baptismal ceremony of Pocahontas, among them MR. AND MRS. FORREST AND CHILD, who occupy a prominent place in the picture. This Mrs. FORREST, it appears, "was the first gentlewoman who arrived from England in the Colony of Virginia."

Now, whether EDWIN FORREST is a lineal descendant of this FORREST family is a question for genealogists to solve.

## OUR ENGRAVINGS.

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As regards the likenesses of EDWIN FORREST and Mrs. CATHARINE SINCLAIR, which embellish these pages, little need be said on our own part in their praise, as they speak for themselves, as also does the artistic execution of the engravings by Mr. Hiram Ferguson, designer and photograph engraver, which may challenge the criticism of the most exacting connoisseur.

The photograph of Mrs. SINCLAIR was taken soon after she obtained the divorce from Mr. FORREST. She is represented as Lady Teazle in the "School for Scandal." The particular scene in which she is represented is the famous one where Lady Teazle is discovered by Charles Surface and Sir Peter, secreted behind the library screen of Joseph Surface. The likeness of Mrs. SINCLAIR is perfect and life-like, as will be readily admitted by those who have ever seen her, especially in the character of Lady Teazle. It will be found, on comparing the likeness of Mrs. SINCLAIR with that of Lady Washington, there is a remarkable resemblance.

The photograph of Mr. FORREST was taken when the great actor was in the very prime of life, and at the zenith of his histrionic fame. The artist has represented him as standing in his library, in a deeply contemplative mood, his hand gracefully resting upon the works of his favorite Shakspeare. Mr. FORREST's likeness is also exceedingly truthful in every particular.

In speaking of the artist, Mr. Ferguson, we would here simply ask why Albanians need go to New York or Boston to procure their work done, when they have competent artists at home? We believe, as did EDWIN FORREST, that native or *home* talent, genius, *labor*, should be encouraged in preference to that of a foreign character. In the production of these engravings, Mr. Ferguson has done himself credit, and it is very doubtful whether his work could be surpassed, if equaled, by any artist in the country.

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## THE STAGE—THE DRAMA.

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“AMUSEMENT WITH INSTRUCTION BLENDED.”

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THAT amusement is NECESSARY to man, the most superficial observation of his conduct and pursuits may convince us. The Creator never implanted in the hearts of all his intelligent creatures *one* common universal appetite without some corresponding necessity; and that He has given them an instinctive appetite for amusements as strong as any other which we labor to gratify, may be clearly perceived in the efforts of infancy, in the exertions of youth, in the pursuits of manhood, in the feeble endeavors of old age, and in the pastimes which human creatures, even the uninstructed savage nations themselves, have invented for their relaxation and delight. This appetite evinces a necessity for its gratification as much as hunger, thirst, and weariness, intimate the necessity of bodily refreshing by eating, drinking, and sleeping; and not to yield obedience to that necessity, would be to counteract the intentions of Providence, who would not have furnished us so bountifully as He has with faculties for the perception of pleasure, if He had not intended us to enjoy it. Had the Creator so willed it, the process necessary to the support of existence here below might have been carried on without the least enjoyment on our part;

the daily waste of the body might be repaired without the sweet sensations which attend eating and drinking; we might have had the sense of hearing without the delight we derive from sweet sounds; and that of smelling without the capability of enjoying the fragrance of the rose; but He whose wisdom and beneficence are above all comprehension, has ordained in another and a better manner, and annexed the most lively sensations of pleasure to every operation He has made necessary to our support, thereby making the enjoyment of pleasure one of the conditions of our existence.

That man must have amusement of some kind, "Nature speaks aloud." He, therefore, who supplies society with entertainment unadulterated by vice, who contributes to the pleasure without impairing the innocence of his fellow-beings, and, above all, who instructs while he delights, may justly be ranked among the benefactors of mankind, and lays claim to the gratitude and respect of the society he serves. To that gratitude and respect the dramatic poet, and those who contribute to give effect to his works, are richly entitled. Accordingly, history informs us, that in all recorded ages theatrical exhibitions have been not only held in high estimation by the most wise, learned, and virtuous men, but sedulously cultivated and encouraged by legislators as matters of high public importance, particularly in those nations that have been most renowned for freedom and science.

In the multitude and diversity of conflicting opinions which divide mankind upon all, even the most manifest truths, we find some upon this subject. Many well meaning, sincere christians, have waged war against the enjoyment of pleasure, as if it were the will of GOD that we should go weeping and sorrowing through life. The learned bishop of Rochester, speaking of a religious sect which carries this principle as far as it will go, says: "Their error is not heterodoxy, but excessive, overheated zeal."

Thus we find that the Stage has ever been with many well meaning though mistaken men, a constant object of censure. Of those, a vast number express themselves with the sober, calm tenderness which comports with the character of christians, while others again have so far lost their temper as to discard in a great measure from their hearts the first of all christian attributes—CHARITY. We hope for the honor of christianity, that there are but few of the latter description.

There are men, however, of a very different mould; men respectable for piety and for learning, who have suffered themselves to be betrayed into opinions hostile to the drama, upon other grounds. These will even *read* plays and profess to admire the poetry, the language, and the genius of the dramatic poet, but still make war upon *scenic* representations, considering them as stimulants to vice, as a kind of moral cantharides which serves to inflame the passions and break down the ramparts behind which religion and prudence entrench the human heart. Some there are again who entertain scruples of a different kind, and turn from a play because it is a fiction; while there are others, and they are most worthy of argument, who think that theatres add more than their share to the aggregate mass of luxury, voluptuousness, and dissipation, which brings nations to vitious refinement, enervation and decay.

It might not be difficult to prove by inference from a multitude of facts scattered through the history of the world, that a passion for the dramatic art is inherent in the nature of man. How else should it happen that in every age and nation of the world vestiges remain of something resembling theatrical amusements. It is asserted that the people of China, full three thousand years ago, had something of the kind and presented on a public stage, in spectacle, dialogue and action, living pictures of men and manners for the suppression of vice, and the circulation of virtue and morality.

In England, where the clouds of religious intolerance were first broken and dispersed by the reformation, the Stage has flourished, and exhibited a mass of excellence and a constellation of genius unparalleled in the annals of the world. There it has been encouraged and admired by men whose authority, as persons deeply versed in christian theology and learned as it is given to human creatures to be, we do not scruple to prefer to that of the persons who raise their voices against the Stage. Milton, Pope, Addison, Johnson, Warburton, bishop of Gloucester, and many others have given their labors to the Stage. In many of his elegant periodical papers, Mr. Addison has left testimonies of his veneration for it, and of his personal respect for players; nay, he wrote several pieces for the Stage, in comedy as well as tragedy; yet we believe it will not be doubted that he was an orthodox christian. The illustrious Pope, in a prologue which he wrote for one of Mr. Addison's Plays — the tragedy of *Cato* — speaks his opinion of the Stage in the following lines:

“To wake the soul by tender strokes of art,  
 To raise the genius and to mend the heart,  
 To make mankind in conscious virtue bold,  
 Live o'er each scene, and be what they behold;  
 For this the tragic muse first trod the stage,  
 Commanding tears to stream through every age.  
 Tyrants no more their savage nature kept,  
 And foes to virtue wondered how they wept.”

Warburton, the friend of Pope, a divine of the highest rank, wrote notes to Shakspeare. And an infinite number of the christian clergy of as orthodox piety as any that ever lived, have admired and loved plays and players. If, in religion, Doctor Johnson had a fault, it certainly was excessive zeal; and assuredly his morality cannot be called in question. What his idea of the Stage was, may be inferred from his labors and from his private friendships. His preface to Shakspeare; his illustrations and



characters of the Bard's plays; his tragedy of Irene, of which he diligently superintended the rehearsal and representation; his friendship for Garrick, and his constant attendance on the theatre, loudly proclaim his opinion of the Stage. To him who would persist to think sinful that which the scrupulous Johnson constantly did, we can only say, in the words of one of Shakspeare's clowns — "God comfort thy capacity."



# THEATRICAL REMINISCENCES.

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## CHAPTER I.

OLD ACTORS—OLD ACTRESSES—THE INFLUENCE AND EFFECTS OF GOOD ACTING—OLD THEATRES OF NEW YORK—THE GREAT EDMUND KEAN “EMEUTE” AT THE PARK THEATRE, &C.

In looking over a copy of *Appleton's*, we found an article which greatly interested us, reviving, very vividly, memories of scenes and incidents of the past. In this article reminiscences of the old theatres of New York interested us not a little. Very accurate and life-like illustrations of those ancient landmarks are also given, the illustrations being so remarkably truthful that any one having seen the original, or entered their portals, will at once recognize their plain, unostentatious and familiar faces, or fronts. An illustration is also given of the corner-stone of the first old Park Theatre, which stood opposite the City Hall Park, between Broadway and Beekman street, and was erected in 1795. By-the-by, at the second Park Theatre a scene occurred that will long be remembered by those who witnessed it, as one of the most thrilling theatrical *emeutes* that ever transpired in this country, with the exception, perhaps, of the celebrated “Astor Place” riot, when the English actor, Macready, was mobbed and driven from the stage:—In this terrible riot it will be recollected that many lives were lost by being shot down by the military. The scene was occasioned by the appearance at the Park Theatre of Edmund Kean; he

was pelted with all sorts of obscene missiles, and only allowed to play Richard III in dumb show, or pantomime. We will endeavor to give the particulars, having been present during the riot, and an eye witness to the whole affair.

The first theatre erected in New York, it would seem, was the John Street Theatre, in 1753, the population of the city at that time being only 10,000. The first play bill had the following announcement:

“The historical tragedy of King Richard III, wrote by William Shakspeare, and altered by Colly Cibber, Esq. Pit, five shillings; gallery, three shillings; to begin precisely an half an hour after six o'clock, and no admittance behind the scenes!”

The *role* of Richard was enacted by an actor of the name of Kean, supposed to have been a relative of his illustrious successor, Edmund Kean. General Washington, while a resident of New York, and while President, frequently visited this theatre.

In speaking of the old “Chatham Garden Theatre,” which was located on Chatham street, between Sweeney’s present hotel and, if we mistake not, Pearl street, in the rear of the main building, and in the centre of a beautiful garden, the entrance from the street being through a spacious hallway, with the ticket and other offices on either side, we would say we are reminded of many of the names of the unequalled dramatic company attached. The theatre was under the management of a Frenchman by the name of Barrier, and was managed in the most admirable and acceptable manner. The names of some of the company, as near as we can recollect, were as follows: Henry Wallack, brother of James Wallack, and his accomplished and talented wife; Mr. Durang, Mr. Scott, who went by the *soubriquet* of “Long Tom Coffin,” owing to his immense size, as well as so often playing “Long Tom” in a nautical play; Mr. and Mrs. Harry Williams, accomplished artists. Mrs. Williams was a remarkable woman, often

assuming male characters, and especially that of "Richard III," which she enacted in such a manner that she received the most flattering encomiums of popular critics. Henry and David Ebberlee, their two talented sisters, were dances and vocalists; Mr. and Mrs. Walstein, who were once attached to old John Biven's Theatre, corner of Green and Division streets, of this city, also Mrs. Hatch, an excellent actress, who was at Biven's theatre; Alexander Simpson, for short called "Alic." Simpson, was an Albany boy, and served his time as a printer in the old Albany *Daily Advertiser* office, and commenced his theatrical career in the old "Thespian Theatre," located on North Pearl street, opposite the Clinton Park, the ground of which was occupied by dwellings at that time. Many old theatre-goers will remember the names of the above mentioned actors and actresses.

The record of the old play-houses has a very sad value in recalling interesting phases of the social life of New York, and also brings before the mind of the reader the great changes that have taken place, especially in dramatic representations. For twenty-five years after the first play was performed in New York, the "legitimate drama" was in the ascendancy. The *actors*, not their artificial surroundings, were the centres of interest. Scenery and machinery, spectacles and gaudy effects, were almost unknown. Old actors and audiences shed tears over the perfection of imitated nature. Hyatt, a veteran actor, was so overcome by the performance of Helen McGregor, by Mrs. J. Duff, that he cried from emotion like a child. [This George Hyatt, alluded to, was the first low comedian of Charles Gilford's unequalled dramatic company, of the old Pearl Street Theatre in this city, and of the very first of his class; he also possessed high literary attainments. George composed several popular pieces of music, among them the once popular song of the "Mellow Horn," sung with great effect by the celebrated vocal-

ist, Phillips.] We saw the stock actors lose their presence of mind in Sir Giles Overreach, in "New Way to Pay Old Debts," and actually start to follow the prostrate form of the elder Booth, as he was borne, in the last scene, fainting and dying, from the stage, while the audience arose, and, pale with terror, leaned forward with painful interest to see the end of what, for the moment, appeared a *real catastrophe!*

Clara Fisher, on one occasion, sang what was intended to be a ludicrous appeal for sympathy, with such wonderful truthfulness of suffering, that a majority of the audience were overcome with tears. [It will be recollected by many, no doubt, that Clara Fisher, in her young and palmy days, introduced for the first time in this city, at the Pearl Street Theatre, then under the management of Duffy & Forrest, the popular and affecting ballad of "Home, Sweet Home," when performing the *role* of Clara, in the "Maid of Milan." At last advices, December 15, 1872, Clara Fisher Maeder was doing the *role* of "Old Woman" at Aikin Theatre, Chicago, and yet in a remarkable state of preservation.] Such incidents are characteristic examples of the "old school" of acting, and the most enthusiastic admirer of "modern inventions" must admit that the old theatres of New York, at least, surpassed their successors in holding the "mirror up to nature," and that at this time, with but few honored exceptions, the era of great actors and actresses has passed away with the temples in which they achieved their triumphs. Mrs. John Greene, attached to Duffy & Forrest's Pearl Street company—a great favorite, a lady of the highest dramatic attainments, and a model woman in public as well as private life—in her portrayal of Mrs. Haller, in the "Stranger," Bianca, in the "Italian Wife," "Evadne," &c., &c., very seldom failed to work upon the sympathies of her audience, by throwing such intensity of feeling and

earnestness in the characters as to have the entire audience in tears, and not unfrequently in audible sobs.

Mr. William Duffy, (Duffy & Forrest,) while doing the *role* of Phasarius in Forrest's *Gladiator*, portrayed the crucifixion of the gladiators with such truthfulness, nay, electric effect, that portions of the audience would positively turn their faces from the actor during his recital with utter horror and disgust! Even Forrest, at times of its recital, would evince an unusual degree of emotion, It will be recollected by those who have witnessed the play of the *Gladiator*, that portions of Spartacus' (Forrest) army were taken prisoners, and "no quarters" shown them by their foes. Along the highways rude crosses were erected, and upon each cross was nailed by the hands and feet a living gladiator—thousands being thus crucified. In the dreadful agonies of death, the poor wretches would struggle till they tore their hands from the iron spikes that confined them to the cross, and attempt to throw their bodies outward, madly grasping at vacancy, their bleeding and lacerated feet still being fastened to the cross! It was this scene that Mr. Duffy described so fearfully truthful as to produce the effect upon the audience above referred to. Mr. Forrest paid Mr. Duffy the high compliment of saying in our presence, "Duffy is the best Phasarius that ever played with me."

At the representation of "Mary Stuart," in Philadelphia, when Lord Linsley seized Mary by the wrist, and left the impress of his gauntlet on her flesh, Mr. William Forrest, (brother of Edwin,) as Douglas, stepped between and says, "Shame! shame!"—an honest, good-hearted fellow, sitting in the pit, near the stage, his feelings becoming gradually excited, jumped up and cried out in very audible tones, "So it is a d—d shame! Knock the fellow down, Forrest," which incident not being in the programme, brought down the house.

There appears in these latter days so much of the *il-leg-*

itimate drama, so much of the flashy, trashy, sensational afloat and tolerated, that the true, solid, intellectual old tragedies, comedies, and sterling melodramas are wholly ignored, and made to "take a back seat." As Hamlet says, and to the point, too—

" 'Tis true, 'tis true, 'tis pity,  
And pity 'tis, 'tis true."

The old John Street Theatre was erected in the year 1753. Very accurate plate illustrations were given in *Appleton's* of the two Bowery Theatres, the La Fayette Theatre, which stood in Laurens street, near Canal, and the old National Theatre, corner of Leonard and Church streets. The National, in those days, was deemed one of the most beautiful and commodious establishments of the kind in New York, and was under the management of the veteran actor, James Wallack, Esq., father of J. W. Wallack, present manager of Wallack's popular theatre in New York.

It is a somewhat remarkable fact that all of these theatres were destroyed by fire. No city in the Union has suffered so much by the destruction of theatres by fire as New York. The theatres thus destroyed by fire are as follows: Park Theatre, July 4, 1821; Bowery Theatre, May 28, 1821; La Fayette Theatre, 1829; Bowery Theatre, Feb. 18, 1838; National Theatre, Sept. 23, 1839; National Theatre, May 29, 1845; Bowery Theatre, April 28, 1845; Niblo's, Sept. 18, 1846; Park Theatre, Dec. 16, 1848; Barnum's Museum, July 13, 1855; Butler's American Theatre, Feb. 15, 1866; Academy of Music, May 22, 1866; New Bowery Theatre, Dec. 18, 1866; Winter Garden Theatre, March 23, 1867; Barnum's Museum, March 3, 1868; Butler's American Theatre, April 8, 1868; Theatre Comique, Dec. 4, 1868; Niblo's Garden Theatre, May 6, 1872; Lina Edward's Theatre, Nov. 28, 1872; Barnum's Circus, Dec. 24, 1872; Fifth Avenue Theatre, Jan. 1, 1873.



Some of the above have been burned as follows:

Park Theatre, twice; Bowery, three times; National, three; Niblo's, twice; Butler's American, twice; Barnum's Museum, twice; Barnum's Circus and Menagerie, once.

Speaking of the old Bowery Theatre reminds us that it was here that Edwin Forrest, after leaving the old Pearl Street Theatre in this city, (he then being a member of Gilfort's stock company,) commenced his career as a "star." The second Park Theatre, which in its day was considered *the* theatre of New York, was the favorite resort of the wealth, aristocracy and fashion of the city, and one of the best stocked, best appointed, and admirably managed theatres in the world. It was conceded that its stock company was never before equaled. Many old theatre-goers will no doubt remember a portion of its names, which we give from memory, and are as follows: Peter Richings, (foster father of the universally admired and accomplished actress and vocalist, Caroline Richings,) then in his prime, and a finished, genteel comedian and vocalist. Henry Placide, a very versatile and brilliant actor. [When Edwin Forrest was in Europe on a visit, he was asked whom he deemed the best American actor; he promptly and unequivocally replied, "Henry Placide is unquestionably the best general actor on the American boards, and I doubt whether his equal can be found in England."] Thomas Placide, brother of Henry, Mr. Fisher, Mr. Hilson, the original representative of "Paul Pry" in this country, and inimitable in that *role*; Mr. Wood, Mr. Isherwood, Mr. Wheatley, Mr. Johnson, John Barnes, usually called "old Jack Barnes," Obe. Woodhull. [Here we would remark, that Woodhull was the "heavy man," doing, of course, all the *villains*, and so naturally did he not only look but act the villain, that many of the old Park patrons positively *hated* the man. The "gallery boys," (always an important theatrical appendage,) when they happened to meet Woodhull on the

street, would cry out, "There's that 'ere chap what played such and such a villian, and we're all d-o-w-n on him any how." A more flattering compliment could not very well have been bestowed upon an actor, but Obe.'s excellent acting always affected him *financially*, as he never succeeded in getting a decent "benefit," until Forrest kindly volunteered to play for him, and the benefit was a "rouser;" but it was Forrest who drew the house.] Chippendale, and many others, among them Harry Hunt, well known to Albanians as a member of Meech's unsurpassed company at the old Museum. Mrs. John Drew, the enterprising manageress of the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, was a *protege* of Harry Hunt, and by him brought out at the old Park as a "prodigy," under the name of "Louisa Lane;" when grown up, she became Mrs. Hunt. In some future reminiscences we may refer more fully to this talented and estimable lady, and versatile and unequalled dramatic artist, who played all *roles* from Lady Macbeth down to such juvenile characters as the "Eaton Boy," Fortunio, &c., and it would seem that this lady, at the present day, even, still retains much of the sparkling generous and vivacity of former days. Mr. Clarke, an admirable actor, was one of the company of the old Park Theatre. Among the actresses were Mrs. Barnes, wife of Jack Barnes, a very accomplished comedienne and tragedienne, who afterwards became a star of the first magnitude, playing in the principal cities with eminent success. Then there were Madames Hilson, Johnson, Clarke, the two Misses Wheatley, &c. One of the Misses Wheatley—Emma, the name was—and a highly accomplished and beautiful young lady, retired from the Park stage, after a brilliant dramatic career, and became the wife of one of the distinguished "merchant princes" of New York.

## CHAPTER II.

THE GREAT EDMUND KEAN RIOT AT THE OLD PARK THEATRE, NEW YORK—HE IS HISSED AND PELTED WITH MISSILES—RICHARD PLAYED IN DUMB SHOW, &c.

We close the sketches of the old theatres of New York with an account, as nearly as our memory serves us—having been present—of the great *emeute theatrale*, on the occasion of Kean's appearance at the Old Park Theatre as Richard III:

It would seem that while on shipboard, *en route* to this country from England, Kean, in one of those "fits of inebriety" to which he was subject, made certain remarks in relation to our institutions which were considered to be positively offensive, and grossly insulting, to every American citizen. The report of Kean's conduct spread like wild-fire immediately after his arrival, and a firm determination was at once formed by a large portion of the public to resent the insult, as summarily as circumstances would permit; and this determination was fully carried into effect, on the appearance of Kean at the Park Theatre.

Richard III, his great and favorite *role*, was announced for the opening night, and long before the time for opening the doors, nay, as early as 4 o'clock in the afternoon, crowds commenced assembling, and before 7 o'clock the entire area in front of the theatre was solidly packed

with a surging, excited mass of humanity, extending far into the City Hall Park! "Old Hays," the veteran and redoubtable detective, and a "terror to all evil doers," was on hand with a strong police force to aid in preventing any acts of violence.

When the doors were finally thrown open, the rush was positively fearful, and those having secured seats at an early hour, were obliged to "run the gauntlet," at the hazard of getting bruised limbs, shockingly bad smashed beavers, buttonless and badly rent coats, &c. After the house was filled to its utmost capacity, the ticket sellers left their posts, and free access was allowed to all who chose to *squeeze* in.

As the curtain "rang up," the scene presented in front beggars all description. Such a perfect ocean of heads—such excitement—such a *roar* of voices, was probably never before witnessed on an occasion of the kind. Of course, there was not a solitary female present in the auditorium. At length Kean entered from the right wing, looking quite pale, but exhibiting much firmness and confidence, and was at once greeted with a perfect storm of hisses, cat-calls, and terrific yells! but the storm subsided for a moment, and Kean commenced the soliloquy, "Now is the winter of our discontent (slight applause and hisses) made glorious by this son of York, (yells) and all the clouds that lowered over our heads"—here the storm that had been so long brewing burst forth in all its intensity and fury, and cries of "Hussle him off," "Down with the English ingrate," "He can't gull us," &c. Kean's lips were seen to move, accompanied by nervous gesticulations, but not a word he uttered was heard. Then came a missile of some sort, an orange or egg, perhaps, with the accompaniment of "there, d—n you, take that." One of these missiles struck Kean on the side of his head, when he turned his face in the direction whence it came, and gave one of his terribly defiant looks, which once beheld, would not soon

be forgotten! Kean, of course, had many friends present—mostly Englishmen—who made spasmodic attempts at applause, but how perfectly impotent were their efforts against the demoniac demonstrations of his opponents! Confusion appeared to be getting worse confounded,—pandemonium, with all its evil spirits let loose, would have been as nought in comparison.

The play went on, but in pantomime or dumb show, especially when Kean was on the stage—the rest of the play was but little disturbed, the rioters taking but little interest in it, as it was Hamlet to them with Hamlet left out. In the scene where Richard stops the corpse of King Henry, and in the wooing scene of Queen Anne, a huge missile, too obscene to be mentioned in print, was hurled upon the stage, falling directly at the feet of Queen Anne (Mrs. Hilson). At this juncture of the affair the husband of Mrs. Hilson sprang from a side wing and bore his wife off the stage in a fit of unconsciousness. The play proceeded to its close 'mid shouts, cat-calls, &c., interspersed with a shower of all kinds of missiles. As many may be desirous of knowing the meaning of the offensive missiles being thrown upon the stage, we would say that it was intended as a reminder to Kean of a certain *liaison*, or *affaire d'amour*, with the wife of an Alderman Cox, of London!

The combat scene between Richard and Richmond was positively terrific, so intensely did Kean's acting absorb the undivided attention of the rioters, and there was quite a calm in the storm for several minutes. [We never saw the equal of this combat scene, except, perhaps, that between the elder Booth and William Duffy, in Richard, at the old Pearl Street Theatre, in this city, when Booth, in one of his fearfully earnest fits, fought with a desperation that is utterly indescribable.] Kean, fighting with the desperation and earnestness of an enraged tiger, resembled a maniac more than a sane man; the

entire contour of his face presented a most repulsive aspect, and it was with Herculean efforts that Richmond prevented Kean from inflicting serious, if not fatal injuries upon his person. Kean's dying scene was fearful to behold, and we venture to say was not soon forgotten by those present.

The curtain then dropped upon one of the most remarkable *dramatic* scenes, both on the stage, as well as in the auditorium, that probably has ever occurred in the history of the stage.

Kean did not again appear at the Park for some time after this affair. His next appearance was in Boston, when he met with full as warm, if not a warmer, reception, as at the Park—threats were made to even lynch him, in Boston—and he getting wind of this, made a hasty “exit” through the private entrance to the street, in the disguise of a female, *a la* Jeff Davis, but he was more fortunate than Jeff., as Kean escaped, while Jeff. was caught and “bottled up!”

Kean, after his hasty exit from Boston, appeared at the old Pearl Street Theatre, in this city, Dec. 12, 1825, in the character of Richard III, and, contrary to the general expectation, he was received without the least riot or disturbance whatever. He played the first night to the fullest house ever witnessed in this theatre, many ladies were present, and nothing occurred to attract the attention of the audience from the masterly acting of the “mimic monarch.” The “opposition,” if any existed, was overawed, by the evident respectability of the house, from commencing any affray. After the tragedy was concluded, Kean was loudly called for by the audience, who, on his appearance, greeted him with a burst of applause which shook the edifice. He briefly addressed the audience, and expressed his gratitude for the kindness and partiality evinced towards him in the manner of his reception “in this ancient metropolis,” and retired amid the most enthu-

siastic tokens of the popularity which his late persecution had secured to him.

Kean returned to New York, meeting with a very cordial reception; also in Philadelphia, Boston, etc. Albanians seemed to take the right view of the matter; they cared nothing about the piccadillos or short-comings of the MAN; they desired to see the great ACTOR, and to witness his unequalled impersonations of Shakspeare's grand creations.

It is said that long before he appeared before the audience, his countenance betrayed an ashey or death-like paleness, his every limb trembling like an aspen; but he finally entered from the right wing, as usual, and was received with—instead of hisses and a storm of missiles—a perfect storm of applause, the entire audience rising to their feet and waiving their hats and handkerchiefs. So much was Kean taken back with this demonstration that it was several minutes before he was enabled to proceed, so great was the reaction; but he went on, and it was said he never played with such force and positively electrical effect before. He played out a week's engagement here to splendid houses.

It would seem that Albanians possessed more of the "milk of human kindness" than either the New Yorkers or Bostonians, they deeming him sufficiently punished for his indiscretions. After his engagement in Albany, he again returned to New York, and was well received. As Shakspeare says:

"All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players.  
They have their entrances and their exits,  
And many men playing many parts."

Kean passed through a terrible fiery ordeal, coming out a wiser if not a better man, no doubt. *He* played many parts, too, both on and off the stage, as we have shown in the above sketches.

Thus ends our reminiscences of the old theatres, old actors and actresses of New York.

## CHAPTER III.

GREEN STREET THEATRE ERECTED IN 1811—ATTEMPTS MADE TO PREVENT THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES—COMMON COUNCIL REFUSES TO INTERFERE—LOOKING-GLASS CURTAIN—THEATRE FINALLY CONVERTED INTO A PORK-PACKING ESTABLISHMENT.

The first knowledge we have of theatricals of any sort in Albany is that which Mrs. Grant communicates in her "American Lady," of their having been performed by the officers of the British army, in the time of the French war, about 1759. These gave such offence to the Dutch Reformed clergyman, the Rev. Theodorus Frelinghuysen, that he made them the subject of severe censure in his pulpit; but instead of affecting any reform, a very singular suggestion was made to him to depart. He found at his door on Monday morning a staff, a pair of shoes, a loaf of bread, and some money. This so wrought upon his feelings that he left his charge, crossed the ocean, and was never more heard of.

The first theatricals in Albany were enacted by a company of comedians from New York, who gained permission, for one month only, from the Governor. They occupied the hospital, which stood about where the Lutheran Church now stands, on Pine street. The first play was "Venice Preserved," July 3, 1769.

In 1785 the hospital was again fitted up for theatrical purposes, and opened on the 14th of December with "Cross Purposes," and "Catharine and Petruchio," between which was a dance, a "La Polonoise," and an eulogy on Free Masonry. Tickets were sold at Lewis' tav-



ern, as no money would be taken at the door. Boxes \$1, gallery 50 cents. A vigorous effort was made to prevent the continuance of the performances by a number of influential citizens, but the common council determined by a vote of six to four, that they had no legal right to prohibit theatrical exhibitions.

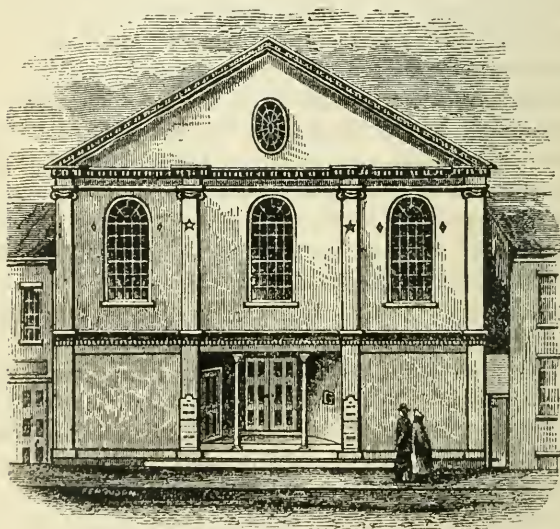
In 1803, a company calling themselves the "Old American Company," gave an entertainment at the "Thespian Hotel," in North Pearl street. They opened on the 2d of August, and continued their representations several weeks. This house a Mr. Hayman seems to have had possession of in 1810, and opened it on the 14th of November, with the comedy of "The Poor Gentleman," Mr. Bates speaking the prologue.

The epilogue was spoken at the end of the comedy, and was followed by the farce of "The Lying Valet." This company concluded the season on the 28th of May, 1811. The edifice in which these performances took place, was first known as "Angus' Long Room," where the "City Assemblies," as they were called, were held—in other words, it was a dancing room.

In 1801 the "United Presbyterian Church" held their meetings there. It seems to have been a convenient place for almost any public purpose. It was finally taken down about the year 1835. It is said that John Burnard, decidedly the best low comedian that ever appeared in Albany, had an excellent company at this place for one or two seasons before the Green Street Theatre was erected. Mr. and Mrs. Young, Horton, Anderson, Johnson and Graham, belonged to that company, and Mrs. Young acquired her great popularity in this city at that theatre, in the character of "Adelgitha." Hop. Robinson and Dwyer appeared here as stars; and the "Forty Thieves" was first produced here, William Robinson personating Hasserack, the last of the Forty Thieves. Here were introduced as stars, many of the most celebrated actors of the day.

Holman and his daughter, afterwards Mrs. Gilbert, made their first appearance here. John Howard Payne, author of "Home, Sweet Home," and of several dramatic pieces, appeared on this stage.

Theatrical performances were also given at a house fitted up at 140 State street, and in a wooden building on the southeast corner of Green and Division streets. Bliven carried on a theatre, which was known at one time as the "Pavilion," and was afterwards the site of a circus and menagerie, made memorable by the death of an elephant in it.



Green Street Theatre.

The first edifice erected for the purposes of a theatre, was begun in 1811, in Green street, near Hamilton, and it is still standing. It was of brick, 56 by 110 feet; Lewis Farnham builder, and was the enterprise of a joint stock company, consisting of John Van Ness Yates, Isaac Han-

sen, George Sharp, Isaac Q. Leake, John I. Godfrey, and others. It was opened by John Burnard, and an excellent company, 18th Jan. 1813, with "The West Indian and Fortune's Frolic." The opening address was written by Solomon Southwick. In this company, the notabilities were Mr. Waring, Mr. Tyler, Mr. Southey, Mr. Dwyer, [Mr. Dwyer died in this city. His widow, aged 66 years, is still living with Mr. Vose, on Madison avenue, February, 1873;] Mr. Young, Mr. Hopkins Robinson, [Robinson married the daughter of the late Judge Woodworth, who resided corner North Pearl street and Maiden lane, on Dr. Hun's estate;] Mr. Placide, and William Robinson—for short, called "Bill"—Mrs. Bernard, Mrs. Lewis, Mrs. Wheatley, and Mrs. Young. The prices were—boxes, one dollar; *pit*, seventy-five cents; gallery, fifty cents. Mr. Young died here, and his widow retired from the stage, afterwards marrying the Hon. Mr. Hughes, and was the mother of Charles Hughes, Esq., late clerk of court of appeals. She afterwards returned to the stage, under Burton, in New York. Many of the habitués of that theatre will remember her admirable rendition of the characters of "Mrs. Toodles," and "Lady Sowerby Creamly," in which she was unequalled. On the death of Mr. Burton she retired to a farm in Washington county, and at last date was still living.

This theatre proved to be a good speculation during the war with Great Britain, after which there was a general depression of business and it remained some time unoccupied. In June, 1818, it was sold to the Baptist society, and was dedicated January 1, 1819. The Baptists occupied it until 1851, when it was sold to a new society called the "People's Church," which lasted but a short time, and in 1852 passed into private hands. It was re-sold to a theatrical company for \$6,000, and opened 5th July under the lesseeship of William S. Preston. On the 12th of August following, the performances were brought to a

close by the sheriff taking out the scenery. On the 20th December it was again opened, greatly improved and decorated by "Madame de Marguerites." This theatre had a glass or mirror curtain, which, instead of a "drop," was divided in the centre and run in "grooves" the same as the side "scenes." The curtain, which was very beautiful, cost fifteen hundred dollars or thereabouts, and was gotten up by Riley, who kept a looking-glass manufactory in the building in Green street, now occupied by our old friend Hiram Livingston. When the auditorium of the theatre was full, the effect produced by the reflection of this immense mirror was really gorgeous and novel in the extreme—the entire audience, especially in the parquette and dress-circle, were reflected in full, representing a double audience, and showing distinctly the minutest portion of the ladies' costumes; so perfect in fact was the reflection that the disarrangement of a lady's hair could be detected, and if any "billing and cooing" were going on between fond lovers, they too would "see themselves reflected there." It is quite doubtful whether another curtain of the kind was ever seen in this country, at least we are not aware of any. The writer saw two of these glass curtains in *Paris*, and another, if we mistake not, in a small theatre in Vienna. [By the way, poor Riley came out minus in furnishing the curtain, and when the theatre "burst up" had to take back his curtain, the glass being in good order. The author of this was also victimized by Madam de Marguerites to the tune of five hundred dollars for printing, to say nothing of newspaper advertising, &c.] This theatre was soon re-opened by W. S. Preston, and on the 8th of February, 1853, was sold by the sheriff for \$6,975. It was again opened on the 28th of March, by Edmund S. Connor, husband of Charlotte Barnes, the daughter of the old comedian, "Jack" Barnes—but it was in the end a losing con-

cern. A great many attempts were afterwards made by Charles T. Smith, Davy Barnes, and others, to carry on the drama successfully at this place, but it finally sank to a very low grade and was closed in despair. In the fall of 1865 it was converted into a "pork packing" establishment by Jennings, one of the most famous pork packers east of the great lakes. Immediately after, the rear wall fell down—a disastrous "finale" to its inglorious career.

Attached to the early dramatic company of this theatre was Mrs. George Jones, in those days an actress of considerable dramatic celebrity. She was a fine looking woman, though rather masculine in appearance, and pretty well known, especially in the west, by the sobriquet of the "Man Flogger"—deriving the title from the fact of her having cow-hided a larger number of actors and editors than any other strong-minded woman in the country. In order to have things "handy" she usually carried a good-sized raw-hide under her cloak. The mention of her name brings vividly to mind a little incident that occurred in a Cincinnati theatre. Mrs. Jones was playing a star engagement at this theatre at the time, and at the close of her engagement she went to the "captain's office to settle"—but the manager was, to use a modern term, being well up in the *role* of "Artful Dodger," had "vamoosed." An attache thinking it a good chance to perpetrate a joke at the expense of George Stone, low comedian of the theatre, pointed out George as the manager—the lady at once made a leap towards poor, unsuspecting George, who was standing near an open "trap;" seeing the lady approaching, and being well posted in her style, he made a sudden dive through the "trap," and a rapid exit out of the rear of the theatre. In the course of the day, Mrs. Jones met George and made a very humble and satisfactory apology. "All right," replied George, and went on his way rejoicing.

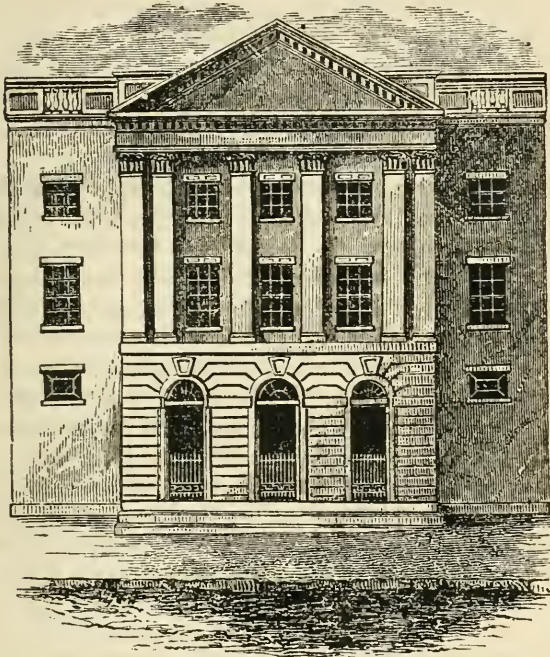
## CHAPTER IV.

THE PEARL STREET THEATRE—NAMES OF FIRST STOCKHOLDERS—  
WHEN AND WHERE THE INCIPIENT STEPS WERE TAKEN FOR  
BUILDING IT—WHAT THEY HAD TO CONTEND WITH, ETC., ETC.

The next theatre erected exclusively for the representation of the legitimate drama, was the edifice known from time immemorial as the "Pearl Street Theatre." It was erected by a joint stock company, composed of some of our most prominent and enterprising capitalists, in the year 1825, the ground upon which it was built having been donated by the late Isaac Dennison. The architect was Phillip Hooker, who drew the plan for the New York State Bank on State street, the Boy's Academy in the park, and other prominent public buildings in the city. In those days this theatre was admitted to be one of the very finest establishments of the kind in this country. It was 116 feet deep, 60 feet wide, and 40 feet high. The auditorium consisted of a pit of vast dimensions, extending under the boxes nearly to the front vestibule. The stage was 52 by 58 feet. There was also a spacious refreshment room, elaborately furnished, a ladies' *boudoir*, and a large "punch room," as it was called, extending the entire width of the building. [The following is a list of the original stockholders: Stephen Van Rensselaer, Tennis Van Vechten, Gerrit L. Lansing, Isaiah Townsend, John Townsend, James Stevenson, Francis Bloodgood, Abel French, James McKown, James McNaughton. Dr. McNaughton must be the only surviving stockholder.]

This theatre was opened to the public under the management of Charles Gilfert, Esq., on the 18th of May,

1825, under the most flattering auspices, and with one of the most thoroughly efficient dramatic companies ever organized in the United States, or perhaps in Europe, there being scarcely a member, male or female, but what



Old Pearl Street Theatre.

was far more worthy to rank as a "star," than scores who now-a-days make large and ostentatious pretensions to the title. The names of the company were as follow : Charles Gilfert, manager and musical composer ; Charles Young, "the heavy man ;" Edwin Forrest, tragedian ; Anderson, tragedian ; Joe Horton, tragedian ; Lindsley, tragedian ; Morton, tragedian and general utility ; George Barrett, light comedian ; Rufus W. Blake, comedian ; Barry, gen-

eral business; Faulkner, dialect and old man; John Augustus Stone, (author of "Forrest's play of Matamora," and other plays, and a near relative of the author of this work,) eccentric old man; George Hyatt, low comedian; Spiller, low comedian and vocalist; Howard, vocalist; Johnson, general utility; Mrs. Grey, vocalist; Mrs. Gilfert, tragedienne; Mrs. John Augustus Stone, tragedy and comedy; Miss Tilden, comedienne; Miss Neville, walking lady; Miss Robertson, chambermaid; Mrs. Barrett, old woman.

The Pearl Street Theatre forms a complete history of itself. One event in its history, at least, will render it ever memorable, or while the name and fame of Edwin Forrest lasts. It was in this theatre, it will be remembered, his unsurpassed histrionic genius was developed, encouraged and nurtured by an Albany public, until it finally impelled him onward and upward to the very highest niche in the dramatic temple of fame and fortune. The innumerable and varied scenes, incidents, &c., that have transpired within the walls of this venerable edifice, from the time of its erection to the present, would, if written out, afford an exceedingly amusing as well as instructive volume.

Having come across a copy of the bill for the first night's performance, we give it entire:

#### ALBANY THEATRE.

The inhabitants of Albany are respectfully informed that the NEW THEATRE will be opened Wednesday evening, 18th of May, 1825. Performances four nights in the week. Prize Address, written by Thomas Wells, Esq., of Boston, will be spoken by George Barrett. After which the admirable Comedy of

#### "LAUGH WHEN YOU CAN."

Gossamer.....	Mr. Barrett.	Tom.....	Mr. Singleton
Bonus.....	Mr. Faulkner.	Charles Mortimer.	Master Arthur
Delville.....	Mr. Lindsay.	Mrs. Mortimer..	Mrs. J. A. Stone
Mortimer.....	Mr. Anderson.	Emily.....	Miss Robertson
Sambo.....	Mr. Spiller.	Miss Gloomy.....	Mrs. Barrett
Costly.....	Mr. Rosser.	Dorothy.....	Mrs. Horton
Gregory.....	Mr. Lamb.		



Evening's entertainment to conclude with the admired Farce of

“RAISING THE WIND.”

Jeremy Diddler.....	Mr. Barrett.	Richard .....	Mr. Lamb.
Plainway .....	Mr. Faulkner.	Waiter.....	Mr. Singleton.
Plainwood.....	Mr. Lindsley.	Miss Dorable.....	Mrs. Barrett.
Sam.....	Mr. Hyatt.	Peggy.....	Miss Robertson.

Seats for the lower tier of boxes can be taken from 10 to 1, and from 3 to 5 o'clock. Box tickets, \$1; Pit, 50 cents; Gallery, 25 cts. Doors open at a quarter to 7 o'clock.

A first class orchestra was attached to this theatre, and all its appointments were upon a most liberal scale.

Soon after the opening, the eminent actor, Lucius Junius Booth, made his *debut* in this city, being the *first* star that appeared at the Pearl Street Theatre, and was received with the greatest enthusiasm by a large and fashionable audience; and during the season all the stars of the first magnitude appeared in rapid succession, viz: “Pat” Keene, the vocalist; the charming young English comedian, Miss Kelly; Mrs. Barnes, Conway, Cooper, Hamblin, Edmund Kean, and other dramatic magnates. Kean made his *debut* at the Pearl Street Theatre Dec. 8, 1825, as Richard III. He had previously been driven from the Boston stage and the theatre nearly destroyed by the mob. In Albany, however, Kean was greeted by an overflowing house, the crowd being so great that many retired through fear of suffocation, and large numbers who came from Troy and the surrounding villages, were unable to obtain admission. [For a full and graphic description of the great Kean riot at the Park Theatre, New York, see Chapter II, of this work, giving a history of old theatres, old actors, old actresses, &c., of New York.]

We would here state for the information of old play-goers, that the project of building a theatre here was first broached at “Bement’s Recess,” No. 1, Green street, by a number of leading and wealthy citizens, who, after a brief discussion and interchange of views, decided to go

on with the work with as little delay as possible. Four of the stockholders, viz., James Stevenson, Francis Bloodgood, John Townsend, and Teunis Van Vechten, were each afterwards honored with the title of "Mayor" of our city—for it *was* an honor in those days to be mayor, or even alderman! These were the men who inaugurated and carried out successfully an enterprise they firmly believed would result in a *positive* benefit to our city; and that a well conducted theatre *does* produce such a result, there can be little doubt. The enterprise, however, met with spirited opposition from men of contracted views and fanatical notions; but notwithstanding the opposition and the doubts and "predictions dire," of many "slow coaches"—for this class of persons were as numerous then as now-a-days, and who were ever ready to throw a wet blanket upon any improvement or enterprise that did not directly "put money in *their* purse"—we repeat, that, notwithstanding all these obstacles, these public spirited capitalists pushed the enterprise to completion.

In speaking of "Bement's Recess," our readers will pardon a slight digression which, we trust, may not prove the less acceptable, as the "Recess" was, in a large measure, *identified* with the old Pearl Street Theatre, or, at least, with its inception. This "Recess" then stood in the rear of the south end of the Express building, corner of State and Green streets, there being a good sized courtyard fronting on Green street, the main entrance being from Green. This "Recess" was an extensive establishment having numerous and very spacious apartments, sitting rooms, parlors, lunch rooms, &c. It had an enviable celebrity, far and near, it being the "head centre" where "most did congregate" our principal business men—merchants, doctors, lawyers, editors, politicians, devotees of Epicurus, and lovers of good company, good cheer, and sumptuous living generally.

Green street, in those days, was very narrow, being

scarcely wide enough for two teams to pass abreast. It was widened many years ago, as many of our older citizens are aware, from State to Hamilton street. Between State and Beaver, there were three hotels besides Bement's Recess—two on the spot where now stands "Norton's Block"—one called the "Stone House," kept by James Colvin, father of Andrew J., the other, the "City Tavern," kept by Peter Germon, and the third on the corner of Green and Beaver, where Hood's jewelry store now stands, called the "Albany Coffee House," kept by Christopher Dunn, better known as "Kitty" Dunn, father of our worthy fellow citizen, "Tommy" Dunn, and a counterpart of jolly "old Crit," of the "Old Eagle," which, with so many other fine hotels, fell a prey to the terrible and ever memorable fire of 1848. The Green street hotels, as well as the "Utica House," "Connecticut Coffee House," "Montgomery Hall," in old South Market street, were called "stage houses," as, in those days, stages were immense institutions, and Albany was the grand converging point for them.

Regular lines were run by Thorpe & Sprague, Rice & Baker, Young & Walbridge, John Swan, &c., from Albany to Boston and New York, in the winter season, Montreal, Buffalo, Cherry Valley, &c.; and in the summer season, to Saratoga, Lake George, Niagara, Lebanon, Sharon, and other watering places. At almost all times of the day and night could be heard the rattling and rumbling of heavily laden stages over the rough pavements, accompanied by the sound of the coachman's horn, and the cracking of his huge whip, handled with a skill that none but those experienced "ribbon holders" could boast. Landlords, porters, cartmen, hackmen, runners and "baggage-smashers," were all astir on the arrival of the stages. Even now one can fancy he hears, far above the din of the excited crowd, the shrill voices of those old stage and steamboat "institutions," Chauncey Dexter, George Bortle, Willard Adams, and Richard or "Dick" Graves; for

there was occasionally strong opposition in the stage business then, and consequently these old workers were brought "to the rescue."

There were no railroads then; but times were really good, living cheap, rents low, taxes nominal, people contented with moderate incomes, no thoughts of *gold*, or the rise and fall thereof, no gambling in stocks, no *whiskey* and other government frauds and peculations; in fact, no  
—— boring for *ile!*

## CHAPTER V.

### SOUTH PEARL STREET THEATRE.

WILLIAM DUFFY'S FIRST APPEARANCE HERE, PLAYING BERTRAM—  
HIS PRIVATE AND PROFESSIONAL CHARACTER—EXTRAORDINARY  
MEMORY—BUSINESS CAPACITIES—HE ASSUMES THE MANAGE-  
MENT OF THE PEARL STREET THEATRE IN THE YEAR 1829—  
COMMENCES THE ERECTION OF A THEATRE IN BUFFALO—CERE-  
MONY OF LAYING THE CORNER-STONE—REMARKS OF THE MAYOR,  
AND MR. DUFFY'S RESPONSE—R. W. BLAKE ASSUMES THE MAN-  
AGEMENT.

William Duffy made his *debut* in Albany at the South Pearl Street Theatre July 22, 1827, in the difficult *role* of Bertram, one of the favorite characters of the elder Booth. Mr. Duffy came from New Orleans, where he had been playing as a stock actor for some time. His second appearance here was in the tragedy of "Venice Preserved," he doing Jaffier to "Obe." Woodhull's Piere. Mr. Duffy was a native of Albany, one "to the manor-born," but, as did Forrest, he left Albany when quite a young man, to seek his fortune in the South and Southwest. In the year 1829, after playing occasionally at the South Pearl Street Theatre, at Providence, R. I., and in other theatres, he yielded to the urgent solicitations of many friends, and reluctantly assumed the management of the South Pearl Street Theatre. He, however, deemed the venture rather hazardous, involving large responsibilities, especially at that time, when theatricals were at a low ebb throughout the country. He was deemed on all hands to be one

of the best general actors in the country, and when Forrest played star engagements here, Mr. Duffy seconded him in all his principal pieces. In the *role* of Pharsarius, in the *Gladiator*, Mr. Duffy won golden opinions from all sorts of people, Forrest pronouncing him most unequivocally and decidedly the best Pharsarius that ever assumed the *role*. Mr. Duffy possessed a most remarkable memory. It was seldom that he more than glanced or ran over his part, notwithstanding which he was generally "letter perfect." In fact, we have known instances when his managerial duties required much of his time and attention, and he had a lengthy part to play, he would don his "harness theatrical" a short time before the curtain rose, run hurriedly over his part, and occasionally "winging it," to speak professionally, would go through with his part with as much ease and truthfulness as though he had given hours of study to it.

Mr. Duffy was peculiarly and admirably adapted to the positions which he held—acting manager and actor. His powers of endurance were very marked—he having a splendid *physique*, besides being exceedingly active and energetic in all his multifarious duties. At one time Mr. Duffy, it may be recollected, was running the Pearl Street Theatre, and the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, his time being divided between the two places. He had also in contemplation—in fact, under way—for some time before his untimely "taking off," a theatre at Buffalo; his intention being to establish a complete line of theatres from Albany to Buffalo, taking in, in course of time, Syracuse and Rochester. Under his indefatigable and judicious management, this would no doubt have proven a successful enterprise; his extraordinary business capacities affording ample assurance of such result.

Speaking of the Buffalo enterprise, the ceremony of laying the corner-stone of the theatre occurred on the 4th January, 1835, in presence of the mayor, common

council, and a large collection of citizens. A silver plate, containing the following inscription, was deposited by the master builder beneath the corner-stone :

## BUFFALO THEATRE.

Founded by William Duffy, January 3d, 1835.

L. Howard, Master Builder.

In presence of E. Johnson, Mayor, and Common Council.

The mayor, on presenting this plate, made the following appropriate remarks :

“ We are called as witnesses to the laying of the corner-stone of another ornament of a public character to our city. Modern history, for more than 250 years, tells of the building of Temples to the Muses in all enterprising and growing cities; and I believe, gentlemen, you will all freely accord with me, that few more years are to elapse before this public building will adorn the second city of this Empire State.

“ We welcome you, Mr. Duffy, and cordially wish you success in your enterprise.”

To which Mr. Duffy made a pertinent and appropriate reply, speaking of the rise and progress of the “ City of the Lakes,” the enterprise and liberality of its citizens, his visit to it in years past, and intention long cherished to erect an edifice of this character so soon as the growth and prosperity should reasonably warrant. That time, he was happy to say, had arrived, and by the advice of many of its most respectable citizens, and in the presence of many of them, the work had been commenced; and whatever might betide his experiment, he should never forget the open hospitality which had been extended to him, the frankness with which he had been met and welcomed; and that the present moment would be cherished as one of the happiest of his life.

The elaborate and very efficient manner in which Mr. Duffy placed Forrest’s new pieces on the stage, viz: Meta-

mora, Gladiator, Broker of Bogata, and Orolooso, elicited very flattering encomiums from not only Mr. Forrest, but the press and the public generally. Mr. Duffy was a gentleman of refinement and taste, generous heart, highly respected, and an ornament to the profession which he so much loved.

After running the theatre single-handed for some time with the most satisfactory results, Mr. Duffy connected himself with Mr. William Forrest, brother of Edwin Forrest, under the firm name of Duffy & Forrest, and under whose efficient management the Pearl Street Theatre was elevated to the highest standard of excellence and prosperity.

After Mr. Duffy's death, the theatre was closed for quite a time, and afterward opened, with a powerful dramatic company, by Blake & Dinneford. During their management several gorgeous spectacular pieces were brought out, among them the *Bride of Abydos*, *Norman Leslie*, *Cherry and Fair Star*, the *Jewess*, and several other imposing spectacles which were run many consecutive nights to large and fashionable audiences. After the close of the season under the management of Blake & Dinneford, the theatre was re-opened under the *sole* management of Rufus W. Blake, with the following dramatic company: John R. Scott, R. W. Blake, Nickinson, Henkins, Mossop, Germon, Shinotti, Gibson, Smith, H. Anderson, G. Anderson, Lansing, Madison, Leigh, Burnett, Mrs. George H. Barret, (*nee* Miss Henry, one of the most really beautiful actresses on the American boards); Mrs. Blake, sister of Harry Placide; Miss Virginia Monier, a remarkably prepossessing young lady, and fine actress; Miss Watts, Mrs. Anderson, Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Monier, (mother of Virginia Monier,) Miss Eliza Monier, Mrs. DeGrouch. The *corps de ballet* consisted of the Misses Farren, Ludlow, Broome, Brookes, Bruce, and Madam Truss as principal Terpsichorean leader.



The ballet dancers in those days did not dress so closely to imitate nature as at the present time; though when Madame Houton and other celebrated *danseuses* from Europe first appeared in this country, the style of their costumes was carried to such extremes as to disgust the female portions of the audiences; consequently an appeal was made to the managers, protesting in earnest terms against the very *broad* innovations made upon the good old plain style of Terpsicorian costume, and resulted in a decided reformation.

## CHAPTER VI.

### PEARL STREET THEATRE.

FORREST LEAVES THE OLD PEARL STREET THEATRE—APPEARS AS OTHELLO AT THE PARK THEATRE, MAKING A SUCCESSFUL DEBUT—AFTERWARDS APPEARS AT THE BOWERY, PLAYING EIGHTY CONSECUTIVE NIGHTS TO CROWDED HOUSES—MRS. VERNON—SKETCH OF HER PRIVATE AND DRAMATIC CHARACTER—HER DEATH AND BURIAL—DIFFERENT MANAGERS OF THE OLD PEARL STREET THEATRE, &C.

Forrest remained at the South Pearl Street Theatre until Gilfert relinquished its management and assumed the management of the New Bowery Theatre, New York, the corner-stone of which was laid April 15, 1826. After appearing as Othello, at the Park Theatre, for Obe. Woodhull's benefit, meeting with eminent success, and receiving the most flattering notices of Major M. Noah and other experienced theatrical critics, he commenced an engagement with Gilfert, at the New Bowery, playing some eighty consecutive nights to crowded audiences. At this time Forrest had reached within a few rounds of the top of the dramatic ladder to fame, carrying, as the saying is, "everything before him." After leaving the Bowery, Forrest made the tour of the States, creating a *furor* wherever he appeared.

After Gilfert left the Pearl Street Theatre it remained closed for some months, until re-opened by George Barret, Gilfert's old stage manager, who had a very efficient stock company comprising many of the members

of Gilfert's unsurpassed company; but the fates appeared to be against "Gentleman George," as he was familiarly called, and he was obliged to retire, and take a position as leading genteel comedian in one of the New York theatres. The exorbitant rent of the Pearl Street Theatre was a great drawback, as it took the lion's share of the receipts of the establishment.

About August 8th, the theatre was opened by Henry Wallack, brother of the eminent actor, James Wallack founder of "Wallack's Theatre," New York, with a first-class dramatic company. It was expected that Wallack would appear at the opening; in fact, he was to have advertised as Rolla, Mr. Parsons playing Pizarro. Wallack had been on a pleasure jaunt South, leaving his assistants to run the establishment during his absence, and on receiving information of the proceeds of the house during his absence, they not proving, perhaps, to be sufficient to pay his lordship's expenses while on his pleasure trip, swore in the bitterness of his wrath that the house should be closed, and remain so for aught he cared, *sine die*; and the thing *was* done, although there was a prospect of doing a fair business. The pure English blood of Mr. Henry Wallack had been very much excited, and he took this method of "teaching the d——d Yankees a sense of their duty!" And perhaps he served them about right, as at that time Americans were such consummate fools, or toadies, as to exalt every upstart foreigner, no matter how undeserving, over their own countrymen!

At this time both the theatre and splendid amphitheatre on North Pearl street were closed, and the play-going public for a time experienced a perfect dearth in the way of amusements.

The stockholders leased the theatre to Mr. Lement, (pronounced Lema,) who kept a hotel south side of State street, a few doors east of Pearl, but soon re-leased it to Mr. Sanford, proprietor of the La Fayette Theatre, New York.

Sanford then had a lease of the North Pearl Street Amphitheatre, which he deemed more advantageous to close and run only one establishment. Sanford's dramatic company was considered one of the very best in the country, with Mr. Burrough, a great and very versatile actor, as stage manager. Mr. Sanford produced all the sterling legitimate old comedies, tragedies and melodramas, besides spectacular pieces gotten up on a most magnificent and elaborate scale. But notwithstanding the indefatigable manner in which the establishment was managed, the unsurpassed dramatic company attached, and the rich intellectual treats nightly presented, the theatre was only indifferently supported, and Mr. Sanford, after struggling hard to keep the ship afloat had to strike his colors, and surrender with a much lighter exchequer than when he came here. During Mr. Sanford's entire management not a dollar remained on the debit side of any man's ledger against him, and he left the city with a truly honorable record, which was rather a rare instance with managers even in those days.

Elijah J. Roberts, editor of a paper called the *Craftsman*, leased the theatre, but soon found it an up-hill business, and after a pretty thorough depletion of his purse, he abandoned the enterprise, and again assumed the chair editorial, a position for which he was far better qualified than running a theatre.

George Vernon, with a full and talented stock company, succeeded Roberts. He continued the management of the theatre for several months, when his health became so greatly impaired—losing his voice—that he was obliged to relinquish his interest in the establishment and retire to a farm he had purchased a few miles west of this city. Mr. Vernon was one of nature's noblemen, a gentleman of the old school, highly educated, and a dramatic artist of the very first order. Mr. Vernon died soon after he gave up the theatre, and was buried in the old Protestant

Episcopal burying ground on State street, in this city. Mrs. Vernon erected a fine tablet to his memory. Speaking of George Vernon, brings vividly to mind his estimable widow, who was the leading female artist of Vernon's company. The career of a lady like that of the late Mrs. Vernon, who died in the seventy-seventh year of her age, is one of the thorough refutations of the charges often made against the stage and its surrounding influences. Mrs. Vernon, who had passed her whole life in active service as an actress, was as thoroughly and entirely a lady as any of the honored matrons—American wives and mothers—who never ventured beyond the sanctity of private life. To the present generation of play-goers she was not only a valued artist but almost a traditional name; for but few of our citizens who attend theatrical representations have done so further back than 1827, when Mrs. Vernon first appeared in this country. Ever since that date she has been recognized as a sterling actress. Every face lighted up with pleasure when Mrs. Vernon entered on the scene. Years fell upon her lightly, and though they robbed her of the freshness of youth, they imparted a tender dignity which, while it assorted well with her time of life, did not destroy the sense of humor and the delicate gaiety that were always so characteristic of her acting. For many years our theatre-goers have looked upon Mrs. Vernon as a beloved friend, nor was this friendly feeling taxed to allow her failing faculties, as is so often the case with veteran actors, for Mrs. Vernon up to within three months of her death, acted with as much energy and skill as at any time during the last twenty years. It is something worthy of special record in the annals of the stage, that an actress should, in her seventy-seventh year, delight and gratify as much as she did when she was forty. The mere fact that she retained the memory needed to play long parts to this advanced age, and with it her bodily activity, is as remarkable as it is gratifying. When to all

this it can be added that she inspired in private life an affection and esteem even greater than that reflected in her public associations, it will be seen that the American stage has lost in her one whose honorable reputation it must ever be grateful for.

Mrs. Vernon was a native of Brighton, England, her maiden name being Jane Merchant Fisher. Shortly after her arrival in this country in 1827, she married Mr. George Vernon, who died three years later, leaving a young widow who never after changed her name. At the Bowery Theatre in the days when it was one of the most prominent places of amusement in New York, and at the Chatham, Park, the Old Broadway, Burton's and Wallock's, Mrs. Vernon has played a great variety of parts in the wide range of modern comedy. In her younger days she took the leading characters, but for many years past has been known by her inimitable representations of "first old women." *Mrs. Skewton* was a personation in which she excelled; *Mrs. Malaprop* was one of her favorite parts; and as the housekeeper in "The Old English Gentleman," she mingled with the absurd elements of the character a touch of pathos that was as beautiful as it was natural. She never o'erstepped the modesty of nature, and she, a genuine talent and an accomplished lady, proved how unnecessary to a cultivated mind, are the extravagances and "dodges" which so many of the actresses of the day deem essential to secure success and popular recognition.

Mrs. Vernon was a regular communicant of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Her funeral in New York was very numerously attended, not only by the profession, but by a large representation of the very first citizens of New York. Mrs. Vernon, it is pretty generally understood, was the elder sister of Mrs. James Maeder, *nee* Clara Fisher, who is still engaged in her professional capacity.

## CHAPTER VII.

### OLD PEARL STREET THEATRE.

WILLIAM RUFUS BLAKE—HIS VANITY—HIS ECCENTRICITIES—HIS AFFAIRES D'AMOUR—HIS THEATRICAL MANAGEMENT—HIS SUCCESS—HOW HE LOST HIS DINNER—THE CONSEQUENCES THEREOF—THE POOR SCOTCH COOK, AND HER DILEMMA—BLAKE GOES TO BOSTON—HAS A LAISON WITH A BEAUTIFUL BOSTON BELLE—LEAVES BOSTON, AND GOES TO NEW YORK, ETC.

Old play-goers will doubtless well remember William Rufus Blake, commonly called in his profession, the "Duke," who assumed the management of the Pearl Street Theatre after the dissolution of the copartnership of Blake & Dinneford. The private as well as dramatic career of Blake, had it been truthfully written out, would have afforded a very rare treat for those theatrically inclined. We can, however, give only an inkling of some of the scenes and incidents of his theatrical career while in Albany.

Blake, we think, was born in Nova Scotia, coming to this country when quite young. After appearing in Boston and New York, he was engaged by Gilfert, of the Pearl Street Theatre—one of the most accomplished, genteel, or light comedians of the day, and withal a splendid looking fellow—a great favorite with all classes, and especially the upper classes of Albany—the *beau ideal* of the *female* portion, who seemed to regard him as

"The glass of fashion, and the mold of form,  
The observed of all observers."

Blake became more of a favorite among some *distingué* fair ones of the upper classes of society in Albany, than would seem fitting.

Blake left the Pearl Street Theatre some time before Giltert relinquished it, and moved to Boston. He soon left the "Hub," on account of a rather important *affaire d'amour* with a distinguished belle of that city, and obtained an engagement in New York. He often boasted—for he was inflated with vanity—that he was actually obliged to leave Albany on account of his beauty and rare accomplishments; that they were playing the d—l with all the pretty women in the city! The imposing title of "Duke" was given to Blake on account of his high aristocratic notions and bearing, and his inflated idea of "having come of gentle blood." Probably Blake thought, as did Madame Melnotte in the "Lady of Lyons," that her son Claude, "though he was not a Prince, he ought to be one, as he looked and acted so like a Prince."

Blake, when manager of the Pearl Street Theatre, made money very rapidly, but his extravagance in living ever kept him "short." He had an exceedingly fine stock company, with an occasional sprinkling of first-class stars, and produced many magnificent spectacles on a very elaborate and expensive scale; but after running the establishment for a few months, he relinquished its management and went to New York, leaving many lasting "remembrances" behind him in the shape of large debit balances on many a ledger. He resumed his position as leading light comedian on the boards of one of the metropolitan theatres. In later days he became quite corpulent, and finding himself approaching the "sere and yellow leaf of time," and that it had began seriously to tell upon him, he was obliged to assume the role of "old man," at Wallack's Theatre, in which line, and at which theatre, he was playing until a short time previous to his death, in 1865 or '66.



Blake was an epicure of the very first water—we might safely say a *gormand*—as his abdominal proportions in after life so plainly indicated. He would never forego his dinner—his principal meal—for either pleasure or business, no matter how pressing. He was similar in this respect to old Fallstaff, who would forego all things rather than his favorite “cup of sock!” There are many very amusing anecdotes of Blake which we should like to relate, but must be content with one only, and that is how he “lost his dinner.” B. occupied rooms adjoining the green room in the Pearl Street Theatre, where he and his wife kept house. For his dinner he had ordered a splendid turkey. His directions to his cook—a buxom Scotch girl—were to have his dinner ready precisely at a certain hour, without fail. It happened that he was unexpectedly called to Troy on business, his wife accompanying him, and was detained considerably beyond the time appointed for dinner. B. had a very intimate confidential friend, who, happening to drop in during the absence, thought it an excellent chance to perpetrate a joke at B.’s expense. He accordingly took the turkey, which was nearly ready for the spit, and secreted it in an under closet, where he was pretty sure it would not be found in time to spoil his joke, and hastily left the theatre. The joke was favored by the girl’s stepping out to procure some condiment to season the trimmings, leaving the field clear for the successful operator. The girl’s feelings and astonishment on her return, to find the turkey gone, is more easily imagined than described. At length B. and his wife returned, B. rushing in, his appetite having been sharpened by his ride, as well also, perhaps, as a glass or so of *eau de vie*, on the Troy road. On reaching the inner door he heard loud sobbing and wailing from within—they came from the bewildered girl, who was lamenting the loss of the turkey, and the attending consequences of the dreadful mishap. He opened the door, and exclaimed, “Good gracious”—his

favorite exclamation—“Margery’, what’s the matter? Have you burnt yourself basting the turkey?”

“Nae, nae, Mister Blaik, I wish it wa’ na’ worst—oh sic an affair—gin I’s a woman, auld Clotie, that’s the deil himsel’, and his imps, them’s the bogels, ha’ tak’n awa’ the critther!”

“Why, what do you mean—are you mad, old Clotie, bogles—you don’t say the turkey’s gone, and if so, who took it?”

“I dinna ken wha’ teuk it, but it’s a gane—I dinna think it was the dog, or I wo’d ha’ ken’d it.”

“Did you leave the room for any length of time?”

“Just aboon sax minutes I was gang awa’ to get a wee bit o’ somethin’ for the trimmins. I’ll tak’ ma aith wi’ ma han’ upon the gude book I was na’ gan aboove sax minutes, na mair, an’ I’m sure the deil himsel’ ha’ speerit’d it awa’.”

Here *was* a catastrophe, indeed. Cheated out of his dinner! Finding it was useless to question the superstitious girl farther, diligent search was made for the stray turkey, but all in vain. Then, indeed, did Blake enact the “Manager in Distress” more naturally than he had ever before performed it—also Delph, in “Family Jars.” Chairs were overturned, dishes misplaced and considerably damaged—a blue streak of something that would’nt look well in print coming from B.’s mouth, and the “de’l himsel’ to pay generally. Blake did not feast upon the plump, juicy turkey that day, but made a luncheon of the remains of a piece of corned beef that happened to be left over. The turkey was, however, found the following day, none the worse for “laying over;” and in spite of poor Margery’s “bogles,” Blake had a sumptuous feast, to the great delight of all, but to none more than to poor Margery, the Scotch cook.

Blake was pretty well satisfied that some old acquaintance had perpetrated the hoax, but had made up his mind

to say as little as possible about it. It was some two months before the "cat was let out of the bag." This friend and Blake being at a private free and easy, "owned up," and the affair was pleasantly discussed over several bottles of choice Heidseick, at the expense, of course, of the perpetrator of the joke.

Blake used often to tell the story of the lost turkey, as well as the lost dinner, when with a convivial party, and enjoyed the joke with great gusto.

## CHAPTER VIII.

TOM. FULLER, THE "ARTFUL DODGER"—HIS CHARACTERISTICS—HIS SUDDEN AND MYSTERIOUS ESCAPE TO NEW YORK—FORREST MAKES HIS LAST APPEARANCE AT THE PEARL STREET THEATRE—AMATEUR PERFORMANCES—MASTER BURKE AND TYRON POWER—A ROW AT THE THEATRE—PRESTON'S MANAGEMENT—THEATRE SOLD TO ST. PAUL'S CHURCH—CHURCH CONVERTED INTO ACADEMY OF MUSIC BY JOHN M. TRIMBLE, &C.

Tom. Fuller succeeded Blake in the management of this theatre, and met with considerable success. His stock company comprised members of the profession with talent and character, and had Fuller been a man of honor or honesty, he might have had a splendid success; but he was truly an "artful dodger"—a name he won from those whom he had made to suffer. Forrest played a two weeks' engagement under Fuller's management to overflowing audiences, the theatre closing the last night of Forrest's engagement, the house being the largest of the season. This was the last time Forrest appeared at the old Pearl Street Theatre.

Among the many victims to the dodge-game of Fuller was Charley Eaton, the young tragedian who had supported Forrest through the engagement just closed. The day after, Charley, with a huge cudgel in hand, searched the premises, but Fuller was non-comatible. Charley declared, after a vain search, that "had he found him, his life would have been of no more account than that of a dog's." It appeared that F. had secreted himself in the

garret of Washington Hall, kept by jolly Sam. Fuller, (no connection of the manager,) a hotel adjoining the theatre on the south, and there remained till towards evening, when he slipped into a carriage from the back door of the hotel, and was driven down the river to a point, where he was taken aboard the night boat in a small boat—(way-passengers in those days were taken aboard and put ashore in small boats). So poor Charley was left, with many other victims of misplaced confidence, to chew the bitter cud of disappointment.

It is a somewhat remarkable fact, that it was, in 1826, thirteen years before, that Forrest made his first appearance on the boards of this venerable edifice. The theatre was then closed for quite a length of time, until Mr. W. S. Preston opened it with an excellent company, running it with very fair success till the year 1839, when it was sold to St. Paul's Church, an Episcopal congregation then worshipping in the edifice now occupied by St. John's Catholic Church, in Ferry street. It continued as a church until 1862, when it was sold for \$14,000, (it originally cost \$25,000,) and in December, 1863, was opened by J. M. Trimble as the Academy of Music. On removing the floor of the church, the original pit and orchestra were found to have been left as they stood twenty years before, when the edifice was transformed and remodeled for a church. Mr. Trimble fitted up the old edifice in splendid style, and opened it December 28, 1863, with the play of *Lady of Lyons*, with the following cast of characters:

Claude Melnotte.....	Mr. Stetson.	Deshapelles.....	Sydney Smith.
Beauseant.....	Mr. Page.	Pauline .....	Anne Wait.
Col. Demas.....	Mr. Ryer.	Mad. Deshapelles..	Mrs. La Brun.
Glavas.....	Mr. Ashley.	Widow Melnotte..	Miss Hampton.
Gaspard.....	Mr. Murdock.		

The Academy of Music was considered one of the most successful enterprises of the kind ever undertaken in Albany, Mr. Trimble making a net profit of \$20,000 the first

year. After the death of Mr. Trimble, his daughter, Miss Georgiana, (now Mrs. Lucien Barnes,) who possessed much business tact and capacity, assumed the management, and run the establishment with eminent success until it was destroyed by fire January 29, 1868.

During the intervals between the various managements, occasionally amateur and other performances of a dramatic character were given at the Old Pearl Street Theatre. Miss E. Davenport, who has since figured as one of the most charming actresses—and, as Mrs. Lander, has appeared with such *eclat* in England and America—opened the theatre for several nights, just after she had entered the profession as a “prodigy.” On this occasion she was supported by several members of the old Histrionic and Forrestonian Societies, among them Stephen Hutchins and Frank Briare. The plays were Douglas, Miss Davenport doing Young Norval; The Four Mawbrays, Therese, The Orphan of Geneva—Hutchins doing Carwin, Quackenbush, Father Fontaine, and Frank Briare, Mariette—and very creditably did they acquit themselves. Frank had enacted Julia, in the play of the Hunchback, and several other female characters, with success. He possessed dramatic talent of an extraordinary character, and would have made his mark had he followed the dramatic profession.

Another Dramatic Festival was given at this theatre, when Sheridan Knowles’ fine drama of the Wrecker’s Daughter was enacted, the performers being mainly composed of the Histrionic and Forrestonian Societies. The arduous *role* of Marian was personated by Frank Briare, and in it he made a very splendid hit. In the delivery of some of the soliloquies, young Briare appeared to many competent judges present the counterpart of that eminent actress, Mrs. John Greene, who had often enacted the character. In the abstracted scenes, he gave a bold imitation of those celebrated artists, Josephine Clifton and

Julia Dean, who had made the character a specialty. The part of Robert, the Wrecker, was enacted by James Carroll, and that of Black Norris by Stephen Hutchins, and were impersonated in a manner that elicited the hearty approbation of the large and respectable audience present. The National Brass Band, under the leadership of Lewey Undener, volunteered their services for the occasion, and discoursed excellent music.

#### COMPLIMENTARY BENEFIT TO MR. DUFFY.

There were many events that took place within the walls of the Old Pearl Street Theatre that will no doubt be well remembered by old play-goers, two of them having produced at the time no little excitement. The first was the complimentary benefit tendered to Manager William Duffy, which was indeed a brilliant and very successful affair. Our leading and influential citizens took a lively interest in it—the tickets were \$3 each, and the theatre was graced by the beauty and fashion of the city. It was a compliment he richly merited as a man and an actor. Mr. D. was called before the curtain, and made a very feeling and appropriate response.

#### TYRONE POWER.

The next event was the appearance of the great Irish comedian, Tyrone Power. Power was inflated with very high notions, and was exceedingly aristocratic; he claimed to "come of gentle blood," and that he was a brother of the celebrated Lady Blessington, priding himself very highly on that score, and deeming himself far superior to every body and every thing in young Yankee land. It appears that on one night of his engagement the audience was not as large as suited his fancy, and, to use his own language, he said, "I will not play to such contemptible houses." This at once aroused the indignation of many

prominent citizens. Handbills were circulated, contributing greatly to increase the flame; hissing, howling, and cries of "Hustle him out," were the order of the night. Power attempted to speak, showing that he was desirous of making an apology, but could not be heard. John Greene, stage manager, appeared, and the house was hushed; he told the audience Mr. Power wished to have a hearing, and would no doubt explain himself in such a manner as to do away with the prejudice. Still it was not till after several attempts that Power was enabled to speak, when he finally made a rapid statement of the case, and an attempt at an apology, whether sincere or not. The play was finally allowed to go on, in pantomime, however, for the clamor was such that scarcely an actor's voice could be heard, and it continued till the fall of the curtain. This was Power's last appearance here. He was one of the many victims in the ill-fated steamer *President*, lost on her passage from New York to Liverpool, not a vestige of the passengers or steamer ever being heard of.

#### DEMONSTRATION AGAINST MASTER BURKE.

When the celebrated Master Burke, then in the zenith of his fame as a "prodigy," appeared at this theatre, several of his countrymen made a demonstration against him, the provocation being, it was understood, that young Burke's father had made some remarks disrespectful to Daniel O'Connell, that keenly touched their patriotic sensibilities. The American portion of the audience, deeming it unjust to visit the sins of the father upon the child, espoused the cause of young Burke. For a time matters assumed a serious aspect; in fact, the demonstration reached so high a pitch that the "watch"—for we had no "Capital Police" in those days—were called to the rescue, and the active and leading spirits in the melee were unceremoniously ejected from the theatre. The performance was then allowed to go on without further disturbance.



## CHAPTER IX.

GRAND FIREMEN'S BALL—ITS MANAGERS—CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN THE BELLE OF THE AFFAIR—THE OBSERVED OF ALL OBSERVERS—THOMAS McMULLEN, IN FULL CHARACTER, AS FLOOR MANAGER—TERRIFIC SWORD COMBAT BETWEEN THE ELDER BOOTH AND WILLIAM DUFFY—RICHARD III, IN BURLESQUE, BY GEO. HYATT AND OLD JACK BARNES—RICHARD III AGAIN BY HYATT AND ROBERTS—COL. PLUCK'S SPURS, ETC.

Among the memorable events that occurred in this theatre, were the celebrated ball in honor of General Jackson and the battle of New Orleans—the Firemen's Ball, and benefit of the Young Men's Association, on which occasion the celebrated Master Burke appeared as Richard III. We will only allude to one of these balls, the one probably surpassing in splendor any event of the kind ever gotten up in Albany, especially by that noble body of men, the firemen. This ball was attended not only by our first-class citizens, but by large numbers from Philadelphia, New York, Boston and other cities. The military of this city and military and firemen of other cities were largely represented. Among the ladies who figured most conspicuously in the brilliant throng, was Charlotte Cushman. In all the freshness and bloom of youth, magnificently attired, her head adorned with an immense and beautiful bird of Paradise; as she threaded the mazes of the dance, or moved gracefully in the promenade, her stately form towering above her companions, was the "observed of all observers," the "bright particular star" of the evening.

The space occupied for dancing included the entire stage and covering of the pit, affording ample accommodations for over fifty sets—the entire circle of the boxes was elaborately decorated with flags, banners, insignia of the department—massive mirrors, elegant paintings and portraits were suspended on all sides. The first tier of boxes was filled with that portion of the fair assemblage who chose to remain as “lookers on,” rather than join in the dancing. The most gorgeous portion of the scenery, such as parlors, castles, woods, streets, courts, mountains, used in the representations of those grand spectacles, “Norman Leslie,” “Bride of Abydos,” “The Jewess,” &c., were artistically arranged around the stage, and, giving additional beauty and grandeur to the fairy scene, reminded the spectator of oriental scenes described in the Arabian Nights.

The music—a full orchestra—was under the direction of Professor Anthony G. Graves. An entire new set composed expressly for the occasion and called the “Firemen’s Cotillions,” were introduced, in parts of which, with the Kent bugle, drum, violin and a large bell, an effect, resembling all the noise, bustle, and confusion incident to an alarm of fire, was produced. It is strange these once so popular cotillions are not more frequently introduced at our large balls.

The spacious saloon of the theatre was fitted up as a gentlemen’s supper room, and suits of rooms in B. M. Briare’s large cream and confectionery establishment adjoining the theatre, were elegantly and tastefully fitted up as a ladies’ supper room, an entrance having been cut through from the theatre. When it is known that they were furnished by that well known caterer, B. M. Briare, it is unnecessary to say that the supper and accompaniments were *recherche*.

Alderman Thomas McMullen was chairman of the floor managers, and well he performed the duties assigned to

him. He was dressed in character, satin tights, black swallow-tail coat, with a large red and white rose looming out on either breast. "Tommy" was a character—active, energetic and ever ready to take a hand in any good thing. He was the first man who essayed to reform our miserable militia system, by getting up burlesque parades with the raw material, and dubbing them "The Fusilliers." Similar parades were immediately inaugurated in the principal towns in the State, and finally resulted in giving the death blow to "fuss and feathers" of the old general training. Mr. McMullen received, by unanimous consent, the title of "Colonel Reform," and bore it with modesty and meekness to his death.

We doubt whether the fetes and balls gotten up in the present fast age surpass, or even equal, those given so many years ago.

The following gentlemen were managers of this magnificent ball:—John G. Treadwell, Charles Gay, Samuel Van Vechten, H. J. Clark, W. L. McLaughlin, C. L. Woodruff, B. M. Briare, P. B. Leddy, T. L. Booth, R. S. Cushman, John Brooks, jr., C. Vanderbilt, J. H. Chadwick, J. Linecare, W. W. Jones, George B. Steele, J. F. McPherson, J. L. Badgely, J. O. Wilson, John Osborn, Cornelius Glenn, H. C. Southwick, C. McLoughlin, Philo Booth, Alex. Brown, S. H. Strain, John Fredenrich, H. H. Yates, Cornelius J. Cuyler, S. Putnam, Jacob Leonard, Jacob Ten Eyck, W. Harrison, Thomas McMullen, E. L. Hart, James Kidd, Spencer S. Benedict, J. McPherson, Isaac N. Comstock, P. E. Bowman, John W. Cluett.

This event took place over thirty years ago. Alas! how many of those who participated in these joyous scenes, have passed to that "undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveler returns." Of the managers, more than one-fourth of the number have passed away.

## COMBAT BETWEEN BOOTH AND DUFFY.

When Lucius Junius Booth was playing an engagement at the Pearl Street Theatre, he came in the box office one morning looking quite moody, and apparently not a little out of sorts. He was greeted by Mr. Duffy, with a "How is the citizen soldier this morning?" (This *sobriquet* was given Booth by Mr. Duffy, and as such he was pretty generally known in the profession.) "Well," said Duffy, "it seems we are to measure steel to-night." "Yes," replied Booth, "and I charge you, by all that you hold sacred, to look well to your guard in the combat scene, for I am in fighting trim." "Never you fear, sir," was Duffy's reply, "you'll find me fully up in my part or I much mistake myself." And, as the sequel will show, he *was* up in his part, for Duffy evidently knew that Booth "meant mischief." The play was Richard III, Booth, of course, doing his favorite role of Richard, and Duffy that of Richmond. Both actors were in fine trim, and "eager for the fray."

The play went off admirably, Booth never, perhaps, appearing more brilliant in the character. There appeared to be a premonition among a few of the audience that the combat scene on this occasion was to be something more than usual, and great anxiety was evinced to see it. The combat at last commenced, and a terrific one it was. Booth having worked himself up to a high degree of excitement in the battle scene, where he cries, "A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse," had become desperate. His thrusts, lunges and cuts were fearful. Duffy was cool and collected, parrying with consummate skill. He was an excellent fencer—sparks of fire rolling from their swords, the chances appearing to be about equal. Booth finally, finding that he had his match, resorted to his old dodge of "playing down," or "driving to the corner," his antagonist. Duffy, however, was fully on his guard, and by making a "feint," threw Booth off his guard, striking

Booth's sword with great force, and hurling it several feet over his head.

Booth, evidently greatly chagrined at his discomfiture, storming and fretting like a caged tiger, quickly made vain attempts to regain his weapon, but finding himself much exhausted, made the "last fall," thus ending one of the most severe stage combats we ever witnessed. The dying scene of Booth was truly frightful—his eyes, naturally large and piercing, appeared to have greatly increased in size, and fairly gleamed with fire; large drops of perspiration oozed from his forehead, and coursing down his cheeks, mingling with and moistening the large black ringlets of the wig he usually wore in Richard, caused them to adhere to his face, rendering his appearance doubly horrible. The remarkable portrayal of the passions—the despair, hate, grief—in the passage in the original text, which reads—

"But the vast renown thou  
Hast acquired in conquering  
Richard, doth grieve him more  
Than the soul parting from the body."

has probably never been surpassed, even by George Frederick Cooke, whose Richard is said to have excelled all others.

#### GEORGE HYATT AND OLD JACK BARNES.

It will be recollected by many of our older citizens that on the corner of South Pearl and Beaver streets stood an old yellow brick tavern, called the "Rising Sun Tavern," kept by Crosby, and at a later date by Carter. Speaking of this old tavern, which was afterwards called "Crosby's Hotel," brings to mind George Hyatt, the inimitable low comedian, attached to Gilfert's Pearl Street company. Hyatt was a gentleman of polished manners, brilliant intellect, and a highly finished education. He was the author of several valuable works, and possessed a fine musical

taste and talent. He composed several popular airs, among which was the beautiful song, "The Mellow Horn," sung with great *eclat* by Phillips.

Hyatt had a benefit at the "Old Pearl," doing Richard to the Richmond of "old Jack Barnes," the celebrated low comedian, for many years attached to the Old Park Theatre, New York—the piece was, of course, played in *burlesque* throughout. The idea of two such eminent comedians playing tragedy, was sufficiently novel and ludicrous to attract an immense audience, and it was kept in continued roars of laughter throughout the performance. The combat scene between Richmond and Richard was as good as a score of first-class farces. During the fiercest of the combat Hyatt got his sword between his legs, and fought with his back to his antagonist, as if fearful of getting a slash across the face or stomach. Barnes was equally ludicrous in his cuts, parries, thrusts and guards. After Hyatt had fallen, Barnes stabbed him *a la posteriori*, and raised his weapon as if to strike, when Hyatt, looking up, shook his fist at him, and exclaimed: "Jack, would you hit a fellow when down—it's foul—cowardly!" Hyatt then made preparations to die; took off his mantle, folded and laid it down for a pillow, and quietly laying himself down, addressed Richmond (Barnes): "Jack, I'm done for—the game's up—go and *treat*, and we'll call it quits!"

It is scarcely necessary to say this brought down the house, cheer followed cheer, making the welkin ring, and continuing till long after the curtain went down. Hyatt then came forward and made one of his unique and laughter-provoking speeches.

From the scene in Richard, when the dead body of King Henry is borne in upon a bier, we quote the dialogue between Richard and the bearers of the corse, in order that it may be more fully understood by the reader:

RICHARD—Take up the corse, sirs.

BEARERS—Towards Chertsey, noble Lord?

RICHARD—No; to White Friars; there attend my coming.

Hyatt gave the following version of the above text:

HYATT—No; to Crosby's (meaning Crosby's hotel,) there wait my coming, and *we'll have a drink all round!*

This scene also created great applause, a large part of the audience rising to their feet, waiving hats, handkerchiefs, &c. With two such eminent comedians as Hyatt and Barnes, this was probably the richest burlesque performance ever witnessed on any stage.

#### ANOTHER SIMILAR SCENE.

At the old Chatham Garden Theatre in New York, Roberts, an unsurpassed low comedian, and George Hyatt, played Richard III—Roberts appearing as Richard, and Hyatt as Richmond. Owing to the singular cast of characters, it was generally expected that the play was to be a burlesque, but with the exception of now and then a word, Roberts closely imitated the "proud representative of Shakspeare's heroes," until the fifth act, when the anticipations of the crowded audience were fully realized on beholding the crook-backed tyrant, his boots adorned with the celebrated "Col. Pluck's" huge *spurs*, which had been brought on from Philadelphia and presented to the late Col. William L. Stone, editor of the old New York *Commercial Advertiser*. Col. Stone kindly loaned them to Roberts for the occasion. Hyatt, (Richmond,) after having slain Richard, slapped his arms against his sides in imitation of a rooster, and crowed three times at the top of his voice in triumph over Richard's remains! The effect upon the audience can be imagined—the applause elicited lasting for a long time after the curtain fell.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE TRIMBLE OPERA HOUSE.

INCIPIENT STEPS FOR REBUILDING THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC—NUMEROUS PLANS AND MOVEMENTS FAIL—LUCIEN BARNES FINALLY SUCCEEDS IN ORGANIZING A COMPANY TO GO ON WITH IT—BRIEF SKETCH OF ITS MANAGEMENT, &C., FROM THE PERIOD OF ITS OPENING TO THE PRESENT.

After the burning of the Academy of Music, there was for a long time perfect dearth in regular theatrical amusements in Albany. The play-going public demonstrated, in a marked degree, their desire for the revival of this class of amusement, and numerous projects sprung up. The legislature was appealed to, to throw the protecting arm of an enabling enactment over the parties who proposed to organize a company to replace the lost dramatic temple; but this, like all the other plans, was at length abandoned. At last Mr. Lucien Barnes took hold of the matter, and succeeded in forming a company that should remain sufficiently permanent to insure the success of a first-class theatre. Mr. Barnes matured his plans during the summer, and on the first day of November he began work. In the short space of fifty-three days he had erected the Trimble Opera House, and the first entertainment was given on the evening of December 31, 1869. The theatre was opened by as good a stock company as could be secured at that season of the year. Mr. Barnes played his stock company to a very fair business till some time in January, when the star system was introduced. Mr. E.



Eddy appeared as the first star, playing a very successful engagement, the nightly receipts being larger than that of any star that had preceded him, even in the days of the Academy of Music. The popular actor, Edwin Adams, succeeded Mr. Eddy, doing a large business. The great sensational play of "After Dark" was then brought out in magnificent style, and played by the stock company many consecutive nights to very remunerative houses. Following this were the engagements of the Watkyns, the Williams, the Florences, Chanfrau, Brougham, and other stars. The sensational and beautiful play of "Ixion" was then placed upon the stage in a very gorgeous style, and had a profitable run of several weeks. The "Black Crook" soon followed "Ixion," and so magnificently was it gotten up and admirably played, that it had (for Albany) the unprecedented run of thirty-five nights, and up to the time it was withdrawn the house was filled to its utmost capacity. This closed one of the most successful theatrical seasons known in Albany—the season being quite short, (about one hundred and thirty-seven nights,) and the grand total of receipts amounting to considerably over \$44,000.

During Mr. Barnes' management of the Trimble Opera House, besides producing a large number of gorgeous spectacular pieces, the most prominent being the "Field of the Cloth of Gold," all the prominent stars, Forrest included, appeared in rapid succession, besides all the grand Italian and English combination opera troupes extant.

Mr. Barnes evinced a remarkable activity and energy in erecting so elegant a place of amusement in the unprecedently short period of fifty-three days. The theatre is conceded to be the equal of any of its size in the Union, and Edwin Forrest declared, on his last appearance here, "that the Trimble Opera House was, in all its appointments and surroundings, one of the finest theatres that he

had yet appeared in, and that Albanians had just cause to be proud of such an institution." But it would seem that, with all his energy and activity as a practical business man, Mr. Barnes did not prove a success. Either from a lack of experience in the general conduct of a theatre, or a seemingly marked disinclination to avail himself of the ripe experience of successful managers, his inevitable failure was early predicted by those familiar with theatrical matters.

After he retired from the management, the lease was put up at auction, and purchased by Aaron Richardson, who immediately went to work, and at a very liberal outlay effected many important and desirable improvements. Many of Mr. Richardson's friends seemed to think that it was a useless expenditure of money to undertake to improve the interior of the edifice—that it would be like attempting to "gild refined gold;" but Mr. Richardson saw room for improvement, and at once acted upon the suggestion, and effected in a short space of time almost an entire transformation of the interior of the edifice. Among the improvements were the putting in of ten additional boxes, or "stalls," accommodating six persons each, fitted up with elegant carpeting, comfortable chairs—making quite a new feature, and adding greatly to the general appearance of the auditorium. In place of wooden settees in the parquette, nearly an entire new set of iron chairs were added, giving greater cheerfulness to that part of the house. The walls were elegantly frescoed and painted, the blending of the maroon, gold and drab producing a charming effect upon the whole. Another great desideratum was accomplished in the way of improvements, by placing heavy mattings through the vestibules, lobbies, passage-ways, and on the stairs leading to the dress circle, thus wholly deadening the noise heretofore produced by people moving about the house. And taking it all in all, it can be said without fear of successful con-

tradition, that the present Opera House is not surpassed by any similar establishment in this country, and Albanians have ample cause to be proud of the institution. Mr. Richardson is now running it with energy, tact and success.

## CHAPTER XI.

### DIVISION STREET ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

CONVERSION OF THE UNITARIAN CHURCH INTO A THEATRE—LIST OF LAWLOR'S OPENING COMPANY—E. L. DAVENPORT—TONEY DERNIER—SUCCESS OF WALTER KEEBLE'S MANAGEMENT OF THE CAPITOL THEATRE—HIS PERSONATION OF SHAKSPERIAN CHARACTERS, ETC.

Some time prior to any definite movement having been made to build the Trimble Opera House, and when there seemed little prospect of our city again being favored with a regular dramatic temple, Frank Lawlor, at the suggestion of his friends, leased the old Division Street Unitarian Church, which Mr. Oppenheim had just commenced to convert into a place of amusement. Mr. Lawlor took hold of the work with energy, and at a considerable outlay converted the old church edifice into a very neat and commodious theatre. It was opened on the evening of the 5th of October, 1869, under the imposing name of the Academy of Music, and with an efficient stock company, composed of Messrs. George C. Bonniface, George Ryer Charles Hilliard, William C. Crosbie, A. L. Cooke, A. J. Sawtelle, C. E. Edwin, J. W. Walsh and Frank Lawlor; Miss Augusta L. Dargon, Mrs. M. A. Farren, Miss Maggie Newton, Miss Alice Brooks, Miss Caroline Carman, Miss Florence Vincent, Miss Lana Hall and Miss Louisa Howard.

Mr. Lawlor's enterprise proved an eminent success. He was indefatigable in catering to the amusement of his

patrons, and exercised an excellent taste and judgment in selecting the most approved and popular dramas. He placed them upon the stage in an unexceptionable manner, and they were satisfactorily rendered by his efficient dramatic company. At various periods prominent stars appeared from time to time. E. L. Davenport, the accomplished gentleman and finished actor, was among them, and he attracted numerous and delighted auditories. Mr. Lawlor continued to run the Academy quite a length of time with fair success, but having another project in view, relinquished its management, and Toney Dernier assumed the management of it. Mr. Dernier expended a large amount in improving the interior, rendering it a neat, comfortable place of amusement, and for a time his success was quite flattering, but not sufficiently so to induce him to continue its management.

Mr. Walter Keeble, who was acting in the capacity of stage manager, succeeded Mr. Dernier as lessee and manager, and the People's Capitol Theatre, under his judicious and energetic management, has proved a success far surpassing his most sanguine expectations, and become established as among the permanent institutions of Albany. During Mr. Keeble's residence in Albany, and particularly during his managerial career, he has succeeded in securing a large share of public confidence, as well as enlisting hosts of warm-hearted, disinterested friends, who evince a determination to stand by him under all circumstances. Mr. K. has lately impersonated Shaksperian and other prominent *roles* in a style of excellence that has stamped him second to few dramatic artists on the American boards.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE ODEON THEATRE.

ANECDOTE OF THE ELDER BOOTH—HE FAILS TO MAKE HIS APPEARANCE AS ANNOUNCED—IS FOUND IN THE “HOLE IN THE WALL”—IS TAKEN TO THE HOWARD STREET JAIL AND LOCKED UP IN THE DEBTOR’S ROOM—HIS STRAGETIC OPERATION IN OBTAINING BRANDY—THE SHAKER PIPE—JAILOR ISAAC WINNE IN A QUANDARY—DESTRUCTION OF THE ODEON BY THE GREAT FIRE OF 1848.

In the year 1846 or '47, a building on the east side of South Market street (now Broadway,) between Hamilton street and the steamboat landing, was converted into a theatre, and opened under the management of John Cruta. It was fitted up in neat style, though it was of rather limited dimensions, and opened with a very fair dramatic company. Several fine scenic pieces were brought out in a manner that would have been creditable to a much more pretentious establishment, and several leading stars appeared upon its boards—among them the elder Lucius Junius Booth, who was engaged for six nights. The announcement of this engagement and of Richard III for the opening night, as a matter of course, filled the theatre to its utmost capacity, with an audience on the very tip-toe of expectation and interest to witness the great impersonation of Richard. At the time for the performance to commence, the “call boy” tapped upon Mr. Booth’s dressing room door, but could not obtain a response from within. After a diligent search through the theatre, and no traces of Booth being discovered, the manager announced the

fact to the audience and threw himself upon their kind indulgence, stating, that as Mr. Booth would not appear, he should be obliged to substitute another play. Many left the house, their money being returned.

The manager knowing Booth's infirmities, felt sure that he was on one of his terrible sprees, and several attaches of the theatre were dispatched in pursuit of the missing actor. After a long and diligent search, Booth was found in a groggery called "Hole in the Wall," in Trotter's Alley, laid out on a bench stupidly drunk. In order to guard against the repetition of the event and to make sure of his appearance on the following evening, Booth was taken in a carriage to the old Howard street jail, now the City Hospital, and locked up in what was called the "debtor's room." Booth did not get over the effects of his orgies till the next morning, when he became quite sober, but declared himself to be "infernal dry," and that his throat was filled with cobwebs. Brandy was the panacea, and brandy he must have; but how to obtain it was the next question. This point, however, was soon disposed of. It seems "Jim Boardman," who occasionally did chores around the jail and who knew Booth well, happened to look through the prison door. Discovering the prisoner to be Booth, he bid him good morning. The salutation met a ready response coupled with a request for some brandy. Jim replied 'twas against the rules of the prison, and, besides, how could he get the liquor through the narrow grating even if he brought it? Booth handed out a quarter, and instructed him to get half pint of brandy in a cup and a long Shaker pipe, and bring both secreted under his coat. Jim did as directed, handed the pipe to Booth, and placed the cup of liquor near the grating. Booth then inserted the bowl of the pipe in the cup, the stem in his mouth, and instantly drained the cup to the very last drop! When the jailor, Isaac Winne, generally known as "Major Winne," entered the prisoner's room a

little later, judge of his surprise at finding his prisoner certainly as tipsey, if not more so, than when he left him the night before. How he became in this plight, or how he could have obtained the liquor to produce it, remained a mystery to Winne until a long time after Booth left the city, when Jim acknowledged his agency in the matter. Whether the manager succeeded in keeping Booth sufficiently sober to fulfil the engagement, we do not remember, but are inclined to think that he did appear one or two nights after this unexpected incident.

The "Odeon" was destroyed in the memorable and disastrous fire in the summer of 1848, when nearly all the dwellings, stores and hotels, from Hudson to Lydius street, were totally consumed.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE GAYETY THEATRE.

CASTLE, THE POPULAR OPERA SINGER, MAKES HIS FIRST APPEARANCE IN ALBANY IN A PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY AT THE GAYETY— PETER AND CAROLINE RICHINGS APPEAR IN OPERA AND COMEDY— ALSO APPEAR J. E. MURDOCK, SOTHERN, CHANFRAU, ADA ISAACS MENKIN, HENRIETTA IRVING, J. WILKES BOOTH, WHO WAS SERIOUSLY WOUNDED BY A DAGGER ENTERING HIS SIDE.

In the year 1859, when Albany could not boast of any place of regular dramatic entertainment, and theatricals were at a rather low ebb, A. J. Leavett and David Allen, aided by the contributions of a few friends of the drama, inaugurated a place for dramatic representations, fitting up the large building in Green street, a few doors south of Beaver, for many years occupied by Mr. John Van Gaasbeck as a carpet store, and Mr. Blair as an upholstering establishment. It was converted into a theatre under the immediate direction of Dr. J. Monroe, a theatrical architect, and fitted up in a really elegant and commodious style. It had two tiers of boxes, several private boxes and a parquette. It opened under the title of the "Gayety Theatre," with a small dramatic company, under very favorable auspices. The liberal patronage of the public soon enabled the management to increase their company, until it became quite formidable in numbers as well as in character and histrionic talent. Mr. Spackman, a talented and versatile actor, who afterwards became stage manager of J. M. Trimble's Academy of Music, J. W. Albaugh,

Charley Kane, David Allen and Mrs. Allen, constituted a portion of the company. Dramas of the first order, and even scenic pieces of quite an imposing character, were produced and represented in a style of excellence that would reflect no little credit to establishments of larger dimensions and assuming higher claims to public recognition.

Many of the eminent stars in the dramatic firmament appeared in regular and rapid succession at the Gayety. Mr. Castle, the celebrated tenor vocalist, made his first appearance in Albany in a professional capacity at this theatre, in conjunction with a Miss Miller, a beautiful blonde and a fine vocalist; Peter Richings, and his accomplished daughter Caroline, completed two extended and highly remunerative engagements here, and rendered English opera with full and artistic companies, and with great success.

Eddy played the first star engagement, Chanfrau, J. E. Murdock, Sothern, Julia Dean Hayne, Ada Isaacs Menkin, Mrs. Waller, Miss Kimberly, Roberts, and J. Wilkes Booth, playing with Miss Henrietta Irving.

The grand spectacular drama of "The Last Days of Pompeii," was brought out at this little theatre on a scale of magnificance, considering the limited capacity of the stage, that excited the astonishment of the entire play-going public.

It was at the Gayety that J. Wilkes Booth, while enacting the role of Pascara, in the *Apostate*, met with quite a serious accident. In making "the fall" at the close of the play, his dagger accidentally penetrated the right arm pit, inflicting a severe wound some three inches in depth, from which the blood flowed profusely upon the stage. Dr. Crouse happened to be present in a private box, was called and dressed the wound, and Booth was moved to his hotel. The wound did not prove sufficiently serious to prevent his appearance the second night after and he

played the role of Richard III, doing the combat scene with his left arm, with all his usual tact and force.

[Had the dagger then but entered the *heart* of Booth, what a terrible calamity might have been averted, and the martyred Lincoln might still have been living. As it is, the just doom of J. Wilkes Booth can be related without a sigh!]

The Gayety, after having been run by various managers with good, and again with indifferent success, for quite a length of time, finally succumbed to the fate of many of its predecessors in Albany—went by the board. It was closed in 1861, and the building has since been re-converted into stores.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### EDWIN FORREST, THE EMINENT TRAGEDIAN.

SKETCH OF HIS PRIVATE AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE, FROM HIS FIRST APPEARANCE ON THE MIMIC STAGE, TO HIS FINAL EXIT FROM THE SHIFTING SCENES OF LIFE—HIS EARLY STRUGGLES—HIS INDOMITABLE ENERGY, PERSEVERANCE AND COURAGE, ETC., ETC.

The death of this justly celebrated and unapproachable actor, has elicited so many exhaustive sketches of his private and professional life, that but a narrow margin remains for further comment or enlargement upon it, and renders it the work of supererogation to more than allude to a few prominent features of his private and professional character.

Mr. Forrest was, for many years, acknowledged by eminent and experienced theatrical critics, as well as the play-going public, to be pre-eminently the finest actor that this or any other country ever produced. In a wide range of characters he stood without a rival; nor can one person of note be called to mind who has been so uniformly and eminently successful. It mattered not in what part of the country he appeared, east, west, north or south, he seldom failed to be greeted by intelligent, fashionable, and overflowing houses. Now and then he was more fiercely and often unjustly assailed than severely criticised, especially by individual presses; but, after all, the popular verdict pronounced him "the noblest Roman of them all."

Edwin Forrest was born in the city of Philadelphia,

March 9, 1806, and consequently was in the sixty-seventh year of his age at the time of his death, December 14, 1872. His father was a Scotchman and his mother an American, and both were strong adherents to the Scotch Presbyterian church. Forrest's father was, for many years, an attache of the old United States Bank, in Philadelphia, and died in its service. Edwin was designed by his parents for the pulpit, a vocation for which he seemed fitted from the earnest attention that, when a mere boy, he paid to the sermons he heard, and the happy manner in which he recited from memory the long passages. But the death of his father, leaving a large family in embarrassing circumstances, and the consequent necessity of immediate exertion, interrupted the education of young Forrest, and at ten years of age he was taken from school and compelled to enter as clerk in a large German importing house, but he remained but a short time in their employ, as he spent more of his time in "spouting theatricals," than in caring for the interests of his employers.

The Forrest family consisted of six children—Lyman, Henrietta, William, Edwin, Edgar, and Caroline. Edgar, the youngest son, was supposed to have been assassinated in South America many years ago. Lyman was a tanner and currier, and it was in his shop that Edwin gave, for the amusement of the workmen, his first dramatic recitation, standing on the stone table used for dressing leather. Edwin is next found on the boards of the old South Street Theatre, Philadelphia. He soon joined a Thespian Society, and at once became the "star" of the company. In 1817, he appeared at the Apollo Theatre as Lady Anna, in the tragedy of Douglas, his costume consisting of a thick pair of shoes, coarse woolen stockings, and a short white dress that reached to his knees only, and a red scarf wound around his head so as to form a turban. He next appeared at the Tivoli Gardens, in the summer of 1820, as Young Norval. His first appearance on a regu-

lar stage was as Young Norval at the old Walnut Street Theatre, then under the management of those eminent actors, Wood and Warren, (Warren being the father of William Warren, the celebrated comedian who was at one time attached to the Albany Museum dramatic company.) In "Wood's Recollections of the Stage," is related the subjoined account of Forrest's appearance on the Walnut Street Theatre boards:

"A very interesting event in theatricals took place last evening on the first appearance of a young man, Master Edwin Forrest. This youth, at sixteen years of age, was introduced to the management by Col. John Swift, as a person who was determined to be an actor, and had succeeded in obtaining 'the slow leave' of his family, who were, however, naturally enough opposed to their son adopting that profession. We have been so unfortunate in the numerous 'first appearances' of late, that the young aspirant could hope for little encouragement of his wishes—the drooping state of theatricals furnishing another and stronger reason for such course. The usual arguments were strongly urged against embracing a profession, at this time so especially unpromising. The toils, dangers, and sufferings of a young actor, were represented with honest earnestness, but, as was soon discovered, all in vain. Forrest was at this time a well grown young man, with a noble figure, unusually developed for his age, his features handsome, powerfully expressive, and of a determination of purpose, which at once overruled all further objections on our part, and we finally very reluctantly yielded to his desires. He accordingly appeared at the Walnut Street Theatre, November 27, 1820, as Young Norval, in the tragedy of Douglas, with the following cast: Lord Randolph, Mr. Wheatley; Glenalvin, Mr. Wood; Old Norval, Mr. Warren; Lady Randolph, Mrs. Williams; Anna, Mrs. Jefferson—which was a powerful cast, rendering Master Forrest admirable and really efficient support,

which gave him much more confidence, than had the cast of the play been made up of less acceptable *material*. So much disappointment had been experienced by the public at many late 'first' appearances, already alluded to, that no great excitement was perceptible on the above occasion. The novice, however, acquitted himself so well as to create a desire for a repetition of the play, which soon followed, and with increased approbation. Soon after Master Forrest added to his reputation by a very spirited effort in Frederick, in 'Lover's Vows.' These performances were considered by all the principal actors as far beyond anything they had ever witnessed from a novice. Still no great enthusiasm was evident in the public, and the receipts at his benefit as Octavio in the 'Hunters of the Alps,' were even less than the former nights. They had been—Douglas, \$319; Frederick, \$255; Octavio, benefit, \$215.

"This cool reception in his native city, that might have discouraged a less ardent and confident mind, had no such effect on Forrest, who boldly reiterated his intention to adopt a theatrical life. The theatre at this time presented no vacancy worthy young Forrest's acceptance. Two circumstances we must not forget to mention, largely contributed to the failure of his benefit—an uncommonly heavy snow storm, and the announcement of the eminent actor, Edmond Kean, for the following week—two greater drawbacks could not easily have happened. After a consultation with Master Forrest's friends, it was resolved that he should abandon the young Rocius' plan and take a range through the western theatres, for the purpose of passing a regular apprenticeship to his profession, and young Forrest left us with flattering auguries for the future."

Forrest did "go west," (as the departed philosopher, Horace Greeley, advised so many young men to do,) making his first appearance at Cincinnati, Ohio, in the autumn of

1822, as Malfort, in the "Soldier's Daughter," which was followed by Richard III, and other Shaksperian and Roman *roles*. An editor of a Cincinnati paper was called a lunatic for prophesying Forrest's future greatness. Forrest played Othello at Louisville, besides many other characters, for the first time, and with little knowledge of the text. It is also understood that at times his taste was for comedy, and he enacted various comedy characters with great *eclat*. Forrest, it would seem, did not appear again in his native city of Philadelphia until four years after he made his first *debut* at the Walnut Street Theatre, as Young Norval. On his return to Philadelphia, he was announced, says Wood, "from the Albany theatre, it being his first appearance in four years in Philadelphia, and to play Jaffier in 'Venice Preserved,' in conjunction with Mr. C. Foster, as Piere." He subsequently appeared as Rolla, and other prominent characters, much to the surprise of the public. Col. Forney, one of his early friends, writes of Forrest: "He was very fond of children and flowers, and had stores of poetry to make them happy; and his description of the beautiful painting of the girls preparing to take a bath, in his fine collection, was itself a picture."

Among many memoranda in my possession none are more useful than the "Forrest Souvenir" of Mr. Wm. D. Gemmill, of this city, which he has kindly allowed me to use. It is a collection of the portraits and photographs of Forrest from his youth, the bills of the plays in which he has acted for fifty years, criticisms of all kinds, anecdotes, and a series of remarkable reminiscences of the great actor by the veteran Charles Durang, who died in Philadelphia, February 15, 1870, in his 76th year. He has annotated many pages, in his own handwriting, with incidents of Forrest. Here we have a playbill of the Walnut Street Theatre for February 2, 1822, announcing the celebrated tragedy of "Mahomet, the Impostor," with Master



Forrest as *Zaphana*. He was then just sixteen. He had first appeared at the same theatre in his fifteenth year, as *Young Norval*, to a house worth \$319. In Mr. Gemmill's collection we have the original cast of "*Metanora*" in New York, in 1830, and the playbill of the same production at Boston in the same year. This work was written for Forrest by the brilliant J. A. Stone. Forrest was then only twenty-four. In 1817, Mr. Durang tells us that as a mere boy, for lack of female performers, young Forrest played girls' characters frequently. He was then eleven years old. When at Louisville, in 1823, Forrest and James M. Scott, known as "Long Tom Coffin," played a pair of dandies with great *eclat*; and in a piece called the "Tailor in Distress," Forrest took a negro part "with so much African nature that he seemed the very incarnation of the race." The troupe with which Forrest was connected at this time had many a severe struggle, one of their houses only netting \$7. In May of 1826, he came back from his wanderings, and flashed forth a star at the Chestnut Street Theatre, as *Jaffier*, in "Venice Preserved," for the benefit of Charles S. Porter, another honored Philadelphia name."

## CHAPTER XV.

EDWIN FORREST.

HIS FIRST APPEARANCE ON THE BOARDS OF THE OLD PEARL STREET THEATRE—HE SUPPORTS THE GREAT ENGLISH ACTORS, CONWAY AND KEAN—HIS GREAT SUCCESS IN THE ROLE OF MARK ANTONY—HIS UNPRECEDENTEDLY RAPID MARCH TO THE TOPMOST ROUND ON THE LADDER TO DRAMATIC FAME—INTERESTING SKETCH OF HIS INHALING LAUGHING GAS WHEN A BOY—HIS SUDDEN AND FINAL EXIT FROM LIFE'S BUSY STAGE!

We have followed Edwin Forrest, in his earlier dramatic career, from the interesting event of his first appearance, when sixteen years of age, on the boards of an obscure thespian establishment in Philadelphia, to his departure from his native city as a poor, friendless young man, to the then new and sparsely settled Western States, to undertake a wider range of characters, and to serve a regular apprenticeship in the theatrical profession.

The many vicissitudes incident to his life while a strolling actor—how he was obliged to lash his scanty wardrobe upon his back and swim a river for lack of the trifling fee to pay the ferriage; how compelled to feed upon the most common fare to keep body and soul together; and of the many other privations which the young Roscins endured, we will not attempt to sketch, as a full account of them is to be found in our "General Theatrical Reminiscences."

### AMUSING ANECDOTE OF FORREST.

Before closing, however, we would add the following incident, giving further evidence of Forrest's privations

during his wanderings in the west. He had taken lodgings at a low-priced lodging house, in a room containing two beds; the second bed being occupied by a person who was an entire stranger to him. At rather a late hour in the morning, Forrest, being tired of longer remaining in bed, cried out to his room-mate, "I say, stranger, don't you think it's time to get up—it's growing late?" "That's just what I was thinking about, and I was anxiously waiting for you to get up, as I have very strong reasons for not getting up first," replied the stranger. "Why, what *are* your reasons?" inquired Forrest. "To tell you the sober truth then, friend," was the reply, "I haven't got a shirt to my back, and was a little ashamed to expose myself!" "Well, stranger, I must confess it's rather a queer coincidence," was Forrest's rejoinder, "I happen to be in a similar fix, as I haven't a shirt to my back either, and also felt ashamed to get up before you!" The twain enjoyed a hearty laugh over their mutual dilemma, jumped up and donned their scanty wardrobes, shook hands and parted the best of friends, despite having met under those embarrassing and ludicrous circumstances.

In a previous chapter slight allusion has been made to Mr. Forrest's first appearance at the Pearl Street Theatre as a member of the stock company. A concise review of his eventful dramatic career, from the time he made his *debut* as a stock actor in Gilfert's company, to his final exit from life's busy stage, will not seem inappropriate here. Mr. Forrest made his *debut* at the old Pearl Street Theatre in the autumn of 1825, as Jaffier, in Venice Preserved, having volunteered his services for the benefit of a member of the stock company. Soon after he joined the company as a regular stock actor, playing, on September 30, 1825, Macduff to Conway's Macbeth. He also played Michael, to Conway's "Tell," in Sheridan Knowles' drama of "William Tell" that had just been introduced

in this country. It was in the simple character of "Michael," the Swiss peasant, who so boldly confronts the minions of Gessler and indignantly refuses to bow to the tyrant's cap, that Forrest unconsciously startled his audience with the electric spark of his budding genius.

Forrest seconded Conway through his entire engagement, and with marked ability. We well remember the night he enacted Mark Antony to Conway's Brutus, in the tragedy of Julius Cæsar. The house was filled to its utmost limit with the wealth and aristocracy of Albany—the *fashion* patronizing theatricals, particularly the legitimate drama, well in those days. As few people had yet seen Forrest in his best roles, they had no true idea of his dramatic power, and were of course greatly surprised, nay, electrified, with his speech over the dead body of Cæsar; not having supposed the "vaulting young strippling" possessed so large amount of true dramatic talent. It was very apparent Conway was greatly chagrined, if not positively *jealous*, at the course things were taking. After Conway concluded his engagement at the South Pearl Street Theatre, Forrest assumed Conway's *roles*, rendering them, in many instances, with full as great *eclat* as had Conway, if one can judge from the warm encomiums of the press and the entire approval of the public.

Forrest continued playing various tragic and melodramatic characters in an acceptable manner, adding fresh laurels to his dramatic wreath. During Edmund Kean's engagement at this theatre, he supported that distinguished tragedian through all his difficult roles so excellently as to elicit the most unequivocal marks of approbation, and Kean warmly predicted the great dramatic future of the aspiring young actor. A warm friendship between Kean and Forrest existed from that time until Kean was called to his great final reckoning!

And now, as to Forrest's first successful step in his onward march to histrionic fame; and how, and when, he

became a star. On the night of the representation of Julius Cæsar alluded to, Major M. M. Noah, editor of a leading New York journal, and conceded the finest theatrical critic of the day in America, was one of the audience. Mr. Noah was stopping at Congress Hall, near the Capitol, kept by Robert G. Cruttenden, ('old Crut.')

and Gilfert was also boarding at Congress Hall. They met, and Mr. Noah describes the circumstances as follows:

"Went to the theatre to see Julius Cæsar. Forrest, a young man of nineteen or twenty, thick set, athletic, stiff, and with coarse but powerful voice, played Mark Antony. Returning to Congress Hall, I found Gilfert rapidly eating his lunch of corned beef and horse-radish. We commenced the following dialogue: 'Gilfert, who is that young man who played Mark Antony?' 'His name is Forrest.' 'Where from?' 'Philadelphia, I believe.' 'What's his character?' 'Good.' 'Is he sober—steady?' 'Yes.' 'Keeps good company?' 'Why, I believe so.' 'Always perfect in his parts?' 'Always perfect.' 'How long have you engaged him?' 'For a year or two.' 'What salary?' 'Very small.'

"We paused while Gilfert got through his supper, and after a glass of brandy and water, he looked at us across the table, over his specs, in his peculiar way, and said:

"'Tell me, Noah, why you asked me those questions about that young man?'

"'Because, said I, he has all the material of a great actor, and if his habits are good, we would advise you to make a long engagement with him, and by all means increase his salary.'

"Gilfert lighted his candle and went to bed. He subsequently told us that he had extended the time of his engagement with him, and when the Bowery Theatre first opened we all agreed to make Forrest a star, and his reception the first night set him afloat in the world on the voyage which has now brought him successfully into port."

Gilfert *did* "strike a bargain" with Forrest, and all who are at all posted in theatricals, or know anything of Edwin Forrest, know whether the predictions of Major Noah were true or false. Forrest, after going to the Bowery, at once "turned over a new leaf" in his habits, applied himself closely to study, but continued to play nightly at that theatre to crowded and enthusiastic audiences—in fact, carrying, as it were, the whole town "by storm."

We well remember the circumstances of many of Forrest's old Albany friends and associates paying him a friendly visit, to tender him their hearty congratulations on his success. He informed them that he "owed them much for what they had done in his behalf, while struggling along up the dramatic ladder; that he was, and ever should be extremely gratified to meet them, but that he had now 'turned over a new leaf,' and that hereafter *his* line of conduct *must* be directed in another channel—no more of the old-time convivialities—no more dissipation—no more frittering away of precious time. I now have *absolute hard work to do*, both mentally and physically." His friends, and they might be numbered as "legion," most heartily wishing him success, listened to the declarations regarding his future course with delight, and finally bid him an affectionate adieu, with "God bless you, Ned."

In 1826, fortune began to favor him, and in July of that year he made his first appearance as a "star," at the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, in the character of *Othello*. From that onward his career was a success. In 1836 he went to England, and in October of that year first appeared on the London stage at Drury Lane, as *Spartacus*. During this visit he was married to Miss Catharine Sinclair, who, divorced from him at her own request many years ago, has since resided in New York and on Staten Island. On the return of Mr. Forrest from

ELPHINSTON in 1837, he entered into an engagement at the Park Theatre, where he received an enthusiastic welcome—the receipts for the first three nights of his performances amounting to \$4,200. In 1845, after continued and successful engagements in this country, he visited England again, and appeared at the Princess' Theatre in London as *Macbeth*. Having been hissed on his re-appearance, he ascribed that indignity to the intrigues of Mr. Macready, and the ill-feeling thus engendered between the eminent tragedians continued without abatement until it culminated in the outrageous attack upon Mr. Macready on his appearance in New York, at the Astor Place Opera House, in May, 1849. Forrest's first appearance in New York after his divorce took place at the Broadway Theatre, in February, 1852, when he played *Damon*—the engagement lasting for sixty-one nights. He afterward made a professional tour of the United States, playing a round of Shaksperian characters. In 1855, announcing his intention to retire into private life, he purchased an elegant mansion on Broad street, Philadelphia, and did not again appear on the stage till the season of 1860–61, when tempting offers were made to him by Mr. James M. Nixon, which were accepted. He continued to appear at intervals until 1866, when he made his first appearance in San Francisco in the character of *Richelieu*. During the past five or six years he has taken frequent "farewells" of the stage, only to be re-enticed by profitable opportunities, and at the solicitation of his friends.

Mr. Forrest's last appearance in public was as a reader, at Steinway Hall, a short time previous to his death; and even at those readings he seemed to be in comparatively full vigor, and to retain all his attractiveness of elocution and action.

It is a somewhat singular coincidence that Mr. Forrest commenced his *real* dramatic career at the Albany Pearl Street Theatre, and made his *last* appearance in a *regular*

theatre on the precise spot (though on different boards, the Trimble Opera House,) upon which he had appeared forty-seven years before.

#### FORREST INHALING LAUGHING GAS.

Frequent allusions have been made to the circumstance of Forrest inhaling exhilarating, or laughing gas. On his return from England after his unprecedentedly successful engagement in London, Forrest's friends, as well as the friends of the drama, in Philadelphia, desirous of evincing their admiration of his talents and respect for his character, invited him to a public entertainment. Over 200 distinguished citizens being present, among the number Nicholas Biddle—"old Nick," as he was familiarly called—of the old U. S. Bank memory—assisted by the venerable Mayor Swift, and the large-hearted Col. James Page—two gentlemen whom our Burgess' Corps, and Firemen, will ever have occasion to remember with the liveliest emotions of gratitude and pleasure. Forrest was, of course, called upon for a speech; and he responded in a truly eloquent and feeling manner, giving an account of his reception and success in London. Among other matters, he gave the following particulars of his inhaling exhilarating or laughing gas, when a poor and unfriended boy:

"A crowd was gathered one evening in the Tivoli Garden to behold the curious varieties of delirium men exhibit on inhaling nitrous oxide gas. Several years had then elapsed since the great chemist of England had made known the singular properties of exhilarating gas. Strange antics performed under its influence by distinguished philosophers, poets and statesmen of Europe, were then on record, but it was yet a novelty with us, and so the public experiments drew throngs to witness them. Among those to whom the intoxicating agent was administered on the occasion referred to, there chanced to be a little unfriended



boy, who, in the instant ecstasy which the subtle fluid inspired, threw himself into a tragic attitude and commenced declaiming the following passage in one of Shakspeare's plays: 'What, ho! young Richmond, ho! 'tis Richard calls—I hate thee Harry, for thy blood of Lancaster!' But the effect of the ærial draught was brief as it was sudden and irresistible. The boy, awakening as from a dream, was surprised to find himself the centre of attraction—'the observed of all observers.' Abashed at his novel and awkward position, he shrank timidly from the glances of the spectators, and would have stolen in haste away, but a stranger stepped from the crowd and taking him kindly by the hand, pronounced words which thrilled through him with a spell-like influence.

“‘This lad,’ said the stranger, ‘has the germ of a tragic greatness in him. The exhilarating gas has given him no new power. It has only revealed one which lay dormant in him before. It needs only to be cherished and cultivated to bring forth goodly fruit.’ Gentlemen, the present Chief Magistrate of your city was that benevolent stranger, and your guest was that unfriended boy. If the prophesy has, in any degree, been fulfilled—if, since that time, I have attained some eminence in my profession, let my full heart acknowledge that the inspiring prediction, followed, as it was, with repeated and considerate kindness, exercised the happiest influence on the result. It was a word in season. It was a kindly greeting, calculated to arouse all the energies of my nature, and direct them to a particular aim. Prophesy oftentimes shapes the event which it seems only to foretell. One shout of friendly confidence at the beginning of the race may nerve the runner with strength to win the goal! Happy is he, who, on accomplishing this round, is received with generous welcome by the same friends that cheered him at the start. Among such friends I stand. You listened with inspiring praise and augury to the immature efforts of the boy, and you

now honor him with this proud token of your approbation—the achievements of the man. You nurtured me in the bud, early blossom of my life, and labored to make me full of growing. If you have succeeded the honor is your own.”

## CHAPTER XVI.

EDWIN FORREST.

HIS GENEROUS DONATION TO THE YOUNG MEN'S ASSOCIATION—HIS LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION—THE PRESIDENT'S REPLY—WHAT WAS SAID OF MR. FORREST BY THE WRITER AT THE TIME THE DONATION WAS MADE—TRIBUTE TO MR. FORREST BY HIS EARLY FRIEND, JAMES HUNTER, ESQ.—FORREST ATTENDS HUNTER'S FUNERAL AS CHIEF MOURNER, ETC.

Many years ago the writer prepared the following brief sketch of Edwin Forrest, in connection with the Young Men's Association of the city of Albany. It was written about seven years after Mr. Forrest's appearance as a stock actor in the Gilfert Dramatic Company, attached to the old Pearl Street Theatre, and during the herculean struggles through which his indomitable energy and perseverance enabled him in a so incredibly brief period to attain to the height of dramatic fame he for so many years proudly and incontestably occupied. In the earlier period of his histrionic career, and even for some time after he had become famous as a leading actor, Mr. Forrest's financial position scarcely warranted or justified him in making large beneficence. The donation he so generously and spontaneously made to the Young Men's Association, at a time, too, when that association was in its infancy, and struggling for an honorable position among the literary institutions of our country, was, therefore, hardly given from an overflowing exchequer.

Innumerable instances could be adduced to prove the noble and generous impulses of Mr. Forrest's great heart to the day of his death. His last and crowning act of munificence was the appropriation of a large amount of money for the establishment of the "Edwin Forrest Home," for members of the dramatic profession, that he so dearly loved and honored, when age and disease shall have rendered them incapable of longer pursuing it. Who, even among those who have been classed as his uncompromising enemies, would be so uncharitable as to assert that Edwin Forrest was a selfish, mercenary man. Mr. Forrest was but human, and his many generous acts, his upright conduct through life, his fair dealings with his fellow-men, will avail his plea "when mercy tempers justice."

It is thirty years since we wrote: "We invariably speak of this distinguished individual with the most exalted emotions of pleasure. His brief dramatic history of only a few years is one altogether unprecedented in the histrionic annals of this country—perhaps the world. His short and brilliant career has already thrown around him the gratitude and affection of every American heart. In this extremely brief period of time he arose from obscurity to an enviable fame. He has been successful beyond all expectation in elevating and planting on a firm basis the tragic muse of our country; he has taught us that our wandering to foreign climes for histrionic sources was entirely unnecessary—that at HOME, in our very midst, the SUBJECT, the AUTHOR, and the ACTOR were at hand; for no one exercising even a spark of dramatic taste, but must acknowledge his *Metamora* an excellent specimen of the American Aborigines. And what characters so interesting to us as those who inherited from the God of Nature, the soil upon which our footsteps are now implanted?"

"But it is not of Mr. Forrest as a tragedian or a professional man that we alone would speak. It is also for the

purpose of showing his heart, in all its varied aspects, to the world. His generous, liberal hand is always stretched forth in administering its noble charities. In our city, where the buds of his towering genius were first developed, cherished and rewarded; here, where the little rivulet that has now grown to his present exalted ability, first gushed from the fountain of his hidden faculties; here, we say, we have abundant evidence of his nobleness of soul.

“As an American citizen, he is an honorable example; for he has contributed more to encourage American talent than any other of our native citizens, with their millions at command. It is the utmost pride of his heart that literature, the essential attribute of human happiness, should be encouraged. His liberal donation to the Young Men’s Association is an act of generosity, which every member—yes, every Albanian—should bear in lasting and perpetual remembrance. We have great pleasure in being able to lay before our readers Mr. Forrest’s admirable letter enclosing his handsome donation to the Young Men’s Association, a copy having been kindly furnished us by the Executive Committee of the Association:

#### MR. FORREST’S LETTER TO THE YOUNG MENS’ ASSOCIATION.

“SIR—The laudable and successful zeal you have recently evinced in the purpose of forming an association for mutual improvement of young men of Albany, without regard to individual condition, is alike creditable to the heads that projected, as to the hearts that resolved it. In a country like ours, where all men are ‘free and equal;’ no aristocracy should be tolerated, save only the aristocracy of SUPERIOR MIND, before which none need be ashamed to bow. Young men of all occupations will now have a place, stored with useful knowledge, where, at their leisure, they may assemble for mutual instruction, and the free interchange of sentiment. A taste for American letters

should be carefully and sedulously disseminated among them, and the false and parasitical opinion cannot too soon explode, which teaches '*nothing can be so good as that which emanates from abroad.*' Our literature should be independent; and with a hearty wish that the iron fetters of prejudice which surround it may soon be broken, I herein enclose the sum of one hundred dollars, to be appropriated *solely* to the purchase of books PURELY AMERICAN, and to be placed in the library for the use of the young men of Albany.

“‘Yours, with much respect,

“‘EDWIN FORREST.

“‘HENRY HART, Esq., *Albany*, 8th January, 1834.’”

REPLY TO MR. FORREST'S LETTER.

“‘EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ROOMS, {  
“‘ALBANY, Jan. 9, 1834. }

“‘EDWIN FORREST, ESQ.:—

“‘*Dear Sir*—Your communication of the 8th inst. has been placed before the Executive Committee of the Young Men's Association, and they, on behalf of the Association, have instructed me to tender you their sincere thanks for your liberal and generous donation; the committee take a pride and a pleasure in responding to sentiments from which they cannot withhold their unqualified concurrence. In the unrestricted admission of all classes and orders to the high privileges of the Association, they did anticipate, as a resulting consequence, the formation of the aristocracy of which you speak, 'before which none need be ashamed to bow.' While, therefore, enacting those general principles, they exclude nothing good. Whether it emanates from home or abroad, they will cheerfully employ the means you have so generously afforded in possessing themselves of the works of those authors who have mainly contributed to extend the American name and influence through the entire empire of reason.

“The committee propose, sir, to expend your donation in the purchase of books containing our political history, which, unlike that of most other nations, is made up of the opinions and acts of a people, and not of a court. Our national existence was the commencement of a new era in the political history of our world. In the commencement and continuance of that existence three things are to be regarded—the reason, the act, and the consequence. The first is found in the recorded wisdom of Washington, Jefferson, Adams, Madison, Hamilton, Jay, Franklin, and a host of other worthies who shed the brilliant light of the most gifted order of intellect around the incipient struggles of an infant nation. The second in the firm resolves of our first councils, and the eloquent voice of our early battle-fields! The third, in the many interesting events of our present prosperity.

“In the first, we meet with the most splendid triumph, not of American, but of *human reason*. In the second, with the first instance on the records of our race in which the propensities of our nature have accomplished their ends in complete subserviency to the high sentiments and intellectual powers. In the third, we recognize the high harmony of things, as evidenced in the interesting general fact, that the consequences have been, and are now actually being, precisely such as are a priori reason would have deduced from such acts, grounded upon such reasons. These constitute an entire whole, and the books from which that whole is derivable must necessarily be ‘*books purely American.*’ We shall preserve and regard them as the monuments of your munificence. Accept for yourself our best assurances, and believe us, with sentiments of esteem, respectfully yours, the Executive Committee on behalf of the Association, by

“AMOS DEAN, *President.*”

## A TRIBUTE TO FORREST FROM JAMES HUNTER, ESQ.

At Mr. Forrest's farewell benefit at the old Pearl Street Theatre, previous to his first visit to Europe, the late James Hunter, Esq., editor of the old *Daily Advertiser*, and afterward of the *Albany Daily News*, an experienced theatrical critic, and an early friend of Mr. Forrest, paid him the following tribute. Mr. Hunter had been the tutor, counselor, and one who probably exercised greater influence over the young tragedian's early dramatic course, and incipient steps and dramatic progress, than any other man in this country. Mr. Hunter was an excellent Shaksperian scholar, and strongly advised Mr. Forrest to perfect himself in Shaksperian plays. Forrest did not forget the many kindnesses of Mr. Hunter, and on receiving, while playing an engagement in a far distant part of the country, the sad tidings of his death, hastened with all possible speed to be present and pay the last tribute of respect to his old friend and benefactor, following his remains to their last resting place. The writer well remembers the circumstance of Forrest walking *alone*, with downcast mein, following immediately in rear of the hearse, as chief mourner.

Mr. Hunter wrote: "This young man, who has given such lustre to the histrionic character of America, and who has shown that this side of the Atlantic can produce talent at least equal to the trans-atlantic shores, takes his farewell benefit to-night. He plays in a piece written by an American—John Augustus Stone.

"Albany was the first place which discovered and encouraged Mr. Forrest's genius. Now, acknowledging their kindness by paying honor to them as citizens, and feeling gratitude towards them as his early and continued patrons, he makes his farewell thanks and his last bow previous to his sojourn in foreign lands. That the Alba-



nians will in a mass, and with the utmost warmth, greet him to-night, there is no doubt.

“Edwin Forrest, independent of his universally admitted abilities as an actor, is a man of the most amiable and virtuous character. He is, to speak all of him briefly, A GOOD MAN. We know him well; we esteem him; we admire him; we love him; and we never knew of an acquaintance of his who did not.

“Pleasant breezes while going, and fast winds while returning, be your guerdon, and GOD be your guardian, OUR FRIEND!”

## CHAPTER XVII.

### WHY MR. FORREST REMAINED SO LONG ON THE STAGE.

Having been for many years intimately acquainted with Mr. Forrest, opportunities were afforded us of becoming familiar with many features of his private life. To us he evinced but little reserve in speaking of his private relations. Our last interview was had at the Metropolitan Hotel in New York. Among the various topics dwelt upon was the cause of his remaining so long on the stage, and which had been for many years a mooted subject. We said, in the course of our conversation, "Mr. Forrest, don't you think you ought to have retired from the stage when your 'brow was bound with fresh and victorious wreaths,' and before the 'sere and yellow leaf' began to tell upon you?" His prompt reply was, "Yes, I confess such would have been my true course, and I had fully determined to do so, in fact, *did* retire for a few years with a firm resolve never again to 'buckle on the armor theatrical;' but I found it impossible to leave the exciting, *fascinating* scenes in which, for nearly fifty years, I had been in the continuous habit of participating. *Money*, you must be aware, was not my object, having all that any reasonable man required. It was excitement I needed to fill the vacuum in my life, occasioned by domestic troubles and other 'ills that flesh is heir to,' that were a constant source of annoyance to me; so you will at once see why I have remained

so long on the stage when I should have been enjoying the fruits of so many long years of excitement and toil, in the peaceful walks of private life."

Thus ends our imperfect sketch or review of the private and public life of the great departed actor, Edwin Forrest, "whose like we shall ne'er look upon again." If, as many may think, our picture is overdrawn or too highly colored, be it attributable to a warmth of friendship which has existed between us for so many years, as well as the high respect we have ever entertained for him as a man and as an actor. And now comes the last sad scene in his long and remarkable career. Edwin Forrest, who has so often played the *mimic* scene of death with such truthfulness, to admiring throngs, has at last met the grim tyrant face to face, and to the inexorable mandate he was compelled to succumb! "After life's fitful fever," the great actor's immortal spirit has winged its way to that "undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns." Like the great Napoleon,

"He's fought his last battle,  
Played his last *role*,  
No loud plaudits awake him,  
To glory and fame!"

The noble form of Edwin Forrest sleeps with his ancestors; his memory will long be cherished by thousands of the admirers of his towering genius. Forrest's dramatic mantle finds now no shoulders able to CLAIM, and, above all, to WEAR it.

What language so appropriate as the beautiful passage from Shakspeare's Hamlet, which the great actor was wont so often to repeat to admiring spectators:

See, what a grace was seated on this brow;  
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;  
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;  
A station like the herald Mercury.

New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;  
A combination and a form indeed,  
Where every god did seem to set his seal,  
To give the world assurance of a man.

FINALE. — “RING DOWN THE CURTAIN, THE GREAT  
DRAMA OF LIFE IS O’ER; THE BRIGHTEST STAR IN ALL  
ITS GLORIOUS CONSTELLATION, IS FOREVER BLOTTED FROM  
THE DRAMATIC FIRMAMENT!”





Mrs. CATHARINE SINCLAIR,

Divorced Wife of Edwin Forrest, in the character of "Lady Teazle."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

MRS. CATHARINE SINCLAIR, THE DIVORCED WIFE OF  
EDWIN FORREST.

HER FIRST APPEARANCE ON THE STAGE AFTER THE DIVORCE—HER  
PERSONAL APPEARANCE—HER MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS—INTER-  
ESTING INCIDENT ON HER DEBUT AT THE ALBANY MUSEUM AS  
LADY TEAZLE, IN THE "SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL"—HER TRIUM-  
PHANT RECEPTION AFTER POWERFUL EFFORTS WERE MADE TO PRE-  
VENT HER APPEARING, ETC., ETC.

The troubles between Mr. Forrest and his wife have been already made sufficiently notorious. Suffice it to say then that *Mrs. Sinclair* was the successful party in the suit, and the decision of the court was that she receive a large alimony from the estate of Mr. Forrest, and that a decree of divorce be entered. Of the merits of the case we have nothing to say; public sympathy, as a matter of course, was with the lady. But we must be permitted to express our belief that the full report of the case was of a most questionable propriety. It could not have but exerted a baneful influence upon society in general. During the progress of this case the New York papers were crowded with the evidence *verbatim*, of chambermaids and low-lived serving-men, whose veracity was questioned at every assertion, and the publication of whose evidence was a disgrace to any press. At the close of the case, some of the New York editors declared that the details of any similar trial should never appear in detail in their journals. The determination reflects credit upon their judgment,

for the columns of a high-toned paper should never be soiled by the detailed report of such trials. Soon after the close of this long case, Mrs. Sinclair declared that the money which the court had awarded to her from her husband's estate, should every cent of it be devoted to charitable purposes, and resolved to resort to the theatrical profession as a means of her own support. Her *debut* in New York was of the most flattering character, having the prestige of her name and the notoriety of the late trial, to aid her in drawing good houses. She opened at Brougham's Theatre, New York, in the "School for Scandal," as Lady Teazle, following up her first appearance by running through with a *role* of characters—such as Julia in the "Hunchback," Pauline in the "Lady of Lyons." After playing out the term of her engagement in New York and reaping a very handsome pecuniary harvest, she filled an engagement in Philadelphia and again returned to New York, where she run through and played in her various *roles* for a second time, meeting with less success. She then appeared at Harry Meech's Museum in this city, as Lady Teazle, in the "School for Scandal." At that time the friends of Edwin Forrest in Albany—they were very numerous—on learning that his divorced wife was to appear, determined to prevent it, and claimed to have made arrangements to "hiss her down." Between the friends of Mr. and Mrs. Forrest, there was no little excitement. Seeing the course matters were taking, and desiring the lady should have at least a hearing, the writer, one of Edwin Forrest's earliest friends, being at the time connected with a daily paper, penned the following article, which appeared on the date she was to appear :



## MRS. FORREST AT THE MUSEUM.

“This lady, the divorced wife of Edwin Forrest, will make her first appearance in this city this evening, in the *role* of Lady Teazle, in ‘School for Scandal.’ As there appears to be a disposition on the part of Mr. Forrest’s friends to prevent her appearing, we do most sincerely trust they may be induced to entertain a ‘second sober thought,’ and at once abandon the idea. In the first place, they should consider that there are two sides to the ‘vexed question’ of divorce,—secondly, she is a *woman*,—a lone woman—a stranger in a strange land, and without protection—reason sufficient in all conscience to enlist the warmest sympathies of our nature. Do not, then, friends, condemn before the verdict is rendered—grant the lady a moiety of charity, seasoned with a goodly share of the ‘milk of human kindness.’”

This simple appeal had a most happy effect—the oil thus administered in a homœopathic dose at once calmed the troubled waters, and all things went on as merry as a marriage bell. The large auditorium of the Museum was literally crowded by the most respectable class of our citizens, and the lady was received with enthusiastic applause, in which the few impotent hisses were completely drowned. After the curtain had been rung down, at the “finale,” she was vociferously called before the foot-lights, and returned her earnest and heartfelt thanks for this cordial reception in a most feeling and appropriate little speech. She played the remainder of her engagement with very fair success.

Mrs. Forrest was at the time stopping at the old City Hotel in Broadway, on the site of Messrs. S. H. Ransom & Co.’s iron building, and on the following morning after her appearance at the Museum, we were the recipient of a very polite note, thanking us in the sincerity of her heart for this disinterested intercession in her behalf—with a

polite invitation to call upon her. Availing ourself of the invitation, we called, and must confess we never met a more highly accomplished woman. Mrs. Forrest has many admirable qualities, is fine figure, quite English in style, and very naturally, as she was born in London; her complexion a rich blonde, with a face at once handsome and prepossessing, and features sufficiently marked and prominent for effect. In private her style and manner are highly attractive, dignified and lady-like.

Mrs. Sinclair is the daughter of Mr. Sinclair, the eminent artist, who made a reputation in New York when the Opera of Cinderilla was first introduced in this country, doing the *role* of the "Prince." His daughter inherited her father's musical taste in a most remarkable degree—besides she spoke several languages with fluency.

Mrs. Sinclair, attired in deep mourning, attended Mr. Forrest's funeral, sitting in the large parlor facing Broad street, her head resting upon her hand, her fingers working nervously. After remaining in this position a short time, she arose, hesitatingly approached the coffin, and drawing her veil aside, placed her hand upon the cold forehead of the dead, passing it gently down to the hand which she held firmly for several minutes. What were Mrs. Sinclair's feelings on that sorrowful occasion, may be better imagined than described. If the fountains of her heart had gushed forth, as they no doubt were inclined to do, those "tell tales," the pearly tears, would have bedewed her pale cheeks. As she was about to leave the coffin, she culled a few choice flowers from the abundance that were strewn around and upon the remains, and returning to her seat remained until the corpse was removed to its final resting place!

"The might of the strength that dwells apart,  
In the deep, deep cells of a woman's heart.  
Little we know it, and man may deem

It is but the tale of an idle dream ;  
But there are springs which never dry,  
But flow on in silence exhaustlessly."

Mrs. Sinclair is at present residing with her youngest married sister at the quiet little village of Stapleton, Staten Island. It is understood that Mrs. Sinclair has commenced legal proceedings for the possession of her thirds of the real estate of her late husband, and we trust she may succeed in proving her claim to it to be legal and just.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH.

HIS FIRST APPEARANCE, AS A NOVICE—HIS RAPID ADVANCE IN THE PROFESSION—HIS FIRST VISIT TO AMERICA—HE TURNS FARMER—IS HIS OWN MARKETMAN—HOW HE SOLD HIS FARMER COMPANIONS IN PLAYING RICHARD—HIS MAD FREAKS WITH CHARLES H. EATON—HIS DEATH IN 1852, ON HIS PASSAGE FROM NEW ORLEANS.

This world-renowned, incomparable actor, was born May 1, 1796, in a small town a short distance from London. He was the son of a barrister, who intended him also for the legal profession, and placed him at Eaton. Mr. Booth was a perfect linguist, speaking fluently French, German, Spanish and Italian, he accomplishing what no English actor ever did, by playing Shakspeare in *French*, and with entire satisfaction, before a crowded and exacting French audience. He entered the navy as a midshipman, but left, and assumed the fine arts—painting, drawing and sculpture; he also became quite conversant in Blackstone. His first appearance was in a Thespian Society, in the comedy of "John Bull," and soon after joined a strolling dramatic company, making his *debut*, 1813, as Campillo, in the "Honeymoon." His first appearance was at Covent Garden Theatre, the same year, as Silvia, in "As You Like It," and in 1821 he came to America, appearing as Richard at Richmond, Virginia; afterwards at the Park Theatre, New York, and Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, the most flattering success awarding his efforts.

He purchased a farm in 1822 at Bel-Air, Maryland, near Baltimore, being his own marketman, bringing in the products of his farm, such as hay, butter, fruits, &c. Booth would play an engagement at a Baltimore theatre, coming to town in the morning with his produce, dressed in his tow frock, coarse straw hat, and cowhide boots, and after disposing of his commodities, go to the theatre, appear in one of his great characters, and return to his home in the evening, after the performance, and go through the same routine during his engagement. The following anecdote is related of this extraordinary man: One evening when he was to appear in Richard, after he had marketed off his produce, he went to the hotel, the resort of the farmers generally, but with whom Booth had formed little if any acquaintance, he residing in a different part of the country from them. An hour or two before the performance commenced, a suggestion was made by one of the farmers that they all go and see Booth play Richard, as they had never seen him. Booth was asked if he had ever seen *Booth* play. He replied that he "had seen him many times, but that he guessed he'd drop in and see him once more in his favorite character of Richard." So, on the arrival of the time for the performance to commence, the entire party, including Booth, started for the theatre, and while the tickets were being procured Booth slipped around to the private entrance to the theatre, entered his room and hastily dressed for Richard, and being the first character to enter after the curtain rang up, commenced the celebrated soliloquy in Richard, "Now is the winter of our discontent," &c. Booth appeared to be in his best mood, intending, no doubt, to "astonish the natives"—his brother farmers—throwing additional spirit into the character, and which very evidently *did* have the desired effect, by setting them completely agog, especially his terrific combat and dying scene.

The theatre being out, the party, excepting Booth, re-

turned to their hotel, soon after which the great actor, attired in his home-spun toggery, stepped up to the bar, took his mug of mulled eider, paid his bill, and, while his team was being hitched up, was asked by one of the party, "How did you like Booth, friend?" "O, pretty well; but *I* think *I* have played it better"—jumped into his wagon and drove off. The farmer responded with a loud voice: "*You* play it better? well, come now, ain't that a good joke?"—and they all ha-haed out at the top of their voices. The surprise of the unsophisticated party can be better imagined than described, when informed by the landlord that the individual with whom they had been talking was none other than the celebrated actor, Booth!

Booth resided on his farm in quiet, surrounded by all the comforts of domestic life, scrupulously avoiding all show or notoriety, and living in the most frugal and simple manner. In 1825 he visited England, appearing at Drury Lane as Brutus. In 1835 he again visited England, and his last appearance on any stage was at the St. Charles Theatre, New Orleans, appearing as Sir Edward Mortimer and John Lump, in the "Wags of Windsor." During his sojourn in New Orleans he contracted a severe cold, and, taking passage on a steamer for Cincinnati, died November 19, 1852, of consumption of the bowels.

It is extremely doubtful whether, that as an actor, his equal has ever been seen. His talent was truly wonderful, often playing such arduous *roles* as Richard, Brutus, and Giles Overreach. He would appear in a farce, doing Jerry Sneak, John Lump, and other low comedy parts, with little apparent exhaustion, and in the most acceptable manner. His voice was singularly flexible and melodious, full, clear, and susceptible of exquisite pathos; his countenance was exceedingly handsome and expressive before his nose was broken by Tom Flynn, with a pair of tongs, in defending himself against one of Booth's "mad freaks;" his eye, the mirror of the soul, was a dark blue,

beaming with intelligence and fire. In depicting the passions of hate, terror, revenge, scorn, despair, he was particularly successful, and, at times, truly terrific—but in the milder passions he was not so successful.

That Junius Brutus Booth was one of the greatest actors who ever lived, there can be little question. He was generally and naturally exceedingly mild and gentle. In his family, it is said he prohibited the use of animal food; an animal life was ever sacred on his farm, and the very trees, too, were held sacred, as they were never allowed to be felled by the axe. All forms of religion and temples of worship, were to him sacred; and passing places of divine worship it is said he never failed to reverently bow his head.

That Edwin Booth, the son of the elder Booth, is a very chaste and impressive actor, few will gainsay; but that he is to be compared with his father in force and positive electric effect, none who have witnessed the elder Booth's impersonations will attempt to assert. John Wilkes, probably, approached more nearly his father in the portrayal of the stormy passions, than does either Edwin or his brother J. Brutus Booth.

In other parts of this work the reader will find several very amusing anecdotes connected with Booth's dramatic career.

#### ONE OF BOOTH'S MELANCHOLY PAROXYSMS.

As almost anything relating to this great actor is always interesting to old play-goers who have witnessed his unsurpassed delineations of character in his palmy days, we give the following letter, written by Charles H. Eaton, or as he was usually called, "Charley Eaton," to a friend in Boston, while he (Eaton) was playing an engagement at the Pearl Street Theatre in Albany, in 1838, doing second to Edwin Forrest. Charley was really a splendid young

actor, an Adonis in his personal appearance, whom Forrest declared "was bound to make a distinguished mark in his profession." In his account of this very thrilling affair, Mr. Eaton goes on to say:

"Since we parted I have been "strutting my brief hour" upon the boards of the Olympic, Bowery and Franklin, New York, and upon the Pearl street boards, Albany. I have just heard of Booth's attack upon poor Tom Flynn, at Charleston, and absolutely shudder, as it recalls to memory the opportunity he had about three years ago to make me participate in a real tragedy. We were playing an engagement together at the same theatre at Baltimore, and reversed Pierre and Jaffier, in Venice Preserved, Othello and Iago, and on the second night he played Othello (a part he seldom personates) to my Iago. After rehearsal, he came to my lodgings and requested me to go through the part with him again. 'Iago,' said he, 'you must do your d—d'st to-night, or I shall play you down.' There was a singularity in his manner which I had not observed before, and I must confess I felt considerable fear that he might fall into one of his melancholy paroxysms and do me great harm. We adjourned to an oyster room, and every time an oyster was opened he cried out 'murder,' in various tones, with apparent horror. Night came. He played Othello splendidly, and drew down thunders of applause. In the last act, after the death of 'gentle Desdemona,' it seemed as if all h— was raging in his heart; his eyes displayed the fierceness of a tiger, and his thrust at me I really believe would have been fatal, had I not suddenly stepped aside to avoid it. The audience were as hushed as death; my heart beat audibly, and it was a minute or two before I could recover my self-possession. A short time afterwards I passed a few days beneath his hospitable roof, and was treated with great kindness by him and his amiable lady. One night I was awakened by a tremendous crash in the next room. I hurried on my dress-



ing gown and ran in the entry to see what was the matter. It seems that Booth had wound a sheet around him, and with light in hand, had gone to his aged father's room; but the old gentleman, who happened to be awake and heard him coming, had dashed the bowl and pitcher on the floor at his feet, as Booth entered, and effectually frightened him out of his mad freak. 'Ah, Junius, Junius,' said the venerable old man, 'Will you never have done with these mad freaks!' Alas, for Booth! alas for the prostration of genius!"

"So flourisheth and fadeth majestic man!"

"Yours, truly,

"C. H. EATON."

## CHAPTER XX.

GUSTAVUS V. BROOKE, THE EMINENT IRISH TRAGEDIAN.

HIS REMARKABLE DRAMATIC CAREER—HIS RAPID PROGRESS UP THE HISTRIONIC LADDER TO FAME—HIS EXTRAORDINARY ABILITIES—HIS SUCCESSFUL CAREER IN EUROPE AND AMERICA—HIS FINAL AND TRULY MELANCHOLY FATE.

Very many play-goers will no doubt remember this eminent actor, while playing at Harry Meech's Museum, where he was nightly greeted by large and fashionable audiences, playing an unprecedentedly successful engagement of twelve consecutive nights. The always acceptable and exciting drama of the "Corsican Brothers" was first played in this country by Brooke, meeting with marked success wherever produced. The subject of this sketch was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1818, and was consequently, at the time he was in this country, about forty-two years of age. Mr. Brooke was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and was intended for the Irish bar. It is somewhat curious to trace the dawn of that genius or talent for which men are distinguished in after years. His introduction to the stage savors more of romance than reality. When scarcely sixteen years of age he chanced to visit one of the principal theatres of Dublin, the play producing a positive impression upon his mind, and he at once determined to be an actor. Accordingly, on the fol-

lowing day, unknown to his family and friends, he called on the manager, and completely startled him by gravely requesting him to let him make his appearance on the stage of the Theatre Royal in "William Tell." Imagine a slender youth of sixteen calling on the great autocrat of the English Stage, and requesting to play "King John," and it may be imagined what must have been the astonishment of the Dublin manager. The English manager, observing the manly and gentlemanly bearing of the boy, received him with the utmost kindness, at the same time pointing out the impropriety of the course, as did the veteran manager of the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, when Master Edwin Forrest made application to appear upon the boards of that establishment. Master Brooke, like Master Forrest, could not be easily diverted from his histrionic ambition, and he finally persuaded the manager to hear him recite the celebrated passage in William Tell, commencing, "Those crags and peaks; what spired city would I take to live in, in exchange for my cottage," which was delivered with so much force and propriety of action, and elocution, that the manager could not refrain from expressing his approval. So ended Brooke's first interview with a manager of a theatre. A circumstance soon offered which gave the future great tragedian an opportunity of gratifying his ambition, and appearing on the stage.

Edmund Kean had been announced to appear in Dublin, and much interest was of course excited amongst the play-goers of that gay city. Just as the time of Kean's appearance approached, the manager received a letter from London, intimating that Kean was "seriously ill," and could not possibly fulfil his engagement. The manager, knowing too well from experience the excitability of a Dublin audience, especially when disappointed, was at his wits' ends; but he suddenly bethought himself of his

young visitor, Brooke, and knowing that his good townsmen were easily pleased so long as they had novelty, no matter in what shape, he resolved to bring forward young Brooke as a "stop-gap." Accordingly, young Brooke was announced on the bills, and on Easter Tuesday, 1833, he made his first appearance on a public stage, in "William Tell." The performance had all the blemishes naturally to be expected in an untutored lad of fifteen, but evinced the possession of an histrionic genius of high promise. A very competent theatrical critic, shortly after this event, wrote of him thus: "Nature has done a great deal for young Brooke; his heart is in his profession; he has a very pregnant fancy; but of what he has acquired from art there is much to be *unlearned* as well as prosecuted; his career is of great promise, if he be not allowed or urged into a wrong path at first, which is too often apt to be the case in young men adopting the theatrical profession."

Now to return to his first appearance in Dublin. His effort in William Tell was so successful that he, in rapid succession, appeared in Virginias, Rolla, &c. Elated with his success, he visited Glasgow, Edinburgh, Belfast, Cork, Manchester, Liverpool, and most of the prominent theatres in the three kingdoms, in the course of which he impersonated most of the leading Shaksperian parts with great success.

In his personal appearance Mr. Brooke was singularly prepossessing. To a tall, lithe and extremely graceful form, was added a face full of intelligence, and of a marvelous capability of expressing varied and intense passion. His whole mein was grace and dignity; to these outward perfections there was the invaluable gift of a magnificent voice, from which the grand swelling periods of regal tragedy to the softest melody of the most melodious voice, was equally effective, grand and beautiful.

But he possessed the higher attribute still of a mind which could seize the conceptions of the great poet, and give them full and original development. Mr. Brooke, it is said to his credit, was no copyist, beyond the mere mechanical conventionalisms of the stage. His rendering of the lofty and passionate *role* of Othello was as truly great and original, it will not be too much to say, as was the conception of the character by the poet himself. Comparison will necessarily occur with the development of such a character by so great a genius as Kean and other eminent dramatic artists of the past; but the necessity for such comparison only strongly exhibits the power of the actor. Take him, therefore, "all in all," it cannot be gainsayed that no foreign actor who has visited our shores, probably since the days of the great George Frederick Cooke and Edmund Kean, could compare with Gustavus V. Brooke. The theatrical profession he chose from a positive LOVE for it, and from his earliest boyhood evinced a desire of fitting himself for the stage.

Four-fifths of the young men pursuing the histrionic profession would be far better and more worthily engaged in some mechanical employment more congenial with their tastes and capacities; but neither Brooke nor Forrest were of this class—they were both *natural* actors. Brooke made his first appearance on the American stage Dec. 15, 1851, at the Broadway Theatre, New York, as Othello. After performing in all the principal cities in this country, he returned to England, visiting Australia in 1860, and reappeared in London, after an absence of several years, at Drury Lane Theatre.

Poor Brooke was lost on the ill-fated steamer London, bound to Australia, a truly thrilling account of which was published at the time of the disaster, and in which was also given the particulars of the courageous and noble conduct of Brooke in his endeavors to save the vessel,

stripping to the buff, and working at the pumps, till sinking from exhaustion, went down with all her precious freight!

Brooke married Miss Avoni Jones, the talented young American actress, daughter of Mrs. George Jones, once quite a distinguished tragedienne.

## CHAPTER XXI.

WILLIAM WARREN, THE EMINENT ECCENTRIC AMERICAN  
COMEDIAN.

HIS FIRST APPEARANCE ON THE STAGE IN PHILADELPHIA AS YOUNG NORVAL—HIS RAPID RISE IN HIS PROFESSION—HIS IMMENSE POPULARITY—HIS APPEARANCE AT THE ALBANY MUSEUM—HIS VISIT TO ENGLAND—HE INVESTS IN REAL ESTATE IN CHICAGO, AND BECOMES QUITE WEALTHY—HIS DISTINGUISHING TRAITS OF CHARACTER, PRIVATE AND PROFESSIONAL, ETC., ETC.

It is deemed unnecessary to offer an apology in giving place to the following sketch of one so long and favorably known to the public, and especially to Albanians. The mention of the name of William Warren cannot fail to revive pleasant memories of other days, when he was attached to John B. Rice's dramatic company at the Albany Museum. There are scores of old play-goers who will readily recall the many delightful hours passed in witnessing the incomparable impersonations of eccentric characters by William Warren, and will unhesitatingly endorse the high and well deserved compliment accorded Mr. Warren by a distinguished theatrical critic.

His father, William Warren, a very popular performer, was born in Bath, England, and made his first appearance on the American stage at the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, in 1796, as the Friar, in "Romeo and Juliet." His performance of "Falstaff," was the most noted of his impersonations. For a number of years he was manager of the Chestnut Street Theatre, but retired from that position in 1829. His death occurred in 1832. His son, the

subject of our sketch, was born in Philadelphia in 1817, and made his first appearance at the Arch Street Theatre, in that city, in 1832, as "Young Norval," the same part in which his father made his *debut* at the outset of his career. Mr. Warren rose rapidly in his profession as a comedian. In 1841, he was introduced to a New York audience as "Gregory Guzzle," in "My Young Wife and My Old Umbrella." In 1845, he visited England and played at the Strand Theatre, London.

While Mr. Warren has less versatility than a few eminent low comedians we remember, as for instance, Finn and Burton, among the past, in a certain and by no means limited range of characters, Warren is unapproachable. We first saw him as Master Solomon in the "Stranger." It is not much of a part, *per se*, but as he moulded and filled it, it assumed a prominence and importance, and was invested with a ludicrous richness of which we had never dreamed it capable. Most admirably, too, does he present the assinine gravity of Dogberry. Every blunder of that immortal functionary, every trait of his character, is admirably rendered. Mr. Warren is noted for his "textual" fidelity, following the advice that Hamlet gives to the players, to "speak no more than is set down for them." He never laughs "to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too," unless the stage direction authorizes it. There is indeed no occasion for it, for his dry humor, his expression, his "make up," are enough to set the house "in a roar" whenever he appears. Warren is especially great in eccentric low comedy, particularly in those *roles* which have a dash of the lachrymose—as, for instance, "Billy Lackaday" in "Sweethearts and Wives." We have seen many representations of that unfortunate young "fondling" who was "'ung up at the sign of the 'og in armor," but never one whose ludicrous miseries so moved our risibles as Warren's. In the expression of his countenance there is "a whole Iliad of comic woe." The lu-



gubrious hero of "Wilful Murder," also received ample justice at his hands. It is in such characters, the eccentrics, that Warren shines pre-eminently, though everything he does, he does well and acceptably. His mere appearance on the stage is always welcomed with hearty applause, and is the harbinger of general good humor among the audience. One of the principal annoyances to which a stock actor is subject, is the necessity of frequently filling uncongenial and indifferent parts. Mr. Warren has his share of these, but his rich native humor invests them with a charm that makes the worst of them succeed. His stage individuality is perfectly provocative of mirth, and finds no exception in this case. It is always WARREN—you cannot mistake the voice and the air—but we are quite content to ask for nothing better than Warren, and Matthews and Flinn could change their features and their voices; Warren has not this Protean faculty. In this respect he is like Liston, but the London public never complained that Liston was not always the same. They could not see too much of him—neither can we see *too much* of Warren. Abernethy's prescription for many of the "ills that flesh is heir to," was "go and see Grimaldi!" With equal confidence can we recommend "seeing Warren," as the "sovereignist thing on earth" for the blues, for the spleen, for hypochondria, or any phase of low spirits, mental discouragement, or *ennui*. Kimball might without the slightest risk of having to write a single order on his treasurer, safely make a standing offer of a high premium for every sour face in his auditorium while Warren is on the stage. An old play-goer, and given rather to internal merriment over what tickles our fancy, than to indulging in that boisterous demonstration of hilarity which is but as the "crackling thorns under the pot," we charge it upon William Warren that he has many a time and oft caused us to break forth in noisy guffaws, accompanied by tears of delight. If Mr. Warren played

at the Boston Theatre he would infallibly ruin the stockholders. In this wise: "to laugh and grow fat" are cause and effect. In a short time the *habitués* of the theatre would become so corpulent that the iron-armed chairs could not contain them, and they would abandon the house from sheer necessity! We have spoken of Mr. Warren in his professional capacity; let us add that in private life he is a gentlemanly, retiring man, of more than respectable scholastic attainments, and is held in high regard by those who are honored by his friendship and acquaintance. We have heard him spoken of by those in whom we place the utmost confidence in a manner of which any man might be justly proud.

The last appearance of Mr. Warren in Albany, in a professional capacity, was at the Academy of Music, under the management of the late J. M. Trimble, being his first appearance here since he left the boards of Harry Meech's Museum. During the latter years of his life Mr. Warren inclined very much to obesity, in that respect resembling his father, who weighed considerably over two hundred pounds—so that in playing Falstaff, his favorite character, he had little necessity to "pad" his person. William, seven or eight years since, was very slim, but splendidly and symmetrically formed.

At the time Chicago began to assume importance as a city, by the advice of his brother-in-law, John B. Rice, the worthy ex-mayor of Chicago, who had become quite wealthy by the advance of property, Mr. Warren invested his surplus capital in real estate there, and it so rapidly increased in value as to render him quite wealthy. At last accounts Mr. Warren was in England.

## CHAPTER XXII.

CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN, THE GREAT AMERICAN ACTRESS.

SHE IS OF THE OLD PURITAN STOCK—HER MUSICAL EDUCATION—JAMES MAEDER FIRST BRINGS HER OUT ON A PUBLIC STAGE IN THE OPERA OF THE "MARRIAGE OF FIGARO"—SHE GOES TO NEW ORLEANS, AND NEARLY LOSING HER VOICE AS A SINGER, DECIDES TO GO ON THE STAGE—HER DEBUT IN NEW YORK—ALSO AT THE PEARL STREET THEATRE, ALBANY, IN 1837—HER VISIT TO EUROPE—HER SUCCESS IN THAT COUNTRY—SHE PERFORMS, WITH REMARKABLE SUCCESS, FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SANITARY COMMITTEE, IN 1863—LARGE RECEIPTS—HER LAST APPEARANCE IN ALBANY, ETC., ETC.

No apology, we opine, need be offered for presenting the rather extended sketch of this estimable lady and fine artist. Her name and fame will long remain fresh in the memory of the American public, and particularly in that of Albany, where she has been so long and so favorably known. There can be very few of our older class of citizens but will remember the appearance of Miss Cushman at the celebrated Firemen's Ball, at the old Pearl Street Theatre—an account of which will be found in a previous chapter of this work—her majestic form, as she threaded the mazes of the dance, towering above her female companions, and making her "observed of all observers."

Charlotte Cushman was born of the old Puritan stock, in Boston, in 1814. Having an excellent voice, she resolved, after she left school, to make her appearance as a public singer. Having received thorough musical instruc-

tions from the best masters, she made her first appearance in public, in 1830, at a society concert given in Boston. During the engagement in Boston of the celebrated vocalist, Mrs. John Wood, Miss Cushman sang at one of her concerts; and Mrs. Wood was so pleased with her fine contralto voice, that she advised her to turn her attention to singing on the stage. At the Tremont Theatre, Boston, in 1835, James Maeder, husband of Clara Fisher, brought Miss Cushman out as the Countess of Almavivi, in the "Marriage of Figaro." Shortly after this she went to New Orleans, having seriously impaired and nearly lost her voice, by trying to force it up to soprano; this was the cause of her adopting the stage. Soon she became one of the greatest actresses that ever graced the boards of any theatre in this country or in England, with, perhaps, the exception of the elder great Mrs. Siddons. Miss Cushman next appeared as Lady Macbeth at the Bowery Theatre, New York, in 1836. From the Bowery she went to the Park Theatre, where she became a leading actress. In 1837 she appeared as Romeo, in the tragedy of "Romeo and Juliet," at the old South Pearl Street Theatre, Albany, meeting with a flattering reception. She subsequently appeared as Count Belino, in the opera of the "Devil's Bridge"—a *role* in which Peter Richings made his *debut* at the Pearl Street Theatre, and continued through a long and protracted engagement of many months, to perform in opera, tragedy and comedy. At that time Miss Cushman generally assumed male characters—her stately form, rather masculine contour of countenance, and powerful voice, admirably adapting her to the line of male characters. They were invariably rendered most acceptably; she also acquitted herself equally as well in female characters.

After leaving Albany Miss Cushman visited Philadelphia, making her first appearance as Lydia Languish, at Burton's National Theatre. Before her great talent was

as fully recognized at home as it deserved to be, she visited England. There she found critics of the most experienced and exacting character, and they acknowledged her as one of the greatest *artistes* of the age. In 1845 she appeared at the Princess' Theatre, London, making her *debut* as Bianca in "Fazio." She was supported by Macready. After three or four years' residence in Europe, she returned to her native land, and made her appearance as Mrs. Haller, in the "Stranger," at the Broadway Theatre, New York, in 1849. In the year 1852, after playing a farewell engagement throughout the United States, she returned to Europe, and after a sojourn there of five years, again returned to the United States, making her appearance at the Broadway Theatre, as Bianca, in 1857. In 1858 she again sailed for Europe, and after an absence of two years returned to New York, making her *debut* at the Winter Garden in the month of September, 1860. On the 17th of October, 1863, she played Lady Macbeth at the Washington Theatre, to an overflowing house, for the benefit of the Sanitary Committee. The sum accruing to the U. S. Sanitary Commission from the several performances of Miss Cushman, amounted to \$8,267.29, as follows: Philadelphia, \$1,314.27; Boston, \$2,020.75; Washington, \$1,800; Baltimore, \$360; New York, \$2,772.27.

At last accounts Miss Cushman was playing at the West and Southwest with very flattering success. While performing at a Chicago theatre she was the recipient of a very valuable present, as a token of the high regard they entertained for her, individually and professionally, from the company attached to the theatre. The event was a perfect surprise to her; she was deeply affected, and made her acknowledgments of the compliment in a neat and very feeling address. The last appearance of this lady in Albany was at Martin Opera House, as a reader before the Christian Association. A short time previous she appeared at Martin Opera House with J. B. Booth's Boston Combi-

nation Dramatic Troupe, attracting excellent audiences. Those who were so fortunate as to witness her *Lady Macbeth*, *Queen Kathrine*, and *Meg Merrilles*, will not soon forget the rich intellectual feast they enjoyed; her portrayal of various scenes wherein the sufferings of the much abused, divorced Queen, were so truthfully and pathetically depicted by this great artist, as to bring many an unbidden tear to the eyes of the large audience present. But the *Meg Merrilles* of Miss Cushman is the most positively electrical, and *fearfully* grand, of all her inimitable personations. Miss Cushman has made *Meg Merrilles* a specialty—in fact wholly, exclusively her *own*—and no rival in it on either the American or British boards; those who have once witnessed her in the “*Old Witch*,” will have little desire to see any other person, however eminent that person may be, in that peculiar *role*. It would seem as though when he wrote *Guy Mannering*, Sir Walter Scott must have had Charlotte Cushman in his mind’s eye, as the proper representative of *Old Meg*.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

EDWARD L. DAVENPORT.

HIS FIRST APPEARANCE ON THE PUBLIC STAGE—HIS RAPID PROGRESS IN THE PROFESSION—HIS REMARKABLE VERSATILITY—HIS APTITUDE FOR STUDY—HIS SUCCESS ON THE LONDON BOARDS, PLAYING WITH MRS. MOWATT AND MACREADY—HIS FIRST APPEARANCE ON THE BRITISH STAGE AS CLAUDE MELNOTTE—THE LONDON CRITICS AWARD HIM UNQUALIFIED APPROBATION—HIS PRIVATE AND PUBLIC CHARACTER.

The annexed brief sketch of this universally popular and eminent American actor, will, we venture to say, be appreciated by all who have witnessed his incomparable impersonation of Shaksperian and other *roles*. Mr. Davenport's laurels are all legitimate. Less than any other popular performer, who has a high position, is he liable to the charge of *ad captandum* tactics (catch the rabble.) He does not seek to take his auditors by storm; he is content with *winning* them. In his impersonations, calm judgment controls his impulses; his action and declamation are never measured and guaged by the popular applause, but regulated by his own correct taste. He appears utterly unconscious of the presence of his audience. With some actors the first point is to establish a line of communication with the audience; to enlist them by appealing looks and gestures; to make them the partizans of the *man*, not judges of the actor, and then, as far as applause is concerned, their triumph is secure. If ne-

cessary, a direct appeal will secure the coveted "three rounds" at any given moment. Mr. Davenport never descends to such violation of the proprieties of acting. His conception of character, matured in his closet, is produced upon the stage as he has learned to understand it. He leaves nothing to chance-thought. Of course, like every man of genius, he is not insensible to, or unaided by, the inspiration of the hour. In reviewing any one of his delineations, one is struck with its harmony. None of its local lights and shades will be found to have been exaggerated, but the various parts appear so duly balanced, that the impression left upon the mind is precisely that produced by a well drawn, well grouped, and well colored picture. Mr. Davenport's mental qualifications for his profession are, in the first place, a hearty love of it; and also, a sound judgment, great energy, and an aptitude for study. Physically, he is possessed of a good face and fine figure, and a voice which, though not adequate to long continued rants in the "circles vain," is yet sufficiently powerful, musical and flexible. His attitudes are picturesque without exaggeration, his gestures graceful and appropriate; his versatility of talent is quite remarkable. He plays with success Hamlet, Othello, Junius Brutus, Romeo, Enoch Arden, William in Black Eyed Susan, etc., etc., parts as dissimilar as can well be imagined. He sings a good song, and used to dance a good hornpipe. Few persons on the stage can do so many things so well. Mr. Davenport was born in Boston, in 1820, and went on the stage at the age of 16, playing at Providence, as Wildo in "New Way to Pay Old Debts."

From the Tremont Theatre, Boston, Mr. Davenport went to Philadelphia, and remained there eight years; he subsequently engaged under Hamblin, on the Bowery stage, and at once became a great favorite. An important event in his theatrical career was his engagement with Mrs. Mowatt, in 1847. After making the tour of the



States with her, they embarked for England. His first appearance on the British stage was at Manchester, as Claude Melnotte, in the "Lady of Lyons," and he afterward made his *debut* at the Princes' Theatre, London, where his reception, both by the public and the critics, was cordial and hearty. He was equally successful in playing with Mrs. Mowatt during their sojourn in England. Mr. Webster, of the Haymarket Theatre, London, engaged Mr. Davenport to support Macready during the final engagement of that eminent tragedian at that theatre. Mr. Davenport alternated with Macready, and performed Othello, Iago, Brutus and Cassio, besides various juvenile tragedy *roles* that fell to his lot on other occasions. The British press was remarkably unanimous in its commendations of our countryman, the most influential journals and severest critics uniting in awarding him unqualified approbation. Mr. Davenport is highly esteemed in private life, and as a man; as an actor he reflects credit on his profession, and proves a great favorite wherever he goes. His Hamlet is pronounced by many competent theatrical critics to be one of the best in the country, not excepting Edwin Booth, who has made Hamlet a specialty. Mr. Davenport has ever been a favorite of the play-going public of Albany, his appearance, no matter in what *role*, being received with great satisfaction. His last appearance in Albany was at the Capitol Theatre, where he played a very successful engagement.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### JAMES E. MURDOCK, THE GREAT ACTOR AND ELOCUTIONIST.

HE COMMENCES HIS EARLY PRIVATE CAREER IN THE CAPACITY OF A BOOKBINDER—COMMENCES HIS DRAMATIC CAREER, AS AN AMATEUR, MAKING HIS FIRST APPEARANCE AS GLENALVON, IN THE TRAGEDY OF "DOUGLAS"—HIS FIRST APPEARANCE ON A PUBLIC STAGE, IN PHILADELPHIA, AS FREDERICK, IN "LOVER'S VOWS"—AFTER BECOMING DISTINGUISHED AS AN ACTOR, GOES TO EUROPE—MEETS WITH SUCCESS—HE LEAVES THE STAGE AND ENTERS THE ARMY AT THE OUTBREAK OF THE REBELLION—PERFORMS GOOD SERVICE IN ADMINISTERING CONSOLATION AND RELIEF TO OUR WOUNDED AND SICK SOLDIERS—HE TURNS FARMER.

This accomplished gentleman, and pre-eminent elocutionist and dramatic artist, is so widely and favorably known and appreciated, that it would seem quite superfluous at this time to give more than a brief sketch of his private and histrionic career. To Albanians, in particular, the name of James E. Murdock has been for many years as familiar as household words, for he has endeared himself to them by his exalted genius, gentlemanly bearing, and his many social qualities. When last heard from, he was residing on his farm in Ohio, in the full possession of all his faculties, and in the very best of health.

Mr. Murdock was born in Philadelphia—the mother of so large a number of eminent American actors—in 1812, and learned the bookbinding business with his father. Like Edwin Forrest, he commenced the profession at the lower round of the dramatic ladder, joining

an amateur association, and making his appearance as Glenalvon, in the tragedy of "Douglas." His first *debut* on a public stage was in 1829, at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, as Frederick, in "Lover's Vows." In 1830 he appeared as Young Norval, at the Chestnut Street Theatre. The coincidence is rather remarkable that Forrest, Murdock, and other young American dramatic aspirants, especially Philadelphians, commenced their career in the same line of characters, viz: Young Norval, Frederick, in "Lover's Vows," etc. His first public appearance in New York was at the Park Theatre, as Benedict, in "Much Ado About Nothing." After performing several engagements in Philadelphia and New York, in 1842, he retired from the stage for the purpose of devoting a few years in a more thorough course of mental training than the earlier career of his profession had afforded him.

"Col. Brown's History of the Stage"—to which we are indebted for some facts and data regarding several members of the profession—remarks, that the science of elocution, always a favorite study with Mr. Murdock, presented the means of maintenance, and at the same time advanced the purpose he had in view. The acknowledged success and approbation universally awarded principal characters by the leading journals of the day, that attended a series of interesting lectures on Shakspeare, delivered in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and other cities, revived the desire to tread the boards; and after a period of several months devoted to study and the preparation of a stage wardrobe, Mr. Murdock presented himself before a New York audience at the Park Theatre, in 1845, as Hamlet. In 1853 he visited California, making his *debut* at the American Theatre. In 1856 he visited England, making his *debut* as Young Mirabel at the Haymarket Theatre; and after playing a very flattering engagement returned to America, appearing in 1857, at the New York

Metropolitan Theatre, and afterwards in Philadelphia. He then purchased a farm in Lebanon county, Ohio, where we find him, in 1858, engaged in tilling the soil, raising corn, potatoes, and cereal grains, and monarch of all he surveyed.

#### MURDOCK'S WAR RECORD.

Here comes the most important era in the career of this eminent, patriotic, large-hearted man. When the stupendous rebellion broke out, Mr. Murdock was just completing an engagement in Milwaukee, and at the first tremendous excitement by the attack upon Fort Sumter, he was *en route* to Pittsburg, where he was under a professional engagement. On his arrival there he found his youngest son had enlisted in the Cincinnati Zouave Guard, and passed through Pittsburg before Mr. Murdock arrived in that city, bound for Washington. Although his name was on the bill for that night, Mr. Murdock's large patriotic heart could not resist the impulse to follow his son. Packing up his trunks and forwarding them on to his home in Ohio, he threw up his engagement, solemnly declaring it should never be opened, and that he would never act, till the rebellion was overcome and peace proclaimed! During four years he devoted himself with all his heart and all his energies to the cause of his beloved country. He had earnestly hoped to be able to serve as a soldier, but, after several attempts, his health became greatly impaired and he found himself an incumbrance instead of a help. He abandoned the idea of serving his country in arms, and devoted himself to our sick and wounded soldiers, reading to and encouraging the men in the field, visiting the hospitals, and giving entertainments throughout the country for the aid of the Sanitary Commission. Like the bards of olden times, he inspired his hearers with the ardor of battle, and urged them to noble deeds of daring. Mr. Murdock was appointed Volunteer Aid on

the staff of Gen. Rosseau. Keeping his word most religiously, he did not reappear on the stage until October 23, 1865, when he commenced an engagement at Pike's Opera House, Cincinnati, which proved one of the most brilliant engagements ever performed by any star actor in that city.

#### MURDOCK'S FIRST CLAUDE MELNOTTE.

Mr. Murdock was the first Claude Melnotte in Philadelphia, and the second representative of that character in America—Edwin Forrest having been the first. Mr. Murdock's recitation is considered to be one of the most easy, natural and effectual, of which our stage can boast. He never "o'ersteps the modesty of nature;" is clear and remarkably distinct in his articulation, correct and spirited in his gestures, and a perfect master in the delineation of the passions. He has won a high and enviable character as an artist, and his urbanity and general deportment have gained for him the very highest reputation as a gentleman. Mr. Murdock is a scholar in his art, with a mind and soul full of the poetry of the world, and a voice musically organized and attuned to melody. We have not heard of his appearing as an actor for some time past, his time and attention being devoted to public readings and lecturing.

In closing this sketch of this distinguished gentleman, or eminent actor and elocutionist, it may not be deemed inappropriate to relate the annexed very amusing anecdote or incident relating to "Farmer" Murdock:

When cultivating his farm in Ohio, he rode to town carrying a quantity of calf skins to sell. Driving to the tannery, he met the proprietor, of whom he enquired, "What are you paying for calf-skins to-day?" The tanner, to whom Murdock was an entire stranger, took a huge chew of tobacco, thrust both hands in his pockets, and replied with a lazy air, that he "didn't know—he wasn't sure that he wanted any calf-skins at all." Murdock's anger was

at once considerably aroused with the fellow's mixture of impudence and indifference. Straightening himself into an acting attitude, he delivered a splendid piece of vituperation from one of Shakspeare's plays. The tanner soon changed indifference into amazement and admiration. The tanner was a very ignorant man, but Murdock's oratory and Shakspeare's words, had completely transfixed him! When the "piece" was finished, the tanner reached out his hand saying, "Who are you, Mister? If you'll only say that 'ere speech over agin, I'll give you a dollar a pound for your calf-skins!" Murdock gave him his name, sold the skins, and the two enjoyed a hearty laugh over the amusing incident.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE ALBANY HISTRIONIC ASSOCIATION.

ITS ORGANIZATION—ITS FIRST DRAMATIC REPRESENTATION IN THE OLD THESPIAN HALL, NORTH PEARL STREET—ITS STRUGGLES AGAINST FANATIC INTERFERENCE—ITS FINAL TRIUMPH—LIST OF ITS PROMINENT AND ACTING MEMBERS—THE HISTRIONIC SOCIETY FORMS THE NUCLEUS TO THE FORMATION OF THE ALBANY BURGESSSES' CORPS; ALSO TO THE YOUNG MEN'S ASSOCIATION.

The "Theatrical Reminiscences" of Albany would be very incomplete were not some allusion made to the old "Histrionic Association," an association that, for a number of years, was one of *the* institutions of the city, and numbered among its members many who have since been prominent in social and public life.

It had its origin at a time when the drama flourished, in all its vigor, at the old Pearl Street Theatre. Its light of life flickered and went out when Albany ceased to number a theatre among its attractions and places of recreation and enjoyment.

The Albany Histrionic Association was organized June 6, 1827, for the purpose of improvement in reading and speaking, and for the representation of plays, blending amusement with instruction.

The first officers were: Wm. S. Campbell, President; James S. Tobey, Manager; John Visscher, Treasurer; Frederick J. Hosford, Secretary.

The following gentlemen were the members who participated in the first representation, July 24, 1827: George

Vance, jr., William Thompson, Henry Glen, James Duffy, Thomas Crowe, Naham Rice and Robert C. Yates.

The pieces performed were "Raising the Wind," and "Bombastes Furioso."

#### NAMES OF MEMBERS.

The association at first occupied the old "Thespian Hall," located at No. 105 North Pearl street, on Clinton square, (now the residence of Lansing Pruyn, Esq.,) and continued to occupy it for seven years, or until 1834. During this time, prominent among the acting members were: Henry Carpenter, Jeremiah C. Lamphere, Edwin J. Porter, John Gregory, Sanford Cobb, Friend Lawrence, William Ford, Orville Rowe, John D. Kearney, John Osborn, Philo K. Cole, Horace Pierce, William McCammon, James W. Parsons, Addison Low, Alvah M. Lockwood, John Gardner, George Trumbull, Arthur C. Southwick, Russell G. Higgins, Charles Van Ostrand, Cornelius Wendell, John S. Vedder, Harvey J. Stevens, James F. Campbell, Samuel Payne, Charles Woodhouse, Rawson Packard, Ira Porter, Peter E. Bowman, Benj. R. Spelman, Townsend Parish, Samuel R. Swain, Elijah Smith, H. J. Radcliff, Theodore F. Sharp, Stephen Bell, Austin Pinney, David Roe, Samuel D. Tracy, Benedict Lewis, George Hocknell, John E. Reese, Ogden N. Covert, Walter Delamano, E. C. Blakeman, William Rice, Albert Dibble, John Silsbey, Henry W. Silsbey, Walter Whitney, Samuel Pinnett, Charles H. Watts, Justus B. Todd, John Campbell and Cornelius Quackenbush.

#### CLASS OF PIECES.

The class of pieces performed were: "The Poor Gentleman," "Wild Oats," "The Soldier's Daughter," "The Dramatist," "William Tell," "Honeymoon," "Speed the Plough," "The Way to Get Married," "Laugh When You Can," "School of Reform," "Road to Ruin," "Heir at



Law," "Wheel of Fortune," "The Rivals," "Secrets Worth Knowing," "Education," "Othello," "Barbarossa," and others, together with a great variety of after-pieces; all of these were sustained with great credit, and *always* to full houses, for there was *no charge for admission*, each member having his share of tickets to give to his friends. The tickets were sought after and engaged, for weeks before the performance, by young gentlemen, to enable them to secure the attendance of their young lady friends.

The "public nights" took place about once in six weeks, interspersed with songs and recitations; the rehearsals were once or twice a week. The rules and regulations were strictly enforced, and no member was allowed to appear on a public stage. They held "the mirror up to nature" for their mutual and social enjoyment. Capt. Johnny Cook's Band "did" the music.

After having made some improvements to old "Thespian Hall," the 29th representation was given June 27, 1833. It cannot be better described than by inserting an address, written for the occasion by a member, Charles Woodhouse, and delivered by Cornelius Wendell. The pieces performed on this occasion were "Secrets Worth Knowing" and "Frightened to Death."

#### FIRST ADDRESS.

Before those *secrets* we unfold to view,  
 Well worth the ken of each and all of you;  
 And ere the vital flame, (by some called breath,)  
 Is thought extinct in poor Jack Phantom's death;  
 Ere we divulge the first, or bring to sight  
 One of those unseen ghosts that walk by night,  
 And make grown babies quake with dreadful fear—  
 Old women's faces look so doleful queer,  
 That one would think, (if mirth did not prevent,)  
 They stretched their jaws to give their knowledge vent,  
 Or, for patent fly-traps did intend 'em,  
 So strangely droll they twist and bend 'em—  
 Before, I say, these things are shown to you,  
 And to your vision clearly held to view;

I am deputed an address to speak  
 To these, our friends, that with their presence greet,  
 And cheer, with smiles, of full approbation,  
 The HISTRIONIC ASSOCIATION.  
 New alterations here, you now behold  
 Have taken place—to speak of these I'm told :  
 First, then, the floor,—the antiquated floor,  
 Which oft hath witnessed the tremendous roar,  
 And seemed, in spite of age, to laugh outright,  
 Whene'er the time came round for Public night,—  
 Our ancient floor has been most rudely torn  
 From off the stage, and without feeling borne  
 By impious hands to serve for fuel,  
 Perhaps, to boil some old maid's gruel ;  
 It can no more it's uncouth form disclose,  
 Nor will the jest awake its last repose,—  
 'Tis gone, and one of modern style succeeds,  
 To chronicle our after coming deeds.  
 And Innovation, not too content to stop  
 It's onward course, or yield it's right a jot,  
 Has farther gone,—and pillars rise to view,  
 To 'dorn our stage and beautify anew.  
 Our chandelier is, by some means untold,  
 Transformed from Tin, to brilliant, shining Gold.  
 The Painter, too, hath here displayed his art,  
 And so our room new beauties doth impart ;  
 Art's — not Nature's beauties, for those you know,  
 Are seated there in one delightful row.  
 A ventilator, too, you see is there,  
 To fan the ladies with the evening air.  
 In fine, to make my story short and clear,  
 We've done our best, our numerous friends to cheer ;  
 Refine the mind, and elevate the soul,—  
 Vile passion's crush that in guilt's bosom roll ;  
 Exhibit virtue in her every grace,  
 Her holy joys thro' all her hardships trace ;  
 And tear the veil from vice's haggard brow—  
 In the vile earth her frightful visage bow,—  
 Enforce this truth, (the Drama's end and aim,  
 For which in Greece she first obtained the name,)

That virtue only can pure joys bestow,  
 And cause the mind sweet happiness to know ;  
 While vice with her dread, deadly, venom'd sting,

Doth naught but empty, transient pleasures bring.  
 And if in this we shall successful be,  
 (And that we shall *your partial* eyes will see,)  
 We'll be content, and with new vigour try  
 To please, delight, *perhaps* to edify.  
 Proclaim the drama's end—that end attain,  
 Her moralizing sway, once more regain,  
 With satire, lash the foibles of the age,  
 Improve our ethics, and adorn the stage.  
 Thus shall we, our labors being ended,  
 Find "Amusement with instruction blended."

The 35th representation, and last in old "Thespian Hall," took place April 10, 1834, and the pieces performed were "The Wheel of Fortune" and "X. Y. Z."

A new era in the history of the Association now opened. It seemed to be so firmly established in public favor, and its representations gave so much delight to crowded audiences of the "best society" of the city, that larger accommodations were demanded. A resolution was adopted, and a committee was appointed, consisting of Benjamin R. Spelman, Cornelius Wendell and George Trumbull, to which was added Arthur C. Southwick, Jesse Potts and J. E. Reese, to enquire into the expediency of leasing a lot, and erecting a suitable building for the use of the Association.

The committee reported in favor of leasing the lot No. 126 North Pearl street, (then Orchard street,) now the beautiful grounds of Wm. G. Thomas, Esq., and erecting a suitable building on the same, and Cornelius Wendell, B. R. Spelman and Addison Low were appointed and constituted trustees, to carry the same into effect. They leased the lot, made a contract for the building, and issued stock for its payment, every dollar of which was, in a few years, paid. They were subsequently directed to purchase the lot, which they did. The affairs of the Association went on for a number of years in the most flourishing condition; the "old stagers" of the Association had

become "stars," and their friends, who were "legion," took pleasure in their performances whenever they could obtain tickets. The members formed a band of amateur musicians, and their "annual sleigh ride," composed of a party of from forty to sixty, was, for a number of years, one of the features of the Association.

#### ALBANY BURGESSES' CORPS.

It was at about this period that the organization of the Albany Burgesses' Corps took place, and among its first and foremost members, who were the originators and for many years the long-continued members of the Corps, were John Visscher, George Vance, jr., Cornelius Wendell, Benjamin R. Spelman, Addison Low, Ira Porter, John Osborn, George Trumbull, Alvah M. Lockwood—all prominent in the "Histrionic Association." A corps so renowned for discipline and soldierly bearing—whose name, "A. B. C.," stands at the head of the alphabet, and of the citizen soldiery of the country—subsequently numbered in its ranks others of the Histrionic Association, prominent among whom we recollect Hale Kingsley, Benjamin M. Briare, Stephen W. Whitney, William R. Whitney, William D. Mahoney, William H. Low, Thomas R. Courtney, Alphonso Walker, William Harbison and Henry C. Haskell.

It was John Visscher who drew up the call and obtained subscribers for the first meeting, at which was organized the Albany Burgesses' Corps. It was John Visscher who proposed the name which was adopted by the corps, and has since been so much respected and admired. From the list of members of the old Histrionic Association, and others, a committee was selected to wait on Col. John O. Cole, then, as now, an esteemed and respected citizen, and request his acceptance of the command of the Corps.

He was the first commander of the company at its organization, in 1833. Although forty years have passed

away, his venerable form is among us, as one of the "Old Guard," almost as buoyant as in his youthful days, respected and loved by his old comrades, and by every member of the Corps.

#### YOUNG MENS' ASSOCIATION.

It was about this time that the organization of the Young Men's Association also took place, and prominent among the first members were most of the members of the *Histrionic*. The names of George Vance, jr., Cornelius Wendell, Arthur C. Southwick and others, will ever be affectionately remembered by their surviving companions in these several institutions.

The *Histrionic Association* during the summer of 1834 had completed their building, and named it

#### "HISTRIONIC HALL."

It was capable of holding and seating about 300 persons. The stage and meeting-room were commodious, and the audience apartment was neatly fitted up.

The thirty-sixth representation, and the first in *Histrionic Hall*, took place October 30, 1834, and the pieces performed were "Man and Wife," and "Love, Law and Physic."

Previous to the performance, an address, written for the occasion by Charles Woodhouse, was delivered by the President of the Association, Arthur C. Southwick, and we think no apology is necessary for its introduction here.

#### ADDRESS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—

'Tis said that Fashion rules this world of our's;  
 And true it is. we own and feel her powers,—  
 Her sway resistless by this act confess,  
 In presentation of this night's address.  
 How like a dream this scene to-night appears?  
 And is it true, 'midst doubt, and hopes, and fears,  
 A new and better house we now behold  
 Upsprung, as by enchantment,—while our old

No more will tell the Drama's grief and mirth,  
But give that boon to this, whose recent birth  
We hail this night with pleasure undefined,  
Flowing from our every joyful, *grateful* mind.  
In ancient Greece the Drama claims her birth :—  
A sacred clime, renowned 'bove all the Earth  
For Science, Art, and Eloquence, which tells  
To present time its spirit-moving spells.  
Here, on this soil, where the Historic pen  
Has wrote her epitaph of noble men,  
Where deeds of time are writ with impress deep  
On tables, their eternal fame to keep ;  
*Here* sprung the Drama—*here* life's mimic scene  
First taught as *Truths* from Fancy's field to glean ;  
While, like a glass, reflecting e'en the hearts  
Of men, the Muses played their magic parts ;  
Portrayed the Passions of the human soul ;  
Taught us the good to cherish, and control  
The bad ;—placed Virtue in her own bright view,  
And painted Vice in every hideous hue !  
And thus the Stage, if kept in morals pure,  
(A moving world in moving miniature !)  
Still holds a mirror, in which all may gaze,  
And learn a lesson to direct their ways ;  
And while we see fair Virtue's cause defended,  
Find the amusing with the useful blended.  
In this a helping hand we lend ; and here  
The Drama's friends this humble Temple rear.  
Here shall the Truth exhibit all her charms,  
And to black Falsehood sound her dread alarms ;  
Here shall be cherished all that tends to raise  
The mind to soar aloft on Poesy's lays ;  
The moralist glean ethics for the young,  
Clothed in poetic dress, by Fancy sung ;  
And now spectators, in your smiles so bright,  
We cheerfully begin this work to-night ;  
And tho' we hold in the Dramatic cause  
An humble station, yet, with your applause,  
We may our feeble aid lend with success,  
In showing Life in its most simple dress ;  
That all may see themselves reflected true  
To the image Justice gives of us and you :  
And thus transmit to the remotest age,  
A pure and useful Histrionic Stage !

The performances were usually interspersed with a variety of songs and recitations.

The young gentlemen, representing the female characters, were generally of the most delicate form, but it was the fortune of the tall and powerful Cornelius Wendell, at one time, to be cast in the character of "Destafena," in "Bombastes Furioso," which part he performed to a *delighted* audience, and with *great* satisfaction.

#### LIST OF MEMBERS, ETC.

The association occupied this hall for eight years, making in all fifteen years of its existence, with great success, until the representations numbered one hundred. The following names were added to the list of members from time to time: Joseph Vance, John Q. Graham, John Thomas, Henry Russell, John Jarvis, Charles J. Gowie, Andrew Comike, James A. McDougal, John Parker, Robert Allison, O. O. Coleburn, Philip S. Van Ingen, John Brooks, Benj. Stokey, George Gladding, Thos. N. Rooker, John Van Heusen, Joseph C. Mayer, Thomas Peacock, Walter Strong, Robert Austin, James W. McKee, Henry Gardner, John W. Bell, William Harbison, Thomas R. Courtney, Francis D. Briare, Thomas Hoyt, Hugh J. Hastings, A. W. Mayer, Solomon Hosford, Peter A. Bailey, Edward Duffy, J. H. Johnson, James Cafferty, William Cafferty, Benj. M. Briare, Alphonso Walker, J. J. Galusha, Stephen B. Hutehins, W. P. Thatcher, Lewis A. Gregory, John S. Knapp, Gilbert Brown, Andrew B. Cross, George Turner, J. Lockwood, George W. Porter, Owen Hanks, Henry D. Stone, E. Henly, Hale Kingsley, William R. Whitney, Stephen W. Whitney, William D. Mahoney, Lorenzo Downing, William H. Low, Benjamin F. Smith, J. M. Jaquith and H. C. Haskell.

The list of members and the casts of the representations, during the last four or five years of the existence of the association, have been lost, and we have, undoubtedly, omitted the names of some who were in at its death.

The troubles, which finally caused the dissolution of the association, had their origin in the "religious revivals" of the period of 1842 and 1843. Many of its members became "convicted," and some "converted." It was with difficulty that a quorum could be obtained at its meetings.

Theatricals were tabooed for the time, the finest representations failed to "fill the house," while the performances of "Brother Knapp" and others, in other auditoriums, outrivalled and outdid all the attractions of the most celebrated tragedians. Tragedy, comedy, farce, burlesque, song and recitation, all failed to "draw the crowd!" Many of its first members had died, or were immersed in the struggles and cares of business. The religious portion of community made a "dead set" at the Association, and it was no longer considered "the thing" to attend its representations. Its treasury became depleted, and dissolution was painfully apparent to the few members who still clung to its waning fortunes. They determined that its "exit" should be at least "decently and in order." Its property was sold, its debts were paid, and the Association dissolved. We have no data from which to learn the exact time of its breaking up, or even the cast of the last representation. It must have been somewhere about 1844.

Among some of its last representations was "London Assurance." Many old players, who witnessed it, declared that it equaled, if not excelled, the performance of the same play at the New York Park Theatre. The stage, particularly in the garden scene, was most beautifully set. Among the cast, we recollect

Sir Harcourt Courtly .....	Walter Strong.
Charles Courtly .....	S. W. Whitney.
Dazzle .....	C. Wendell.
Max Harkaway .....	L. Downing.
Dolly Spanker .....	B. M. Briare.
Cool .....	H. J. Hastings.
Lady Gay Spanker .....	W. H. Low.
Grace Harkaway .....	Hale Kingsley.



And *such* a Dazzle as was the lamented Wendell.

The Histrionic Association is among the things of the past; nothing of it remains except its memories. Who, of all those who "strutted their brief hour" on its stage, would, if they could, blot out one single memory. How varied and checkered have been the lives of those who have been its members. The dark curtain of death has been rung down upon many who will be remembered and loved by those who survive. On the dim distant shores of the past are strewn some wrecks, which, with swelling sails and summer skies, sailed out of the harbor of youth upon the unknown waters of life. Some survive in our midst, honored and respected citizens, but the greater number is scattered and gone. But alas! such is life.

"All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players.  
They have their entrances and their exits,  
And one man in his time plays many parts."



# GENERAL THEATRICAL REMINISCENCES,

EMBRACING SKETCHES OF ACTORS, ACTRESSES, MUSICIANS, EQUESTRIANS, WITH INCIDENTS, SCENES AND ANECDOTES CONNECTED THEREWITH—AMUSING AS WELL AS THRILLING EVENTS GENERALLY—HISTORY OF THEATRES, AMPHITHEATRES, CIRCUSES—WONDERFUL GAGGING EXPLOITS OF DUMMY ALLEN, FORREST'S OLD COSTUMER—OLD KING CHARLEY, OF PINKSTER HILL MEMORY—FIRST OUT-DOOR CIRCUS EVER EXHIBITED IN ALBANY WITHOUT A CANVASS—TOGETHER WITH SKETCHES OF SCENES AND INCIDENTS NOT CONNECTED WITH THEATRES OR CIRCUSES.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

A large portion of these Reminiscences were furnished by Mr. GEORGE STONE, a native of Albany, who began his professional life at the North Pearl Street Amphitheatre, under the management of Samuel Parsons. Mr. Stone afterwards visited all the principal cities and towns of the United States and the Canadas in a professional capacity, and made the tour of England, Ireland and Scotland. This afforded him ample opportunities of becoming personally familiar with the innumerable persons, scenes and incidents so graphically described. He was a comedian, possessing rare dramatic talent, with great versatility, and was very popular in the south and west. "His memory," as Mr. Forrest often remarked, "was the most remarkable I ever knew." Any scene, face or incident he saw was so fully and indelibly photographed upon his memory, as to be seldom forgotten. The friendship existing between Mr. Forrest and George

Stone—like our OWN—was of the warmest and most devoted character—not a link in its lengthy chain ever having been severed. Mr. Forrest and Mr. Stone commenced their dramatic career about the same period, though Mr. Forrest was the senior by several years. Mr. Stone retired from the profession some years since, embarking in the commercial business in Philadelphia, where he died, December 18, 1864, in the 53d year of his age. We would here state, that although Mr. George Stone furnished the *bulk* of the Reminiscences under *this* head, the author, from time to time, supplemented them with numerous local incidents and anecdotes coming within his personal knowledge and observation. The principal portion of the Reminiscences were written in 1864-5. Many changes have naturally taken place in the interim—many of the individuals spoken of have “shuffled off this mortal coil”—but it has been concluded to give them as nearly in their entirety as possible, believing this plan most acceptable to the reader.

### Miss Robertson.

In speaking of the unsurpassed dramatic company attached to the old Pearl Street Theatre at its opening, it does not seem worth while to again enumerate the roll of distinguished artists comprising this company. Of Miss Robertson, however, I cannot refrain from making special mention, her dramatic life being somewhat eventful. She was a beautiful woman, and one of the best actresses in her line (chambermaid) either hemisphere ever produced. She married Burroughs, once manager of the South Pearl Street Theatre; a splendid looking fellow, an excellent melo-dramatic actor and a most efficient manager. She accompanied him to England, and a few years since married a stage carpenter at Liverpool and went to Australia. Miss Robertson was sister to Matilda Brun-

dage, wife of the mad poet, McDonald Clark. Clark and wife were separated in ten minutes after marriage, a divorce following shortly. Mrs. Clark was very beautiful, young, and highly accomplished. Miss Robertson died in Australia.

### Anderson, the Tragedian.

This actor is believed to be living in St. Louis at a very advanced age. Anderson became engaged in a wrangle with a gentleman one night, at Preston's City Coffee House, which stood where the Delavan now stands, Anderson shooting him. He was tried and acquitted. Many of our citizens, especially the old theatre-goers, will doubtless recollect Anderson as a leading member of Gilfert's unequalled company in the palmy days of the South Pearl Street Theatre. In June, 1864, a friend wrote us from Philadelphia that poor Anderson—then seventy-six years old—was an inmate of the alms-house in that city. Anderson is probably the only surviving member of the original stock company of that theatre. He was an accomplished gentleman, a finished actor, and a great favorite. He was a worthy member of the American Dramatic Fund, and yet he is allowed to pass his declining days in an alms-house! Shame that poor Anderson should “to this complexion come at last!”

George Hyatt died at sea, on board a whaler. He was the author of the ever popular song, *The Mellow Horn*; but numerous mellow horns sent poor Hyatt on a long engagement with Davy Jones. He was decidedly one of the most finished, accomplished and popular low comedians that ever graced the stage.

Of William Duffy's and William Forrest's company (William was a brother of Edwin Forrest) of the Pearl Street Circus—the spot being now occupied by the Methodist church—but few remain this side of the tomb.

Jack Green and his wife are dead. Lewy Underner, then quite a young man, was attached to Duffy and Forrest's orchestra. James Wallace, one of the company, and formerly editor of *The Sun*, Philadelphia, is now assistant editor of a Louisville paper. He married Miss Godey, the sister of Charles Durang, a sprightly and beautiful little actress of Duffy & Forrest's company, and after, for many years of the Park Theatre, New York. She is now dead.

Thayer, a light comedian, and one of the very best attached to Burrough's company, and his wife (formerly Miss Fisher), are now playing at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia. Thayer was thin and slim, and an especial favorite in Albany; now he is jolly fat, and considerably over 60, doing old men admirably. Mrs. Thayer is one of the very best old women on the stage. Dave Eberlee, brother to the low comedian, Henry Eberlee, is also at the Walnut. He was at the Pearl Street Theatre under Burroughs.

Johnny Cook, who yet lives, was a musician in that establishment—his wife being an actress and vocalist of a very pleasing and versatile character. Charley Taylor, now the veteran author, having retired upon the Dramatic Fund, is living in New York. Charley did the vocal business and juvenile lovers in those days; he was young and gay with locks of the raven's hue. There was also an actor at the old circus by the name of Henry, quite a genius in his way—a Yankee speculator, an Englishman by birth. He had been captain of a canal boat—preached sometimes—invented a soap that would extract, he said, grease from an *old shoe*, played the fiddle, made theatrical dresses, kept school, and finally turned actor. Some years since, stopping at a hotel in England, I noticed in the bar-room a number of travelers, and among them was this Henry. He had been managing a theatre, but had *busted*—all his earthly belongings were in a pasteboard bandbox! "But," said

he, "I have something that will yet make my fortune." It was a theatre on wheels, composed of cloth, and quite light, and intended to be drawn by the actors. Whether the poor fellow ever got the actors to *draw* the show, I did not learn, but I presume that they (like the manager) never *drawed*.

### Hunter, the Great Bare-Back Rider.

Mr. Hunter was the great bare-back rider of the Pearl Street Circus. He left the States in 1829 for England, and became dissipated. He *innocently* took Ben. Stickney's coat from the dressing-room of the Royal Amphitheatre, Liverpool, one night. Ben., to frighten him, had Hunter arrested, and was obliged to appear against him. John Bull's law being equal to *Jersey*, poor Hunter was transported to Van Dieman's Land in 1839. It is said he has a wife and son in Philadelphia very respectably connected.

There was an actor by the name of Russell attached to the Pearl Street Circus. I saw him several years ago playing Richard in Arkansas, in a *pork-house* converted into a theatre, and the way he battered old King Dick was never equaled by the little Greek, John Amiraille, who used to do scenes from Richard in George Watson's barber shop in North Market street. But the Greek was decidedly the best actor of the two, especially in the dying scene. John Amiraille came to this city from Boston, became dissipated, and fell into the hands of Watson, who maintained him as a *butt* for his customers. He went upon the stage to burlesque Richard III, and his biography was written by John B. Southwick, the Greek soliciting the subscription himself. Most of the edition was destroyed. The Greek died in the New York alms-house.

Albany at that time could boast of one of the most powerful dramatic companies that ever graced the boards of any theatre in either hemisphere.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

George Barrett, I presume, had no superior as a light comedian, in the world; and his wife, too, was a chaste, accomplished actress. Her maiden name was Henry. She was a native of Boston, and said to have been the handsomest and most fascinating belle in that city. Mrs. Barrett was enacting the Bavarian Girl one evening at the Pearl Street Theatre, and while singing the broom song approached her husband, saying—"Buy a broom? Buy a little one for the baby?" "Lord bless you," says Barrett, "I haven't got any babies; I wish I had, and you was the mother of them!" They were childless. She died in Boston. Miss Tilden, also, of Gilfert's company, was an enchanting actress, and a most amiable and accomplished lady. Miss Grey was a sweet vocalist, a beautiful and exemplary woman, and a great favorite. Mrs. Gilfert, as a tragic actress, had few equals. She was very highly accomplished, exceedingly modest and retiring, and her society was much sought by the best class of our citizens. After Gilfert's death she opened a school in New York for the instruction of young ladies in music, drawing and other branches of polite education.

There are but few of that bright galaxy of artists who graced the boards of the South Pearl Street Theatre left—gone, gone to the tomb. The same may be said of Duffy and Forrest's company, Burrough's and Dinneford and Blake's, who succeeded Gilfert.



In relation to Edwin Forrest, then one of Gilfert's stock company, I well remember when he came to this city from the southern or southwestern theatres, (though a native of Philadelphia) and made his *debut* in the South Pearl Street Theatre—then a young man, I should think not over 21 years old. He was rather a wild fellow; what is modernly termed a fast young man, fond of fun, and a good lark now and then without especial regard to the expense; but he at once became a favorite with all classes, both on and off the stage, but particularly the younger portion of theatre-goers. He was counted a good melo-dramatic actor by some, and tip-top in anything by others.

#### Forrest's Physical Powers.

As an evidence of the wonderful strength of Forrest, I will state a little incident that occurred while he was playing a star engagement at the Pearl Street Theatre. The play was *The Gladiator*. Old Dummy Allen, his costumer, was assigned the part of one of the principal gladiators—a very important part—as Spartacus (Forrest) has a long and severe combat with him. Just as the scene in the arena was to commence, a constable by the name of Chet. Moore entered with a warrant against Allen, for an old score he had run upon some former visit to Albany. Chet. deeming that a good time to collect the amount, arrested Allen, without intimating to Forrest the object of his visit. Forrest being informed of the fix Allen was in, grabbed Moore, who was a powerfully built man weighing over 200 pounds, and hurled him several feet away against the scenes, retaining in his grasp good sized pieces of Chet.'s coat, vest and shirt. Forrest gave his word that all things should be made right and the performance went on as though nothing had happened. Chet. was asked the next day—the affair having leaked out

—what he thought of Forrest's grip. "What do I think of it," replied Chet., "why, he's a perfect *corn cracker*, and ought to get out a patent for his machine!"

### Forrest in Acrobatic Feats.

It has been doubted by some if Forrest ever performed feats of agility in the circus, but there is no mistake about it. He performed in the North Pearl Street Amphitheatre for Bill Gates' benefit, on a wager (he was at the time attached to the South Pearl Street Theatre, then under the management of Gilfert), in a still vanlting act, creating shouts of laughter and applause from those present who knew it was Ned. The dress he wore on that occasion was from the wardrobe of the establishment, and consisted of an enormous pair of Turkish trousers, breast-plate and fly—his feet were adorned with a pair of sheep-skin pumps—the kind worn by a numerous train of auxiliaries. But few knew him, and much fun was in vogue at Ned's expense. For Charley Young's benefit, he also made a flying leap through a barrel of *red fire*, singeing his eyebrows all off! This was his last "big leap" in the show business. Major Jacob Fredenrich is supposed to have been the person who held the stakes (\$10) which was bet that Forrest dare not turn a sommersault at Bill Gates' benefit. Sol. Smith, in his Reminiscences, says he saw Forrest with a show in Kentucky. "Ned was performing flip-flaps at the rate of 240 per minute, and the way he kicked the dust was a caution to owls!" Forrest played for Obe. Woodhull's benefit at the Park Theatre before he played at Gilfert's Bowery Theatre. Forrest, in a letter dated Albany, January, 1826, says: "To-morrow night I do Timour for the first time. O, tempora! O, mores!" This was in Gilfert's company. Bob Laidly was then playing the same part at the North Pearl Street Circus. A letter from Forrest, dated Washington, October

14, 1826, says: "I play Damon for the first time to-morrow night." He says in the same letter: "I was detained and did not reach Washington in time. Charley Webb appeared as my *sub*, and played Rolla exceedingly well." In another letter he says: "Albany is not the sphere for me! I shall play with Kean." Forrest was a great admirer of Kean.

### The First Circus in Albany.

As far as can be ascertained, the first circus that ever visited Albany performed on the open lot near where Fort Orange formerly stood, now the steamboat landing. The riders were Mr. and Mrs. Stewart, from England. They had no canvas—nothing but stakes and ropes to form a ring for the riders. Collections were taken up by the clown among the audience outside the ring. Mrs. Stewart was a fearless, graceful rider.

Ricketts' English Circus, after having been burnt out at the corner of Fifth and Chestnut streets, Philadelphia, in 1795, proceeded north, performing in New York and Albany, and returning thence to England. West's company performed at Albany in 1820, in the Colonie, back of a stonecutter's yard. West was from England, and had one of the most magnificent stud of horses ever seen on this side of the Atlantic. His company performed several seasons at the Broadway Circus. They first produced *Timour the Tartar*, *Cataract of the Ganges*, *Blue Beard*, &c. West sold out to Price & Simpson, of the old Park Theatre, and returned to England wealthy. He is still living at York Cottage, in Yorkshire. Levi North married his daughter in England some years ago.

### Price & Simpson, and other Circuses.

The palmy days of the Price & Simpson Circus began to decline in 1826. The animals all perished in a gale of

five days' duration, on board the ship *Orbit*, while going around by sea to Charleston from Baltimore. A beautiful animal (Fanny More) was alone saved of the entire stud. It was described as a terrible scene—the poor animals followed in the wake of the vessel until they disappeared, one after another, beneath the waves. After this disaster circuses seemed to have died out for a time.

Pepin Burchard, with a French circus from Spain, landed in Boston in 1806. They performed in conjunction with West at Philadelphia. Pepin built the Walnut Street Theatre. One of his riders (Burt) is still living in Philadelphia. Pepin was an officer in the cavalry of France, and had a thorough military education. He was one of the most graceful horsemen of the time and the Beau Nash of that day. Pepin was born in Albany, at the corner of North Market street and the Colonie. His parents were French, and left Albany for Paris when Pepin was two years of age. I received the above account of him at New Orleans.

Laison had a circus, in opposition to Ricketts', at the corner of Fifth and Prune streets, Philadelphia, in 1796, and it was an extensive establishment. The pantomime and riding troupe were all Frenchmen. They embarked for the West Indies, and were never heard of afterwards, while their building fell down under the great weight of snow on the roof, just as a company of soldiers left it, it being used as a place to drill in. There was a rumor that the highwayman that attacked the inn kept by Mrs. Pye, between Albany and Troy, many years ago, was one of Pepin's horsemen. He was a southerner, and made a Mazeppa leap on his fleet mare from the quay. After a long chase at Greenbush he was shot, it is said, by Billy Winne. The highwayman died in Albany jail of the wounds.

There was a circus on the hill in Albany, just above the jail in State street, corner of Eagle street. Parsons was

proprietor—this was before he opened the Pearl street show in 1826. It was on this spot that Joe Martin exhibited his wild beasts. Tippo Sultan, the great elephant, was the star, being the second elephant ever seen in America. Tippo saved Joe's life in the Bowery, New York, in 1822, under the following circumstances: Two tigers had got loose from their cages in the absence of their keepers. Martin came into the caravan at this moment, to find one of the tigers had torn the lama to pieces, and was feeding on it. The other tiger had attacked the lion, the lion holding the tiger in "*chancery*." The tiger that was feeding upon the lama then made at Joe—Joe had a cane in his hand, and kept the tiger at bay till he got to Tippo, who, quick as thought, with his trunk placed Joe on his back in safety. Tippo threw the tiger with great violence to the roof of the building; the alarm was given and the animals secured. It was a most miraculous escape for Joe. This circus consisted of John Stickney and wife, Bill Gates, clown (many years low comedian at the Bowery Theatre), Jim Westervelt, rider (died from the effects of a fall from his horse at Syracuse), Mat De Garmo, son of Dr. De Garmo, of Albany, Jake Burton, an Albany boy (poor Jake died in the mines of Galena), Ned Carter, slack rope. The wonderful pony Billy, 30 inches high, was a great curiosity in those days. Old Bill Jones was the groomsman of this circus, and is, I believe, still living in Albany. There was also a theatrical entertainment given here. Duffy played Timour, the stage being "mother earth." The dressing rooms were in the rear of the old jail. Mrs. Thompson played Zorilda—her charger flew up the steps like a cat. She sang comic songs and danced the slack wire, and was alive a few years ago, the wife of a strolling actor named Chip. Mrs. Prichard, formerly Mrs. Tatnall, played here. She was an excellent actress, and married Ham Hassick, the son of the celebrated Dr. Hassick, of

New York. I have a letter in my possession from Mrs. P., written from New Orleans. She writes: "I am now about to leave New Orleans forever," and so she did. The steamboat on which she was took fire on Red river, and she perished. She was a beautiful woman. She was born in Boston, Pemberton being her maiden name. The actors boarded, at that day, at Foot's Inn, State street, near the Capitol.

Old Jefferson gave a theatrical entertainment in Harmony hall. A first class artist, he painted the scenes himself.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### John Biven's Theatre.

Old Biven had a theatrical company in 1822-3, at the Thespian hotel, in North Pearl street. Charley Webb was the tragedian. Webb was found drowned in the canal at Washington, a few years ago. He abandoned the stage for a short time, and commenced an engagement in the pulpit—getting tired of preaching he again joined the profession.

Mrs. Meline was the vocalist. Forbes and Rufus W. Blake played here. Forbes had a most remarkable faculty of turning *ashy pale* at will when occasions required. I never heard of any one possessing such control over the color of his face. His wife, a handsome woman, used to sing the then new *Coming thro' the Rye*, with great effect. Forbes, if I remember rightly, married a Miss Eaton, or Eston, whose parents resided in Fox (now Canal street), in Albany.

Blanchard's circus came from Quebec in 1826, and joined Parsons' at the North Pearl street. Blanchard was an Englishman. He died at Louisville, Ky., in 1837, and was buried by the Masonic fraternity. His son George is still living in that city. Cecelia Blanchard broke her leg while riding at Utica, in 1828, and it had to be amputated. William, the bare back rider, died in Martinique (W. I.) in 1831. Blanchard opened the new amphitheatre, Baltimore, in 1829, and realized a fortune, but subsequently lost all. He opened the Chatham Garden, New York, as a circus, and failed. For many years he kept a small inn

on the Bloomingdale road. Madame Blanchard is now a French cook in New York. Cecelia is still living in New York. The immortal *Nosey* Phillips, of free lunch memory, was Blanchard's right hand man at this time. I hear he is defunct. Well, if he is dead, he has *paid one debt* at all events. So peace to his ashes!

Old Biven opened Vauxhall Garden, in North Pearl street, in 1826. Here ice cream, fire works and Doty's paintings flourished for a while and caved in. Franklin sang the *Hunters of Kentucky*, a song that was all the go in that day. Le Febre balanced guns on one tooth, etc. A small stage was erected in front of a fountain, and on those boards strutted the African champion, Hewlet. This darkey was *some* in Richard and Othello. On the stage he tore King Dick to flinders, and of a hot summer's night the audience kept a respectful distance from the foot lights (penny dips), in consequence of the strong goat-like odor diffused over the garden. Shakspeare's proud representative, as Hewlet styled himself, was detected in New York in

"Taking things that wasn't hizzen,  
Then arrested and sent to prizzen."

Richard Riker, recorder of New York, gave Hewlet a star engagement at Bellevue for one year, with a clear benefit at the expiration of the time. After receiving sentence, Hewlet placed himself in a theatrical attitude, exclaiming, "Lead me back to my straw,"—"I have done the state some service." Riker replied by saying "he should do the state some *more* good service." Old Hays, the renowned high constable, dropped the curtain, and Hewlet was led back to his straw!

There was a show shop at the corner of Division and Green streets. Theatricals, circenses, &c., flourished there for a short time, in 1823-24. Old Vilalave and family danced the rope here.



## Parsons' Amphitheatre.

The amphitheatre of Parsons, in North Pearl street—where the Methodist Church now stands—was probably one of the most spacious and perfect in all its appointments in the Union. The ring and stage were immense. The rear of the building was constructed with an opening into a garden over a hundred feet in depth, thus affording a grand display in getting up such spectacles as the *Cataract of the Ganges*, *Blue Beard*, the *Siege of Montgatz*, &c., with processions of men, horses and elephants, that produced a grand and truly imposing effect.

The following are the names of some of the *dramatic* company attached to this establishment: Messrs. Kenyon, Thompson, Lamb, Laidley, Stevenson, Henry Eberlee, Somerville, C. W. Taylor, Logan (father of Eliza Logan, the celebrated American *tragedienne*, lately retired with a fortune), Avery, Roper, Mrs. Hatch, Mrs. Johnny Cooke, Miss Eberlee, Miss Hatch, Mrs. Lamb, Miss Robertson, &c.

The *equestrian* corps consisted of West, ring master, Masters Jake Burton, Rockwell, W. and J. Bancker, Calahan, Bill Gates, clown (afterwards first low comedian at the Bowery Theatre), Mrs. Williams, *equestrienne*, Hunter, the greatest bare-back rider in the world, Stickney, &c. The *Cataract of the Ganges*, and spectacles of the like character, were brought out here in a style of splendor probably never equaled. The stud of horses was not surpassed in number, splendor and dexterity. The celebrated horse White Surrey was one of the most graceful, beautiful, learned creatures that ever entered the ring. Surrey did the leading business in tricks, storming fortresses, dashing up cataracts, and other wonderful feats. Many will remember the *Cataract of the Ganges*, and the real water, and the precipice up which Mrs. Cooke rode through the spray, upon that wonderful horse. After this business came to an end, Johnny Cooke opened a garden on State

street, directly opposite the Capitol, on the lot now occupied by the residence of Mr. Geo. S. Weaver. He made very little money there, but was of some service to agriculture in the line of irrigation, in this way: He used to exhibit fireworks at this place, and it was only necessary to post up his bills to announce the fireworks to bring on a shower, that generally terminated in settled rain. The clerk of the weather apparently had a special grudge against Johnny, and the windows of heaven seemed to have been situated directly over his garden. Cooke served in the Mexican war, and in the war of the rebellion, returning from the latter minus an arm. He still resides in the city—his wife died many years ago—a devoted member of the Methodist church. We are happy to state that “Captain Johnny” is in a tolerable state of preservation, considering the many vicissitudes through which he has passed. He can be daily seen at the Adjutant General’s office, in the Capitol, assiduously attending to his multifarious duties, happy as a lord, with a smile ever suffusing his benign and venerable face.

#### Joke about the Bears.

In one of the spectacular pieces brought out at the North Pearl Street Amphitheatre, a couple of bears were introduced, and for lack of real bruins a couple of bipeds, David Terry, now living in our city, and John Stanwix, brother of George Stanwix, then quite youngsters, were rigged up in bear skins, heads, ears, tail and all. The bears were brought on the stage, the keeper having a sharp instrument, something like a foil with sharp point, with which he “stirred up the animals” when occasion required, and as the bear (Stanwix) did not move as rapidly as was desired, the keeper pricked Stanwix in a tender spot; this so stirred up his bearship’s anger that he jumped upon his feet at once, stripped off his bear’s gear,

squared off, and "striking from the shoulder," knocked the keeper off the stage into the pit! This little scene not being in the programme, naturally enough took better than anything offered, as was testified by long and loud shouts of laughter and applause!

Duffy & Forrest's company are, I believe, nearly all dead. William Forrest was a printer. It is a little strange that most of the actors of the olden time, especially Americans, were printers. They bowed and strutted their "brief hour" before the immortal Ramage press and then were heard of no more as printers. I was one of a theatrical company some twenty-one years ago—the whole establishment was fully represented by the craft. It was a strolling troupe, and traveled through the interior of Pennsylvania. Charley Porter, the veteran actor (still living) was a printer; also, Harry Henkins, who learned his trade with the Harpers. T. B. Johnson, then a novice but not a *stick*, for he has since made a good *impression*. Joe Gilbert, who afterwards married Mary Duff, and Peter Logan, were printers. The latter died on board a steamboat on the Ohio river a few years ago. The ladies consisted of Charlotte Cushman, Susan Cushman and Mrs. Logan.

The death of Mr. Duffy occurred at Albany, March 12, 1838. William Forrest died in Philadelphia in 1834. The last part he played was the *ghost* in a burlesque called *High, Low, Jack and the Game*, in the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, and exclaimed (his last words), as he descended through the stage, "D. I. O."—(damn me, I'm off). Forrest died suddenly that night. Harry Quinn was one of that company; like Alec Simpson, he had lost his memory. The last night he ever appeared on the stage was at the Arch Street Theatre. His dress was half off—he stood bewildered—Joe Horton apologized for him, and Quinn was led off the stage. He died shortly afterwards at Blakely Hospital. Rossiter, who played small parts,

afterwards ended his life in deep tragedy—he committed suicide in the theatre. Col. James Wallace is still living—he was editor and proprietor of the *Daily Sun* for many years. He is now assistant editor of one of the Louisville papers. The colonel married the sister of Charles Durang. She was formerly Mrs. Godey, a most excellent actress, attached to the old Park Theatre for many years. Fielding, of that company, died in the west. The last I saw of him was in Kentucky. He made a firm resolve to abandon the profession, as times had become desperately bad. Fielding was missed—no person knew of his whereabouts, not even his landlord! I chanced to be traveling through the country one day, and discovered Fielding hoeing corn. It was a very hot day. In his left hand he held a pocket umbrella, in the right his hoe, a three-cornered Panama hat on his head, buff stage boots on his feet, and a pair of fashionable eye-glasses over his nose. He informed me that he had got along finely that day, for he had hoed *four hills!* His *manager* (the farmer) was a Methodist preacher, and a very humane man.

John Kent and his sisters were attached to this company. Mrs. Herbert (Ellen Kent) is the oldest of the sisters. The youngest (Eliza) married little Harry Knight, a low comedian, at Quebec. Knight had his leg cut off on the railroad between Baltimore and Philadelphia, in 1839, and died from the effects. His widow married George Mossop—a divorce followed, and she married a Mr. De Costa, a merchant of Philadelphia, and retired from the stage. Mossop then married the divorced wife of Harry Hunt, the vocalist. She was once a juvenile prodigy (Miss Lane), daughter of Mrs. Kinlock, formerly attached to the Albany Museum company. After Mossop died she married John Drew, one of the very best comedians extant.

## John Drew and the Drew Family.

John Drew was the greatest Irish comedian since Power's time. Mr. Drew died at his residence, in Philadelphia, at half past four o'clock Wednesday afternoon, May 21, 1862, aged 35, probably from disease of the heart. He was born in Dublin, Ireland, and entered the British navy when a mere boy. When very young he went upon the stage and by degrees attained a world-wide reputation in Irish characters. In Europe, America and Australia he was equally popular. Only a few years ago, after concluding a splendid engagement with Mr. Bourcicault in England, he returned to this country, and completed an engagement of one hundred and one nights at his wife's Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia. In New York Mr. Drew was feted by all the members of his profession, and he proposed to return to England, to play a starring engagement. "Man proposes and God disposes." Nothing but a lifeless corpse was left of John Drew—the popular actor, the polished gentleman, the Irish Yorick, the fast friend, the good fellow—except his pleasant memory. The funeral was attended by a vast concourse of persons of both sexes. He was followed to Glenwood Cemetery by the Masonic fraternity, the Actors' Order of Friendship, citizens, &c. Many of the theatrical profession from New York were present. Mrs. Drew is a widow for the third time. What changes of scene has this lady seen since she bore the name of Louisa Lane, then the infant prodigy at the Park Theatre, and at a later date at the Pearl Street Theatre in Albany. Mrs. Drew continues to conduct the Arch Street Theatre, as heretofore. John Drew was married in Albany in 1850, to Mrs. Mossop, formerly Mrs. Hunt. This *engagement* was no doubt the luckiest one John ever made, for on that instant, such was the popularity of this versatile, charming and accomplished actress, who, we venture to assert without fear of contradiction, had not then an

equal in this or any other country, he could command an engagement at any theatre, and it is doubtful whether she now has an equal as a general actress. Mrs. Drew was for a long time the "bright particular star" and universal favorite, at Harry Meech's Museum.

John Proctor, the prompter, well known in Albany, in the South Pearl Street Theatre, was one of the massacred at the battle of Williamsburgh. He, as well as his companions in arms, begged for quarters, but in vain. The rebels fired eight bullets through the body of poor Proctor, and beat his brains out! He was buried from his residence in Philadelphia. The Williamsburgh just mentioned is the place where the first theatrical representation by a regular company of comedies took place in America. This was Hallam's company. The first piece played was the *Merchant of Venice*, in 1752. During the revolution they occasionally played at Philadelphia, and in Nassau street, New York.

The Drew family, which has become well known to the public on account of the talent possessed by its members, and which has been chiefly directed to the profession of the stage, has experienced a sad mortality among its male members. Mr. John Drew died on the 21st of May. His brother, Edward Drew, captain in Berdan's regiment of sharpshooters, was killed on the 22d of July before Richmond, while gallantly leading his men in battle. A third brother, George Drew, died at Fortress Monroe, of typhoid fever, incurred while on duty with the Forty-Ninth New York, on the 17th of August. Of four brothers, the only survivor and only male representative of the family is Mr. Frank, at this writing filling an engagement at the St. Louis Theatre.

## John Green—John Hamilton.

John Green, who recently died in Nashville, Tenn., was born in Philadelphia in 1795, of Irish parents, was a printer, and learned his trade in Shippen, near Fifth street. Old Jack was one of the pioneer actors of the west. His personation of Irish characters could not be excelled, and this was the opinion of the critics of the day. His wife was a talented actress, and a most amiable and accomplished lady. She was subject to deafness, which annoyed her much on the stage as she could hear but very indistinctly the words of the actors. Mrs. Green was the original Lady Randolph to Forrest's Young Norval. John Green was a good-hearted man, and was his own worst enemy. He was a member of the American Dramatic Company for a number of years. He has a daughter living in Philadelphia. Edwin Forrest and John Green were warm personal friends from earliest boyhood. The last I saw of John Hamilton, the assassin, was in Louisville, Ky., twenty-three years ago. He was subject to fits of insanity—during their paroxysms he would rave like a maniac, his friends holding him with all their strength. He imagined the form of his victim was gazing upon him in a supplicating manner, and fiends, with serpents entwined around their heads, were about to convey him to hell! These scenes were truly horrifying to all persons present. Hamilton married old Dyke's daughter, a strolling manager of the west. She was quite young, the widow of an actor by the name of Robinson. Hamilton died in one of his ravings, in an obscure village in Tennessee. Hamilton was also a printer, and worked in various offices in Albany. He would *sub it* during the day, and play at the theatre at night. He generally played second old men, assisted in choruses, and was what is termed a general utility man.

The following comprised Duffy & Forrest's company, at the Pearl Street Theatre: John Green, Wallace, Proctor

(since starring it in Europe), John Herbert, Riley, John Kent, W. S. Walton, Bobby Meer, John Hamilton, Johnson, Corey, Fielding, Lansing (Lans. Dougherty), James, Frederick, Parkinson, Harry Knight, Harrison, McConachy, Master Meer, Mrs. Greene, Mrs. Meer, Miss Woodhull, Miss Ellen Kent, Miss Eliza Kent.

Jack Collins, with his round, red and good natured phiz, strutted on the Albany boards. Jack was a good fellow and a fair actor. He was the son of Lord Dacres, with whom the Yankees contended on the broad Atlantic. Collins died in New Orleans.

#### Henry Rockwell—A Romantic Life.

Henry Rockwell, a handsome boy, from Utica, was one of Parsons' apprentices at the North Pearl Street Circus. He became manager of various companies in the United States, erected a theatre in Cincinnati, and at one time was quite wealthy, but he failed in the business, and died shortly afterwards. A gentleman by the name of Bagely, of Albany, was his guardian, and his life was strange and romantic. It never was rightly known who his parents were. In the fall of 1836 I was standing in company with Rockwell one cold night, on the corner of Camp and Poydras streets, New Orleans. An English woman approached us with two small boys, about five and seven years of age. She seemed weighed down with grief. She asked if we knew of any humane person who would take her children and rear them—she had married a second husband, who was a Balize pilot, and she resided with him at the South West Pass of the Mississippi river. This spot is one of the most dreary of God forsaken places, the pilot's house being erected on piles and surrounded by swamps, drift logs and alligators. The mother informed us that her husband had conceived an ill feeling towards her children, and at his request she had come up



to the city, to get rid of them, or never return herself. Rockwell took the oldest boy, and a man by the name of *Outlaw*, a constable, took the other. It was a heart-rending scene, to see the mother and children part forever! Outlaw, being a man of dissolute habits, neglected the child that was given to him, and it died soon afterwards of yellow fever. Rockwell well trained the other little fellow in the arts and mysteries of the ring, and he soon became a great favorite. Little John became the youthful rider in a company that commenced its tour through Florida and Alabama, and was taken sick—physicians pronounced it a hopeless case—the company was obliged to leave for other towns northward, and were reluctantly compelled to leave him, and, it was supposed, forever, in the hands of strangers. Many years passed, and the fate of Little John remained a mystery. I happened to be in New Orleans on another occasion, and one night, at a masquerade ball, a rough, sea-faring man approached me and asked my name, and if I knew one Rockwell. He was the step-father of John C. He informed me that his wife had been dead many years, but before she died she had received a letter from her son in Alabama. This was Little John. He recovered from his sickness, and, like *Oliver Twist*, had fallen into the hands of a good Samaritan, the daughter of his benefactor. Now the curtain drops on this strange drama. The youthful rider I have spoken of was one of the fillibustering party under Lopez, who was captured and garroted at Cuba, a few years ago.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### Mons. Mallet.

In the orchestra of Biven's Theatre, North Pearl street, near the corner of Patroon, was an old Frenchman by the name of Mons. Mallet (pronounced Malla). This was the identical person from whose history Hackett, the actor, first conceived the idea of forming the play of *Mons. Mallet*. Mallet was ardently attached to Napoleon, and after the exile of the emperor, was obliged to flee to the United States, leaving behind him an only and beautiful daughter. He took up his abode in an obscure New England village. He called daily at the post-office for a letter from his daughter, asking for a letter for Mons. *Malla*, and was of course answered in the negative, the clerk seeing no such name as Malla (spelt Mallet.) The poor Frenchman was nearly insane at the disappointment—still he called at the post-office daily, and received the usual answer of “no letter for Mons. Malla.” By accident the letter was discovered by a person who understood French, and the old Frenchman received the joyful news of his daughter's safety. She shortly afterwards arrived in the United States. Mr. Hackett was playing Mons. Mallet many years ago in Boston. Judge of his surprise when he was informed that the hero of this play was then in the orchestra!

### Terrible Scene—Death of Low!

I became acquainted with two young men in the South-western country some twenty-two years ago. They were

Albanians, and had embraced the theatrical profession. They passed through the most thrilling scenes I ever heard of on the stage of life. The first one's name was James Low. He was the low comedian at the Louisville theatre, under the management of Mrs. Drake. Madame Celeste was at that time playing the *French Spy*. Low was playing Toney, the comic part in the piece. In the fighting scene Toney rushes on the stage with a bayonet in his right hand — he pretends to be killed, and lies down as if dead — he suddenly rises to his feet and hurries off the stage backwards. In this manner poor Low rushed off the stage clinching the instrument of his death! His hand came in contact with one of the wings with great force, and ran the bayonet deep into his groin, and he staggered into the green room. I was near him when he expired. His last words were “*Mother!*” The scene was truly horrible. The contortions of the painted face while in the agonies of death, can never be effaced from the memory of those who witnessed this melancholy sight. The performance proceeded notwithstanding.

#### Capsizing of a Vessel — Terrible Suffering — An Intensely Thrilling Scene!

The other person was Lansing Dougherty, son of Counselor Dougherty, of Albany, who was attached to Duffy & Forrest's company, under the name of Lansing. He started for Texas from New York, on board a schooner, with a theatrical company. The vessel, during a severe gale in the gulf, was capsized at midnight! All the passengers and crew were lost except Dougherty and another young man whose name I have forgotten. They managed to hold on to their berths for two days, there being just room enough between the decks for their heads to remain out of water, in their living tomb. The sea had finally become calm, and they had as much light

as if in a diving bell. They could distinctly see the sharks playing about and devouring their companions! They resolved to make one desperate *dive* for the companion way, and reach the keel of the vessel if possible. Dougherty's companion was to dive first and, if successful, was to give a loud knock on the planks. He made the first dive, and was successful. In a few moments Dougherty heard the knock. He also made the fearful dive, and reached the keel of the vessel. But here fresh horrors and suffering awaited them. For three long dreary days they clung to the vessel in the broiling sun, with no clothing but their shirts! Their bodies became full of blisters and sores from the heated copper on the keel. They were finally picked up by a vessel and brought to New Orleans—the most miserable looking subjects the eye ever beheld. I obtained the account from Dougherty shortly after he came out of the hospital. I last saw Dougherty at Cincinnati, playing old men in John Youngs' company.

Miss Pelby, an excellent actress, played at this theatre. She was from Boston, and the daughter of manager Pelby. Her mother, a very talented lady, modeled the group of wax statuary, *The Trial of Christ*. The Mestayer family are related to the Pelby's. Mrs. Mestayer and Mrs. Pelby are sisters.

Mrs. C. Thorne—wife of Charley Thorne, the actor, who has received an immense fortune from his father's estate, in New York—is niece of Mrs. Pelby. The Mestayer family were all connected with the stage. John was a low comedian—he is dead. Lewis played old men. Charley is dead. His widow is Barney Williams' wife. Old Mestayer is dead. Harry Mestayer was connected with the circus. He was an excellent violin player.

The first tight rope dancer of any note flourished in the reign of Charles II. His name was Johnny Hall. Ducrow was a famous rope dancer and rider. Herr Cline

was born in London. His brother Andrew, a Herculean performer, was born in Germany. Thomas, another brother, was a melo-dramatic actor of the old Franklin Theatre, New York. His daughter was Jerry Merrifield's wife. Jerry Merrifield was found dead in his bed at St. Louis, August, 1862. He was well known in Albany; he was a good comedian, and a clever fellow generally.

Goff, the man-monkey, was one of Ducrow's productions. The bills of the day metamorphosed Goff into a Frenchman, known as Mons. *Goffe*. He was a London cockney, and came as near imitating the monkey as any human being could, on or off the stage. He performed in Albany. He came to the United States with Fletcher, the statue man. Fletcher married Miss Geer, of Duffy & Forrest's company.

Edmond S. Connor is living in New York. He married Charlotte, daughter of Jack Barnes. Connor was at one time manager of the Green Street Theatre, Albany. Old Mrs. Barnes—once a star of the first magnitude—is still living. She was sister to Mrs. Walstein, who played old women equal to Mrs. Barrett, of Gilfert's company. Mrs. Walstein was attached to Biven's company—the theatre being in Division street, near Green.

### The Mysterious Egg—The Frightened Barber—Old Tweed Dale.

Mr. Danfield had out flaming posters that he would give a grand exhibition of fireworks on the hill, in Washington street, near the old hay scales, in 1824 or '25. Fireworks had been played out, in a manner. Several exhibitions of that kind had been given by a Mr. Buckmaster. Mr. B. had declared that he would astonish the Bucktails at one of his fiery exhibitions (many years before the display intended upon the hill), old Buck astonished himself, as well as the doctors. He was foolhardy

enough to fire one of the rockets with a lighted cigar held in his *mouth*, and retired a wiser and better man, but terribly burned. Danfield's exhibition was a miserable failure for the following curious reason: About this time a hen's egg was found in a nest in the neighborhood of Isaac Dennison's mansion. On the egg, in bas relief letters, was this strange inscription: "*Oh, ye sinners, repent, for the world will be burned on the tenth day of November!*" Very few persons thought of amusement—the excitement ran high. There were no spiritualists or Millerites in those days, and, if there had been, they would have been thrown far in the background. Knots of sinners could be seen on the corners of the streets, discussing the coming event. Some folks fairly howled with fear and trembling. Some became as patient as lambs about to be led to the slaughter and awaited the coming of the "general muss" with christian resignation. A poor devil, a barber, became so nervous while shaving a customer, that he actually shaved off one of his ears! Old grandfather *Tweed Dale*, of the Lancaster school (who never flogged the urchins) was minus of scholars for many a day. The fighting youths of the hill and Fox's Creek ceased to batter each other with brickbats during this awful suspense. *Hittites* had played out. Jim Boardman, who "built stronger than the mason," and who was always on hand to assist the coroner in rifling the pockets of drowned persons, declared that the "folks were crazy, when they might escape the conflagration by putting for Lower Canada." Old Penny, a demented street preacher, pitched into the sinners right and left, and warned all hands to keep their eyes skinned for the fatal 10th of November! John Winne and Lew McIntosh, typos, said "the 10th might come and be blowed!" They had received nothing but lottery tickets for their services (the boss gave lottery tickets to the jours in lieu of cash). They had drawn nothing but blanks for six months, and

had become desperate!" Johnny Feltman gave them fatherly advice, and with tears in his eyes begged them to "repent, and remember the little scores on his slate before the 10th." The affair, of course, turned out to be a decidedly *bad egg*. The hoax was got up by a shoemaker, by preparing the shell of the egg with a strong acid, after putting on the letters. Hence this grand hubbub among the weak-minded and credulous!

## CHAPTER XXX.

### “Pinkster Day”—Old King Charley.

Old Platt, a magician, performed slight-of-hand and ventriloquism on public occasions in the summer. Among some of the interesting experiments performed by the professor were running pins and needles in various parts of his body, biting and licking a red-hot poker. A collection was then taken up for old Platt's benefit. He could generally be seen, with his violin, on *Pinkster day*, on the hill—Pinkster hill—south of the Capitol, among the darkies. Pinkster day was a great day, a gala day, or rather week—for they used to keep it up a week—among the darkies. The dances were the original Congo dances, as danced in their native Africa. They had a chief—Old King Charley. The old settlers said Charley was a prince in his own country, and was supposed to have been one hundred and twenty-five years old at the time of his death! On these festivals old Charley was dressed in a strange and fantastical costume. Nearly bare legged, he wore a red military coat trimmed profusely with variegated ribbons, and a small black hat with a pompon stuck in the side. The dances and antics of these darkies must have afforded great amusement for the ancient burghers. As a general thing the music consisted of a sort of drum, or instrument constructed out of a box with sheep-skin heads, upon which old Charley did most of the beating, accompanied by singing some queer African air. Charley generally led off the dance, when the Sambos and



Phyllis, juvenile and antiquated, would put in the double-shuffle-heel-and-toe-breakdown, in a manner that would have thrown Master Diamond and other modern cork-onians somewhat in the shade. These festivals seldom failed to attract large crowds from the city, as well as from the rural districts, affording them any amount of unalloyed fun. Negro minstrelsy has held its own down to the present day, now in full feather—it is likely to so continue for years to come.

### The Menagerie—The “What Is It?”

Thirty-five years ago a sort of menagerie opened in the stable opposite Bowsby's Hotel, in North Market street, southwest corner of Van Tromp street. The lower part of the building is now occupied as a stove store, &c., and the upper part by several families. Bowsby's was considered a first-class hotel in those days, equal to Skinner's and Rockwell's, afterwards called the City Hotel and Mansion House, (the sites of those two celebrated hotels are now occupied by those magnificent structures, Marble Hall and Ransom's Building.) Bowsby's Hotel had been previously kept by Reuben Smith, uncle to Captain Henry Smith, a brave young officer, aid to General Scott in his Mexican campaign, in which he lost his life. Members of the legislature, and other dignitaries, sojourned at this house. But to the show—it consisted of two cub bears—Dandy Jack, a gloomy looking monkey, was the star—a calf with two heads, and a monster that was thrown upon the beach at Staten Island—at least so the showman informed the audience. It was drawn on four wheels, and was about twenty feet long—it was a sort of *What is it*. Its tail resembled that of a whale—its body was black and smooth, the head square, with a pair of eyes resembling two bung holes in a large sized hogshead. Dr. Latham was the manager. Stevens, in his travels in South Amer-

ica, speaks of finding a small ranche on the Andes, I think, and was greatly astonished to discover human beings living in this remote region. He hailed, in Spanish, two men, but judge of his surprise when he was answered in English, by two live Yankees: Dr. Latham and his partner, who were trapping wild beasts!

### Menagerie Destroyed by a Mob!

This menagerie I have spoken of was destroyed by a mob at Waterloo, in the western part of the state. The manager had changed the critter to a whale. The show folks besmeared it through the day with a very rancid kind of oil—the odor having the effect to keep the meddling audience at a respectful distance, as close examination would be fatal to the whale stock. A prying, meddlesome lawyer—a *Yankee*, of course—felt extremely anxious to ascertain the exact thickness of the whale's hide. He accordingly took out his knife, regardless of the *whale y* smell, and cut a large hole in the side of the monster. The lawyer was completely dumbfounded. The monster of the deep had a body made of *sole-leather*!—his tail was the only thing that was Simon pure about his whaleship. The manager and his assistants carried their wardrobe, trunks, etc., in the whale's belly—(probably taking the idea from old Jonah)! The head of the whale was portable, or *come-off-able*. Suffice it to say, as soon as the trick was discovered the mob *harpooned* the entire show. This was some time previous to Barnum's day, and the art of humbugging had not arrived at the present pitch of perfection.

### Charley Parsons, or Roaring Ralph Stackpole.

But I am wandering too far from Albany—so I will resume the reminiscences of old Gotham. Charley Parsons played at the South Pearl Street Theatre, after Bur-

rough's time. Burroughs, a splendid melo-dramatic performer, managed for Sandford. Mrs. Hamblin, wife of Tom Hamblin, of the old Bowery, was the leading woman in this company. Parsons was an inferior actor, especially in tragedy—he was of Herculean frame, round shouldered, and had a voice like artificial stage thunder! He was a great favorite, however, in the southwest. He played Roaring Ralph Stackpole to perfection. Had Dr. Bird seen Ralph and Parsons he would have been puzzled to distinguish one from the other. It was actually worth the price of admission to *see* Parsons as Ralph, without his uttering a word. Parsons being a speculative genius, left the stage and went to preaching in the Methodist church at Louisville, but he soon slid backwards, and finally slid on the stage again—but the spec wouldn't pay; he made a failure, and so Roaring Ralph abandoned the devil's frying pan (the stage), and was once more received to the arms of his deserted flock. I heard him preach the next Sunday after he left the stage, but it was Roaring Ralph all through the sermon, the prayer, the benediction.

#### Clara Fisher and her Songs.

Among the celebrities that appeared about this time at the South Pearl Street Theatre, was Clara Fisher, who was the prodigy of her time. She was the youngest sister of Mrs. Vernon. Vernon had the management of the theatre for some time, till he lost his voice, and retired to a farm, where he died. He was the architect of the first St. Paul's Church, in Ferry street. The songs that came upon the stage at this time were the *Hunters of Kentucky, Wha'll be King but Charley, The Dashing White Sergeant*, sung by Miss Twibill; *Coming thro' the Rye*, sung by Mrs. Forbes. Sloman introduced *Kitty Clover*, and other popular comicalities. Miss Fisher sang with much effect *Full not in Love, dear Girls Beware*. The

songs soon wore out, and those who sung them had as brief a career.

Miss Twibill, a beautiful girl, who played at the Pearl Street Theatre, was the daughter of Twibill, an actor and vocalist, who was unequaled in nautical songs, such as the *Bay of Biscay*, *The Waterman*, *Harry Bluff*, &c. It was said that Twibill treated his daughter very cruelly at times. During one of Twibill's fits of anger, the gallant Tom Flynn, comedian, interfered with her heart, hand and fortune, and one day made the pretty and fascinating Miss Twibill Mrs. Flynn. Flynn was a genius in his way. He was engaged to play at the Pearl Street Theatre, and was to open as Young Rapid, in *Cure for the Heart Ache*. Night approached, the boat from New York was detained on the bar. Vernon, I think, was substituted for Flynn, but at the end of the first act Flynn arrived and finished the play. Old Jack Barnes and his wife were playing here at the time. Old Jack, in his own peculiar style, made an apology to the audience for Flynn, which was as good as a first-class farce, and the performance went off with immense *eclat*. Roberts, an excellent comedian, played that night. His rendition of Bailey Nichol Jarvie, in *Rob Roy*, was probably never equaled in either hemisphere. His French, Scotch, Irish and Cockney dialect was smooth, natural and perfect. He was in every sense of the word a gentleman and a scholar, amiable, and beloved by the profession, as well as by all who were fortunate enough to become acquainted with him. Roberts succeeded Gates at the Bowery. He died at Charleston. Roberts was a printer, and an excellent one, too.

#### Tom Flynn and the Elder Booth—How Booth's Nose was Broken.

Speaking of Tom Flynn reminds me of an incident of some importance. Tom broke the nose of the celebrated

tragedian Lucius Junius Booth, with a fire poker or tongs, at a hotel, I think, in Charleston, S. C. This was the cause of that very marked nasal sound in Booth's utterance. Previous to this unfortunate mishap Booth's face was very handsome—a perfect model; his nose was prominent, but not too much so, and a little inclined to acquline. His face, as all who ever saw it well remember, was “strangely beautiful,” and remarkably expressive. His eyes were of a dark blue, full, rolling, and as bright and piercing as the eagle's. Booth had the one great failing of indulging too freely in the bowl, though at times he would abstain from it for weeks, even months. Liquor would frequently produce upon him a state of frenzy that was sometimes terrible, and when these fits were on, he would as soon attack friend as foe. Even in his palmiest days, when Booth was *himself*, so deeply would he be engrossed in the character he represented, and be so completely *carried away* with it, that his brother actors were rather shy of him, and well on their guard lest he should play *real* tragedy with them. While Booth was playing Richard at the old Park Theatre, he chased, with sword in hand, an actor who played Richmond, out of the back door of the theatre into the park. Richmond, however, being the swiftest on foot, eluded him. Booth came very near killing Miss Johnson (afterwards Mrs. Hilson), at the Park Theatre. He was playing Othello, she Desdemona. In the scene where Othello is supposed to smother Desdemona, by placing a pillow over her face while she is in bed, Booth bore down the pillow with such force as nearly to suffocate her. The actors behind the scenes, fearing he was carrying the joke too far, or acting a little too naturally, rushed to the bed and extricated the fair Desdemona from her perilous situation.

But to return to the breaking of Booth's nose. Booth and Flynn, it appears, roomed together. In the course of the night, having just returned from the theatre, Booth

attacked Flynn, when in one of his fits, and in the dress of Iago, exclaiming as he approached him, in the language of Iago—

“Nothing can or shall content my soul  
’Till I am even with him, wife for wife ;  
Or failing so, yet that I have put the Moor  
At least into a jealousy so strong,  
That judgment cannot cure.”

Flynn in self-defence grabbed the fire poker and struck Booth in the face, breaking his nose! Flynn ever regretted the act, and would actually shed tears whenever allusion was made to the affair, for he absolutely idolized Booth.





ANDREW JACKSON ALLEN,

Old Customer of Edwin Forrest, in a Favorite Character.



## CHAPTER XXXI.

### Dummy Allen—Forrest's Costumer.

Andrew Jackson Allen, from the days of the old Green Street Theatre until his final exit from life's busy stage, was well known to the citizens of Albany. He was born in the city of New York, A. D., 1788, and his deafness was occasioned by a severe cold at sea. *Dummy*, as he was familiarly called, was a costumer, but occasionally acted. His taste and experience rendered Allen *au fait* in getting up stage costumes. He accompanied Forrest (*the Boy*, as he called him), to Europe, as costumer to the great tragedian. A gentleman of this city meeting Dummy, who had borrowed \$10 of him, accosted him with, "Mr. Allen, you would greatly oblige me by paying that ten dollars—I've waited a long time." "Oh yes, de poy (he always called Forrest the boy), blayed berry well considering he was so padly subborted." "Mr. Allen, I'm not talking about acting, I want the \$10." "I tink he will do petter de next time as de cast is petter." "Mr. Allen, will you step in at Harmony hall and take a drink?" "Buch oplidged to you, I tink I will, just come from rehearsal, and am berry dry!"

Many anecdotes are told of Allen. He was (in theatrical parlance) an inveterate *gag*, and would manage to draw a house for *his benefit*, when everybody else failed. Many years ago he advertised a grand balloon ascension from a stable on the hill, somewhere in Washington street. Two distinguished personages were to be the aeronauts, viz: Mons. *Gageremo* and Mademoiselle *Pussiremo*;

this announcement of course drew a crowd. The balloonists were two *tom cats*, dressed in the height of fashion, strapped tight under the balloon. The aeronauts ascended a short distance and then came down to mother earth, landing somewhere in Fox's creek, minus of life! On all such occasions Dummy got the proceeds of the exhibition first safe in his breeches pocket! His benefit took place at the Pearl Street Theatre, during Vernon's management. Dummy produced a grand Harlequin pantomime, acting "clown," for this night only, at the request of the F. F. A.'s. At the conclusion of the grand pantomime a balloon was to ascend from the back of the stage to the dome of the theatre, and there it was to make a "brilliant burst." The balloon was filled with lottery tickets, and the audience were to draw "several valuable prizes," made of *silver leather* — (Dummy being great on the manufacture of this article) — invented by the beneficiare, Andrew Jackson Allen. A miniature balloon was hauled up with a string after the aforesaid excruciating pantomime was concluded. Some person stationed above, at a given *cue*, emptied a bag of folded bits of paper upon the heads of the audience—*all blanks!* Dummy, at this time, was snugly at home, enjoying *golden* dreams in the arms of Morpheus.

#### Dummy Allen's Virginia Gag.

Sol. Smith, in his reminiscences, relates many anecdotes of Allen. Dummy was hard up at a small town in the valley of Virginia. His silver leather had become exhausted, and so he determined to give the Virginians an invaluable treat, viz: a grand balloon ascension, assisted by *Gageremo*, &c. A great rush of people from the surrounding mountains was the result. Such an exhibition had never been seen in those parts before, or—since! The balloon was about to be inflated, when Dummy, to his horror, discovered several rents in the paper!

Presence of mind, and a tight grip upon the proceeds never forsook the inventor of silver leather. Dummy mounted a cider barrel, and informed the multitude that certain chemicals had become exhausted, and that, for the success of the balloon and the daring navigators, it was necessary for him to post off to the next village to procure some of those important ingredients that *his gas* required. He appealed to them as "Virginians, the noble descendants of Pocahontas, to wait one hour for his return. He should ever feel proud, as the father of the American stage, for the kindness he had received from the most noble race America had ever produced," *i. e.*, Virginians. Dummy started for the chemicals, on horseback, exclaiming, as he waved his hand, "*Dum Vivimus Dum-meromo!*" It is needless to say the father of the American stage outstripped the far-famed Johnny Gilpin. After riding many miles he made a halt, and from a high mountain had a fine view of the village he had recently departed from. Dummy had an impediment in his speech, and spoke like a person having a severe attack of influenza. In relating this incident, he said, "*It was the dabdest fide sight he ever seed. The hubbug'd ad disappoitted fellows burdt the bost bagdifixedt ballood ever codstructed. The fire shootig up to the horrizod was sublibe.*" The father of the American stage never again visited the descendants of Pocahontas in that section of Virginia.

Allen was a great admirer of General Jackson. He declared that it was through his (Allen's) influence that the people of the United States made the General president. Dummy was a great epicure. He kept bachelor hall, and took the world easy; he invented many fancy dishes, two in particular, which he called *calapash* and *calapee*. These he served to his customers at his eating house he called the *Divan*, in Dean street, in this city. The *calapash* was made of ancient cheese, codfish, onions, mustard, rum and wine. The *calapee* was the same, with the addi-

tion of *cabbage*. Behind the bar was to be seen hanging to the wall the "identical Richard's dress worn by George Frederick Cooke, the great tragedian;" but this, however, it was strongly suspected, was one of Dummy's innumerable *gags*, as some of his silver leather was plainly to be seen sewed to the dress! In his admirable *History of the American Stage*, Mr. Durang tells numerous anecdotes of Allen. A characteristic anecdote, showing how he served up turtle soup for the epicures of Albany, may be found in the *Annals of Albany*, vol. v, p. 276.

Dummy had a wonderful penchant for "running up a score" among his acquaintances. He had borrowed a sum of money from an old friend in Green street, who dunned Dummy for it whenever he met him, but was always put off with some plausible excuse—he must "wait for his benefit," or for something else to "turn up," when it would certainly be paid. Passing in Green street one morning, Dummy on one side and his creditor on the other side, opposite Bement's Recess, the creditor hailed and beckoned to Dummy to come over the street. It was a peculiar trait with Dummy, when dunned, to *feign* more than his usual *deafness*. "I say," said creditor, "Mr. Allen, can't you pay that little score now?" Dummy, in the coolest and politest manner possible, replied, "Tank you, tank you, I nebber takes any ding (thing) pefore preakfast!" and marched on.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### Capt. Page's Circus.

Capt. Page opened a circus in Beaver street, between Green and South Market streets, in 1829-30. John Simpson kept a billiard saloon in the rear of the circus. At the house of Simpson many a sparring exhibition took place. Jim Sandford and Bill Delong taught the *manly art* at Simpson's. Delong is still living; he has been an officer in the Fifth ward, Philadelphia, for many years, and is much respected by all political parties, as a worthy, upright man. Delong was an excellent boxer, and a splendidly formed man. Sandford was a small man, but as tough as Sayers. Among the fancy at Simpson's was Harry Webb, a Herculean figure as finely put together as a marble statue, and heaven protect him that received a fair dose of Harry's bunch of fives. Then there was Harry Jewell, cousin of Joe, now the superintendent of the Point Breeze Course, Philadelphia. Uncle Joe has fallen off *some* in weight—from 275 pounds to 390 in his dancing pumps! Charley Low and Jewell set to at Simpson's one night. Charley received a tremendous teller from Jewell over the "conck." Camphor and brandy were in active demand for some minutes after that.

Capt. Page's company went on a tour to Lower Canada. In a wooden building, situated on McGill street, Montreal, a mob nearly tore his circus down. The time-worn circus play of *Billy Button, the Unfortunate Tailor*, was the sole cause of the riot. At that time there were hun-

dreds of Irish tailors in Montreal, and they imagined the production of Billy Button was an insult to their trade, and all connected with it. The enraged tailors, led on by Captain DeGrady, gave the fearful war cry. Old West had just entered the ring in the character of Billy Button, when showers of brickbats from all directions greeted him. The war then began in good earnest, and was kept up for days and nights. The contending parties, the tailors and the Billy Buttonites, contested every inch of ground. Button met the foe, and they were his. The tailors got awfully beaten by the Cannucks, who were furnished by the citizens with ammunition. Barrels of rum, with their heads knocked in, were swallowed in less than no time. By the friends of Button these barrels were placed in the centre of McGill street. Several persons were killed, among the number a Mr. Lyman, a very estimable citizen. The military were finally called out and peace and quiet restored. The circus embarked for Quebec, where the riot was renewed with redoubled fury, but the military being on the alert it was promptly put down. A number of the rioters were transported, and Billy Button was *transported*, but with *joy!*

#### Page's Dramatic Company.

Page had a fair theatrical company with his circus. It consisted of Harry Knight, Wells and sister, afterwards John Sefton's wife, and later Mrs. Russell, the great tragic actress of the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, Miss Emery, George Gale (Mazeppa), Tom Grierson, Shinnotti, Barney Burnes, Leslie, Shadgut (what a name!), John Kent and his sisters, Helen and Eliza, and many others. Page opened the Theatre Royal, Montreal, and went by the board. I believe this company are all dead, with perhaps three or four exceptions. Page knew no such word as fail. He visited every part of the globe

that white men have seen. He searched the jungles of the East Indies for show stock. He penetrated the regions of scorching Africa, searched all the fairs of Europe, and furnished for the American market more "*what is it,*" in the shape of giants, red-eyed negroes, glass spinners, and other sights too numerous to speak of, than any other showman, not excepting P. T. Barnum. The last I saw of the captain was in Philadelphia, and he was far advanced in the "sere and yellow leaf." He had just returned from South America with the Aztec children, and was on his way to Europe. The captain was a Yankee, had great knowledge of the world, could speak several languages, was full of enterprise, but dame fortune seldom smiled upon him.

The following appeared in one of the Albany papers in 1857: "J. W. Bancker, formerly Master Bancker, of the North Pearl Street Circus, called on us yesterday, and posted us up in a few reminiscences. Bancker first rode in this city in 1823, in a circus located on the corner of Eagle and State streets. The North Pearl Street Circus opened in 1826. Bancker belonged to the first company, and rode the first horse and threw the first sommersault in the house. The company consisted of the following persons: Manager, Sam. Parsons; Treasurer, Edward Tucker; Assistant Manager, Sam. McCracken; Clown, William Gates; Riding Master, J. W. Bancker; Riders, Dan. Champlin, Jacob Burton, Edward Carter, Alexander Downie and John Shay. Miss Mary Robinson was the leading melo-dramatic actress. Miss R. was a very talented woman, and played her parts with great power. Downie died in the West Indies. Gates attached himself to the Bowery Theatre, and died in New York in 1843. Champlin died in Mobile. Burton joined the army, and died in Florida. Carter is also dead. McCracken died in Springfield, Ohio; he married a Miss Brown, who lived opposite the circus, in North Pearl street. Of the com-

pany existing in 1826, Bancker is the only one living. The North Pearl Street Circus was built by Sam. Parsons, and cost \$22,000, horses included. It failed to pay in 1829, and then passed into the hands of S. J. Penniman. Mr. Penniman sold it to the Methodists, who have since used it as a church."



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### Jim Bancker—John Gossin, the Clown.

Jim Bancker opened a circus, in 1831, on the same spot in Beaver street that Page had occupied, with a very good company. Among the performers was a young man by the name of John Weaver, Herculean in appearance, beautifully formed, and called the American Sampson. He performed some astonishing feats of strength. A native of Philadelphia, he was much respected for his amiable disposition and kindness of heart. He had become engaged to a young lady of Philadelphia, and was to abandon his profession forever the following fall, and marry a young and beautiful wife. The company started on its tour. At that day in some of the Western towns there was great difficulty in procuring a license. There appeared to be a very bitter antipathy by the religious community to such amusements—the exercise of horsemanship being considered demoralizing and a sin! Many lawsuits were the result, but the circus non-suited the citizens. In some instances the commonwealth contrived to convince the jury that these wicked shows were prompted by the devil, and a mist was cast before the eyes of the audience by the incantations of the showman. The standing on a horse, when at full speed, was deemed by them a base deception—a *load-stone* being used, they said, to make the man stick to his back! The clown was one of the devil's imps, etcetera; but the disciples of blue laws failed to convince the jury. Theatricals fared no better in

some of these benighted regions. Bancker's company made a halt at a small village for two days. Witchcraft and law-breaking were charged against the unfortunate performers. Weaver was about to be arrested, but not wishing to be detained on the eve of embarking homeward to Philadelphia, he made his escape, with the intention of proceeding to the next county, where he could be safe; but the night being dark and rainy, he lost his way in the woods—becoming bewildered, he was not found for two days. The weather being cold and Weaver thinly clad, he took a violent cold, which developed into bilious fever, and in a few days after he died at Fort Niagara, and was buried in an old church-yard on the banks of Lake Ontario.

#### Vail's Great Feat—A Fearful Dilemma.

John Gossin, about this time, joined Bancker's troupe in Little York, Upper Canada. John was a native of Pittsburgh, Pa. In this company was also a person by the name of Vail, a powerful man, and a native of Mansfield, Ohio. He was the successor of Weaver in feats of strength. His early days were occupied as a boatman on the Western rivers, and he had had many hairbreadth escapes from death. He performed his feats on a pole that supported the large pavilion. It was crowded one night in a town in Indiana, when Vail was suspended by his knees to the pole, some ten feet above the ground; in his hands he held two anvils, and by his teeth he held several fifty-six pound weights. At this moment one of those fearful tornadoes that we so often hear of in the west, suddenly came up; the pavilion was blown to atoms, the seats fell with a fearful crash, the howling of the wind and the screams of women and children, were terrible. The pole on which Vail was suspended broke, and he fell, with the great weight of iron he was grasping,

head foremost to the ground. He was picked up for dead among the mass of weights, but though badly injured, he survived his fearful fall. A number of persons were killed. Vail had a fortunate escape from death during an earthquake at Martinique, in the West Indies. The sides of the house that he occupied fell outwards, just as he was in the act of leaping from one of the windows. He fell safely in the street, the *window frame passing over his head and shoulders!* So close was he to the falling mass that his foot became entangled in the falling beams, and drew the boot from his leg, as he said, with a patent boot-jack! After this occurrence he was shipwrecked. He abandoned the profession, and became very wealthy at one of the West India islands—Port Royal. He married a quadroon, as rich as Cræsus, and as lovely as a sunflower, and is now located at Yankee Station, California, and is known as Squire Vail, *Justice of the Peace.*

Young Calahan also amused the Albanians with his elegant and superb horsemanship. He was a native of the city of New York. Most of his days were passed in Mexico and South America. Calahan died in New York.

Joe Blackburn also performed on the Beaver street lot. Blackburn was *the* clown of the American arena. He was a man of extraordinary ability; possessed a good education, and figured as a poet of no ordinary pretensions. His letters from Europe, published in the *New York Spirit of the Times*, and other popular journals of the day, were perused with much interest. Blackburn was a Baltimorean. His uncle left him his entire fortune; but, poor fellow, while on his way from New Orleans to Baltimore, in 1841, to inherit his wealth, he sickened and died on board the steamer Express Mail, near Horse Shoe Bend, and was buried at Memphis, Tenn.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### “Nosey” Phillips.

The old North Pearl Street Amphitheatre began to give up the ghost about the year 1828. Nosey Phillips tried his hand in this place as well as at the South Pearl Street Theatre. Like all other projects that *Nosey* undertook, somebody was the sufferer, for he was a mad wag. His style of financiering was peculiar to himself. He was the sole author and inventor of many shrewd and curious dodges. Moses—that was his Christian name—procured an excellent company from New York, and opened a theatre in Providence, R. I. With the aid of *Providence* he pocketed quite a sum. He owed several small scores to the inhabitants, as well as the actors, but promised that all bills against him should be liquidated on Monday, without fail. The bills of the day were issued, the lamps all trimmed, the actors all up in their parts, and sundry creditors awaited the important moment; but the eagle-eyed, as well as eagle-nosed Nosey, had fled to New York with all the rocks in his fob! Arriving in that city, he had no difficulty in finding an old sufferer to whom he owed a long standing bill. Nosey, knowing that in a few hours he would be seized for debt and placed in du-rance vile, (there was a law for imprisonment for debt in those days,) induced said old sufferer to sue him. This he did. Nosey acknowledged the debt and was committed to jail. The enraged creditors from Rhode Island arrived only to be disappointed; Nosey was already

caged for debt. In a few days all excitement had subsided, Nosey settled the score with his lucky friend, and once more he buckled on his armor for fresh adventures. Cincinnati was the scene of many of Nosey's jokes. Here he enlivened the audience of Fog & Stickney's Circus by enacting the clown in a time worn scene called the *Peasant's Frolic*. Nosey was astride a beautiful black horse telling some stereotyped Joe Millers, when all of a sudden the horse flew around the ring as if a sky-rocket was fast to his tail. The ring master could not stop him. Nosey's lungs were brought into requisition—he appealed to the man with the whip, at the top of his voice, "Stop him, for God's sake!" "A good joke," says the ring master. "Go it, Nosey," yelled the boys. Nosey went it loose, heels over head into the pit, striking an honest Jack tar in the eye with his hand. Nosey's skull cap and a small portion of his scalp were missing. The sailor was enraged to find his eye blackened. "Well," says Jack, "that fellow with a big handle on his mug is the d—m'st wust clown I ever did see." Nosey left the ring as soon as possible, as his tights had come down. A law suit was the result; but the ring master declared it was a joke, and, besides, that he could not stop the horse. Nosey was accordingly non-suited.

His grand wind up, however, took place in New Orleans, in 1842. Caldwell, manager of the St. Charles Theatre, despatched an agent to New York with full power to engage the best talent to be found, and in particular to engage Aaron Phillips—who was a good actor and a worthy man—for his prompter. Caldwell's agent being a stranger in the capacity of theatrical negotiator, committed a sad mistake. He wrote a note, directing the same to *Mr. Phillips, comedian*. Nosey's hawk-eye discovered the letter and received the contents with unspeakable joy, but mum was the word. He certainly *was* Mr. Phillips, comedian, and was a prompter. The agent never was instructed

to engage any *other* person for prompter but Mr. Phillips, hence the mistake. Nosey was placed under binding articles of agreement, *which he signed*. The other party agreed to give said Phillips the sum of \$30 per week, and a benefit at the expiration of six months. What was the surprise of Caldwell, the actors, and everybody, when the immortal Nosey arrived in New Orleans! Caldwell was in for it. Nosey was sent to Mobile, but he got all the agreement called for.

Phillips' name stands in Scott's Albany Directory of 1828, as "Nosey." He was one of the children of Israel. Phillips and old "Jack Barnes," the low comedian of the Park Theatre, New York, used to play the "Two Dromios," and most decidedly resembled each other in features, figures, and voice. Barnes' *nose* was not quite as prominent and "hookey" as Nosey's nose, but by the application of a little *wax*, the difference was scarcely noticeable, especially by those not personally acquainted with this peculiarity.

The last days of the North Pearl Street Amphitheatre was rather an up hill business. Isaac O. Davis was manager, I believe. At the grand finale, old Turnbull, father of Julia the danseuse, produced an abolition drama, full of woolly-headism. I have forgotten the name of the piece. It was quite affecting, however; the author himself cried in some of the most tender points. It had a fine run of — one evening! For some cause or other the manager on the next evening was obliged, as he said, to dismiss the audience in consequence of some of the artists rebelling and refusing to play. While the manager was making this moving speech the ticket seller smelt a good sized rat, and there being just \$18 due him, he blew out the lights in the office and vamoosed with all the funds, \$18—all in small change. The manager threw himself upon the kind indulgence of the audience, and informed them that they could step to the box office and have the money refunded them! The ticket seller was *non est*, and a free fight was

the result. The chandelier was broken, as well as the manager, who made his escape through a *sewer!* The scene ended by old John Meigs, high constable, and his *posse* capturing some dozen canalers and two soldiers from the rendezvous. The old theatre soon wound up its eventful career.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

The history of the Albany theatre, as will have been seen, is a significant history of the conversion of play houses into churches — the only three edifices erected expressly for dramatic purposes having had a very short career as such, and then their walls echoed with a different class of sounds. Even the wooden building erected in Orchard street, by the Histrionic Society, was converted into a Baptist church.

Bill Lawson was engaged here about this time. Lawson is spoken of in Durang's *History of the Stage*. He came to the United States with West, the bell ringer. Lawson was a fine looking man. Though he could neither read nor write, he could play the part of a sailor in excellent style. His Mat Mizzen was the best ever produced on the American stage in that day. He played Joe Steadfast, in the *Turnpike Gate*, equally well. Joe was the first victim to the cholera in the summer of 1832; he died in New York in a wretched cellar in Catharine street. Near the same locality, and equally as miserable, Miss Emery, the great English tragic actress, died. Her acting of Bianca was a most thrilling picture. Her untimely end was much regretted.

*Yankee Hill* (George) was a native of New England. His father was a teacher of music, tuned pianos, &c., in Philadelphia, for many years; he was very poor, but struggling hard through life, managed to gain a livelihood. George, or *Yankee Hill*, was a paper hanger by trade, and worked for a long time in Albany.



## Dan Marble, the Yankee.

As I am speaking of Yankee characters, I will say a few words of the lamented Dan Marble. I think he was born in New York. He made his first appearance at the old Chatham, in the farce of "Fortune's Frolic," playing Robin Roughead. He was greatly annoyed with the toothache that night, and what, with the pain of the tooth and the first smell of the foot lights, the gaze of the fiddlers, and a view of the audience, he was at first quite bewildered. He finally frightened the toothache away and played the part as well as if he had been an old stager. Dan was full of fun; he told many original stories that would draw a laugh from the ghost of old Job Gould. He was an excellent comedian, and an immense favorite wherever he went. He died in Louisville, Ky. His "benefit" was to have taken place the night he died. The bill read as follows: "Benefit and last appearance of Dan Marble. This evening will be presented '*Cure for the Cholera!*'" Poor Dan died of cholera on the same night!

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### Nichols' Amphitheatre.

Probably one of the largest and best appointed Circuses or Amphitheatres ever organized in this country, was that of Sam. Nichols, on Dallius street, in this city, which was opened December 5, 1840. Alfred B. Street, Esq., wrote the opening address (a \$50 prize essay), which was pronounced an admirable production. The building covered over an acre of ground, was fitted up on a most elegant and elaborate scale, and would comfortably accommodate three thousand persons. The dramatic and equestrian troupes were ample, composed of the very best performers in the country. These companies consisted in part, of the following: Jackson, manager; Anderson, Hall, Plumer, the celebrated vocalist; Dickinson, Needham, Hardy, Mrs. Nichols, Mrs. M. Anderson, playing juvenile male characters. The equestrian troupe was composed of the following: Aymar, John Whitaker, Henry Madigan, William Nichols, Horace Nichols, who married Mrs. Preston, John May, John Gossin, George Knapp, clowns.

The celebrated Kent bugle player, Ned Kendall, and his splendid band, comprised the orchestra. The spectacles, such as El Hyder, St. George and the Dragon, &c., produced, were magnificent, and gotten up regardless of expense. This establishment was liberally patronized not only by the Albany public, but by Trojans and strangers generally. It was not a little surprising to witness the large numbers of the upper class of society, that nightly graced the boxes; and it was not unfrequently the case that

a line of carriages would occupy the street from Lydius, now Madison avenue, to the amphitheatre. For the two first years this enterprise proved a great success, after which an evident decline was noticeable. Finally the equestrian department was withdrawn, leaving only a dramatic company, under the management of Jackson, who was familiarly called "Black Jack." Near the winding up of the concern, Forrest and the "magnificent" Josephine Clifton performed a week's engagement, but the weather being intensely warm the attendance was very light. It was during the "heated spell" in July or August, they appeared. This establishment, like the old Green Street Theatre, at last came to "base purposes," being converted into a furnace or pottery! The dramatic and equestrian companies, as well as the magnificent theatres and amphitheatres that Albany could once boast of, could not be equaled by any city of its size in either hemisphere — a fact which has been frequently admitted by old and experienced stagers from Europe who have appeared in our theatres and amphitheatres from time to time.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### Paddy Burns and His Bugle.

In the orchestra of the North Pearl Street Amphitheatre, was to be seen and heard a remarkable personage—his name was Paddy Burns, and he was one of the best Kent buglers of that day. Paddy, of course, was a son of the Emerald Isle; he was in the British service most of his days, and his regiment was stationed opposite Fort Niagara, Canada.

Paddy had made up his mind “solid,” as he said, to *Yankeeize* himself. Uncle Sam’s dominions were on the opposite side of the Niagara river, only some nine or ten miles below Niagara Falls. Burns was suspicioned, and consequently was watched so closely that an attempt to escape was a dangerous experiment; but he tried it and succeeded. One fine morning Paddy held an innocent confab with the sentinel, whose station was near the bank of the river. A few drops of the “crathur” cemented the bonds of friendship closer than wax; the sentinel got three sheets in the wind, while Paddy Burns was as sober as a judge. He managed, unperceived, to pour some of the liquor into the vigilant soldier’s gun. Paddy then retired from the presence of his friend, behind a rock, tied his bugle on his neck, plunged in the river, and had swam a great distance from the shore before he was discovered. The alarm was given, the sentinel’s gun flashed in the pan, and Paddy arrived safe in the “land of the

free and the home of the brave," amid the loud huzzas of the spectators on the American shore, who had watched the proceedings with the most intense anxiety. Burns then mounted a high elevation and played Yankee Doodle and Hail Columbia in the very teeth of John Bull! "Paddy" was liked by all who knew him. He died in Ohio. At the temporary building on the corner of Green and Division streets (old Biven's Theatre), Mr. and Mrs. H. A. Williams played. They were both eminent performers. Mrs. Williams, after Harry's death, married Maywood, the Scotch actor. There was an actor, an Englishman named Russell, who performed here; he had no fear of strychnine; he was never seen sober, and he became completely acclimated to the *hissing* process. Russell was famous for addressing the audience; he made apologies every night. Mrs. Williams was playing "Jane Shore;" Russell was to kneel over the dead body in the last scene, but being "top heavy," he fell with all his weight on the corpse of Jane Shore. This brought the dead Shore to her feet. Russell, as usual, attempted an apology. Stale eggs went up from ten cents per dozen to \$1.50. Russell made a stampede!

#### Mr. Forrest's Letter.

The following is a copy of a letter from Mr. Forrest, while fulfilling a professional engagement at Crosby's Opera House, Chicago, acknowledging the receipt of copies of *Theatrical Reminiscences* occasionally published by us in the *Morning Express*:

" CHICAGO, Jan. 25, 1866.

" HENRY D. STONE, ESQ.—

" *Dear Sir*—The several copies of *Theatrical Reminiscences*, handed me by your young friend, were received with much satisfaction. The perusal of them afforded me

great pleasure, as they brought vividly to mind scenes long since blotted from memory. I find, too, the facts and incidents set forth remarkably correct, as far as my recollection serves me. Thanking you for your many kind considerations,

“ Believe me, as ever,

“ Yours, &c.,

“ EDWIN FORREST.”

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### John Augustus Stone, the American Dramatic Author.

At the time of the death of this eminent author and actor, which occurred in Philadelphia, in 1834, the following affecting tribute appeared in the *Albany Daily News*. The *News* was edited by James Hunter, Esq., one of Edwin Forrest's warmest friends, and who devoted much of his time closeted with young Forrest, instructing him in Shakspeare—imparting to him that knowledge of the great dramatic poet which was the result of long and ripe experience. Mr. Hunter was one of the most experienced theatrical critics in this country.

“DEATH OF JOHN AUGUSTUS STONE.—Within a few days past the public has been made acquainted with the melancholy fact that John Augustus Stone is no more! The tidings were received in this city with unfeigned regret, and the friends of the drama who knew him so well when living, at the first intelligence of his departure from among us, retired, with melting hearts, to shed the bitter tears of sorrow. The news of his exit cast a solemnity and gloom over the countenances of a large circle of his acquaintances in our city, far surpassing any providential affliction of the kind that ever preceded it. The successful effort of Mr. Stone to elevate and establish permanently

the dramatic character of our country, will ever be remembered.

“Under the patronage of Forrest, Mr. Stone has contributed more, both as author and performer, to raise the character of the stage, than any other native American. He was the author of several pieces which have withstood the scrutiny of the severest critics and rivals in the country. Among those which have been thus produced by him and passed through the fiery ordeal, are these:—

“‘Fauntleroy;’ tragedy; acted in Charleston. ‘Metamora;’ tragedy; acted in New York with great success. [Edwin Forrest paid the author \$500 for this play.] ‘La Rogne the Regicide;’ acted in Charleston. ‘The Demoniack,’ ‘Tancred,’ ‘Touretoun,’ ‘The Restoration, or the ‘Diamond Cross’—all pieces of distinguished merit. ‘Banker of Rouen,’ and ‘Golden Fleece,’ or ‘*The Yankee in Italy,*’ (written for Hill.) At the time of his death, he was engaged in superintending the production of the ‘*Champion of Freedom,*’ which he re-wrote from the Ancient Briton.

“Although we lament the loss, and sincerely repine at his sudden death, yet we rejoice that he lived to bequeath such a lasting legacy to his country’s fame. He has acquitted himself with the highest honor, and performed the task which was allotted him with immortal credit. Years may elapse before another shall grasp his gifted pen; and then it will only be a continuation of the great dramatic work which John Augustus Stone commenced.

“Peace be with him; his earthly  
Light is now extinguished;  
May his friends weed the green grass  
Which waves o’er his grave; and his  
Enemies point in silence to his Tomb.”

To our own knowledge it was the declared intention of Mr. Forrest to erect a suitable monument to the mem-



ory of Mr. Stone. In fact, the preliminary steps were well advanced soon after the great author's death, but whether the object was ever entirely accomplished, we have not been advised. There can be no doubt, however, but Mr. Forrest carried out this praiseworthy object to the very letter.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### DRAMATIC PRODIGIES.

#### Master Payne,

THE FIRST DRAMATIC PRODIGY IN THIS COUNTRY—HE PLAYS ROLLA WHEN A MERE CHILD—LAUGHABLE ANECDOTE ABOUT HIS PLAYING ROLLA—MISS J. M. DAVENPORT, NOW MRS. F. W. LANDER—MISS LOUISE LANE, NOW MRS. DREW, MANAGERESS OF THE PHILADELPHIA ARCH STREET THEATRE—CLARA FISHER, NOW MRS. MAEDAR—MAGGY MITCHELL—LUCILLE WESTERN—MARY GANNON—SUSAN AND KATE DENIN—THE MISSES PARKERS—LITTLE NELL, AND A HOST OF OTHER PRODIGIES.

About the first dramatic prodigy known in America, was Master Payne, who appeared at Wood and Warren's Theatre, Philadelphia, in 1806. In "Wood's Recollections of the Stage," he refers to Payne as follows: "He appeared at that time as Young Norval, being about the age of Master Burke when he first came out as a prodigy. Norval was followed by Hamlet, Romeo, Octavian, and Rolla, nightly playing, on an average, to \$1,500 houses."

Some very ridiculous circumstances attended Master Payne's performances which, from his child-like figure, a physical absurdity could not fail to strike an unsophisticated auditor.

A learned judge, who, when crowded out of the boxes by the ladies, sought refuge in the gallery, related the following: "Master Payne was enacting Rolla while a knot of youngsters were sitting together, some of whom were not particularly interested in what was going on before them. They were coming to the scene in which Rolla

seizes the child of Cora, who, in Master Payne's instance, happened to be nearly as large as Payne himself, and runs across the bridge with him, (a very effective scene where the Rolla is a large and powerful man)—one of these youngsters called his companions to order, and as an inducement to them to stop their talking, said, "Now, boys! look out! and presently you will see one of those little fellows shoulder the other and run away with him over that plank," pointing to the bridge.

Miss Jean M. Davenport, now the eminent actress,  
Mrs. F. W. Lander.

At Harry Meech's Museum, many years ago, there appeared a bright, fascinating and exceedingly precocious little girl, doing juvenile characters, and so remarkable was her rendition of her various roles, that she at once won the very appropriate *soubriquet* of the "dramatic prodigy." After performing a very successful engagement at the Museum, and visiting several other towns, professionally, she returned to this city, and at the regular theatrical season at the old Pearl Street Theatre, arrangements were made by a few friends to engage the theatre three nights for the "Little Prodigy." The programme of the entertainment was accordingly announced, consisting of "Douglass," she doing "Young Norval," the "Four Mowbrays," and the "Orphan of Geneva." She was supported in her efforts by several amateurs, members of the Histrionic and Forresterian societies, at that time in full operation in this city, who acquitted themselves in a very creditable manner. Well, as goes the old adage, "Time works wonders;" as, for instance, the justly celebrated and brilliant actress, Mrs. Lander, *nee* Miss J. M. Davenport, is the lady who was known as the little "Dramatic Prodigy" above alluded to. It is a fact, not generally understood, that Charles

Dickens, in his *Nicholas Nickleby*, had in his mind's eye, and actually selected Miss Davenport as the counterfeit presentment of the "infant phenomenon" in his great work.

It is a somewhat remarkable fact in the annals of theatricals, that nearly, if not quite all, of the numerous dramatic prodigies who have appeared within the last thirty or forty years, have either arisen as "stars" of the first magnitude, or filled prominent situations on the stage in stock companies. Among the juvenile aspirants for dramatic distinction, and who created the greatest sensation, were Louise Lane (Mrs. John Drew), now the indefatigable manageress of the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, and who is unquestionably the finest general actress on the American stage. Miss J. M. Davenport (Mrs. Lander), Clara Fisher (Mrs. Meader), who was the first to sing in the drama of the "*Maid of Milan*," at the Pearl Street Theatre in this city, the popular air of "*Home, Sweet Home*," while playing the role of Clara.

#### Master Joseph Burke.

Master Burke, in point of precocious musical and dramatic talent and genius, eclipsed all the juvenile aspirants that ever appeared in this or any other country. Burke's "*Dr. Pangloss*," "*Sir Peter Teazle*," "*Dr. O'Toole*," "*Romeo*," "*Young Norval*" were performed in a manner that excited the wonder and admiration of the play-going public of the two hemispheres. One would scarcely realize the fact, after witnessing Burke's remarkable delineations of the most difficult characters at night: characters belonging to actors of riper years and longer experience—and the next day meeting the boy in the street cutting up all sorts of boyish pranks, rolling his hoop, flying his kite, playing marbles, etc., utterly regardless of the remarks, as well as astonishment of the passing crowd, and

apparently unconscious of the enviable and important position he occupied before the world. We repeat, that it could not be realized that this mere child, who was seen the night previous rendering, in the most artistic manner, the difficult character of Sir Peter Teazle in the "School for Scandal," was really *the* young Roscius, Master Burke.

Joseph, or Master Burke, was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1818, and made his *debut* as Dr. O'Toole, in the "Irish Tutor," at the Hay Market Theatre, London, at the age of seven years. He came to this country in 1830, making his appearance at the New York Park Theatre in the characters of Young Norval, and as Dr. O'Toole, leading the orchestra after the first piece in the overture. After performing in New York, Philadelphia and Boston, he made his *debut* in 1832 or '3, at the Albany Pearl Street Theatre. Mr. Burke is now residing in New York, engaged in the profession of teacher and composer of music. He moves in the first circles of society in that city, honored and respected by all who know him.

Is it not somewhat remarkable, that, with the many rare qualities Burke is admitted to possess—and doubtless the numerous advantageous opportunities presented during his many years of experience in female society, he being deemed, what the ladies call, "a good catch," that he should so long remain a bachelor—which we understand he still is.

### Mrs. Fitz Williams.

There were several other dramatic prodigies of that day—for instance, Mrs. Fitz Williams—her maiden name we have forgotten. The writer saw her in 1852, at the Hay Market Theatre, London; she appeared to be as fresh, sprightly, and vivacious as ever, and ranked among the first *comediennes* in London. Mrs. Fitz Williams was

a great favorite in this country, especially in New York, where she performed with immense success.

At a later day these dramatic prodigies have appeared in astonishingly rapid succession in the theatrical horizon. There is Maggie Mitchell, and Mary Gannon. Mary died some time since. She was for a long time the favorite at Wallack's Theatre, and a *protege* of Harry Meech, he having brought her out as an infant prodigy at the Albany Museum. There was Lucille and Helen Western—Helen is dead—Susie and Kate Denin, the Parker sisters, the beautiful and talented daughters of Joe Parker—for a long time low comedian at Meech's Museum; and of a later date still, Lotta, Leona Cavender, Little Nell, and half a score of others, who have met with flattering success as dramatic prodigies. We believe that all of the above enumerated individuals are now living, with the exception of Mary Gannon and Helen Western.

## CHAPTER XL.

### Thomas Cooper, the Celebrated Actor.

HIS REMARKABLE PHYSICAL POWERS OF ENDURANCE—HE PERFORMS HIS PROFESSIONAL JOURNEYS IN A GIG FROM PHILADELPHIA TO NEW ORLEANS—HE OFFERS \$100 TO BE FERRIED ACROSS THE HUDSON RIVER IN ORDER TO MEET A PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT—HIS FIRST AND ONLY FAILURE TO MEET AN ENGAGEMENT IN HIS LONG THEATRICAL CAREER—HIS LAST APPEARANCE ON ANY STAGE, AT THE PEARL STREET THEATRE, ALBANY—HE PLAYS DAMON, IN WHICH HIS PHYSICAL POWERS FAIL HIM.

The physical powers of endurance of this eminent actor were most remarkable, nay, unprecedented, as a proof of which we will cite one or two circumstances. He performed the journeys from Philadelphia to New Orleans driving a tandem and handling the "ribbons" himself, to fulfil professional engagements, in an old style gig, sufficiently ample to contain his trunks and wardrobe. He frequently played at the Park Theatre, New York, and at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, alternate nights in the week, performing his journey, and never failing to "come to time," which was considered through the heavy sandy roads of New Jersey, a Herculean performance. It would be deemed rather a rare occurrence of the present day for a star actor, with all the improved facilities of travel, to accomplish such a feat, riding that distance, and playing an arduous character the same evening. But this Cooper would do with little apparent physical exhaustion. Many silk stocking stars of the present day, would deem it rather an arduous task, to accomplish the

journeys Cooper did, even if in one of the splendid drawing-room cars in present use. As stated above, he never failed to meet his engagement, with but one exception, and that through no fault of his. While performing in New York and Philadelphia alternately, late in the fall of the year, the North river between New York and Jersey City became so blocked by an immense field of floating ice as to prevent the passage of the ferry boats. Cooper finding it impossible to pursue his journey, under these difficulties, made arrangements with the captain of a small vessel plying between New York and Staten Island, to convey him to Jersey City—the agreement being that Cooper pay the skipper \$100 if he successfully landed him on the Jersey shore, and \$50 if he failed. They had proceeded about midway of the stream, when, finding it impossible to go farther, the vessel put back to New York, the skipper receiving his \$50, as per agreement.

Cooper was, probably, taking him all in all, the most remarkable actor in the two hemispheres. Besides the long and fatiguing journeys performed in his gig, and playing his most arduous *roles* many consecutive nights, he was in the constant practice of making journeys of miles on foot during an engagement, merely for exercise, as he would say. In his habits, he was scrupulously temperate, using neither spirituous liquor or tobacco in any shape—being also exceedingly frugal in his diet. For promptitude in fulfilling a professional engagement, he stood without a rival. He was never known to fail to meet an engagement, no matter what distance he had to travel, or however unfavorable the weather, except in the one instance above alluded to.

#### REMAINING TOO LONG ON THE STAGE.

Cooper, like Forrest, made a great mistake in remaining too long on the stage. They both should have retired before their well-earned laurels began to wither; before the



“sere and yellow leaf of time” began to tell upon their physical powers. Cooper made his last appearance upon the stage, as did also Forrest, at the Albany Pearl Street Theatre. Cooper, in impersonating at this time his favorite character of Damon, produced a very affecting scene, exciting the deepest sorrow among his old admirers. It was plain to be seen that his physical powers were rapidly failing. In the scene where he rushes in at the very “nick of time” to save his friend Pythias from the headsman’s axe, he made an attempt to leap upon the scaffold, but his physical energies failing he became completely exhausted. It was indeed a sorry sight!

Soon after Cooper retired from the stage, he was appointed military store keeper at the arsenal at Frankfort, Pa. He was afterwards surveyor of the ports of New York and Philadelphia, receiving his appointment from president John Tyler, whose son Robert married Cooper’s daughter, then quite an attractive young actress. Cooper died in 1849, aged 82 years.

## CHAPTER XLI.

George Frederick Cooke, and John Kemble,

COMPARED BY A DISTINGUISHED GERMAN CRITIC—COOKE'S MARRIAGE.

A German gentleman, after having traveled in different parts of the world, arrived in England. He resided there several years, and on his return to Germany, published in a book his observations to his countrymen. He expatiated largely on the English stage, and of George Frederick Cooke and John Kemble—the greatest actors of that time. He said:—"The countenance of Kemble was the most noble and refined, but the muscles were not so much at command as those of Cooke, who was a first rate comedian as well as tragedian. Both were excellent in the gradual changes of the countenance, in which the inward emotions of the soul are depicted and interwoven, as they flow from the mind. In this excellence, the great German actor Issland, and the renowned French actors, Talma and Lafond, are far inferior to them. Kemble was a very graceful, manly figure, perfectly made; his naturally commanding stature appeared extremely dignified in every picturesque position; and he studied such effects most assiduously. His face was a fine oval, and one of the noblest ever seen on the stage, exhibiting a remarkably handsome nose, and a well-formed and closed mouth, his fiery and somewhat romantic eyes shadowed by bushy eyebrows, retreated, as it were, and his front open and a little vaulted; his chin prominent and a little pointed, and his features so softly interwoven that no deeply marked lines were per-

ceptible. His physiognomy, indeed, commands respect at first sight, since it denotes, in the most expressive manner, a man of refined sentiment, enlightened mind, and correct judgment. Without the romantic look in his eyes, the face of Kemble would be that of a well-bred, cold and selfish man of the world; but this look, from which an ardent fancy emanates, softens the point of the chin and the closeness of the mouth. He had a pleasing voice, but feeble; of small compass, but of great depth. This was the greatest natural impediment with which he, to whom Nature had been thus bountiful, had still to contend.

“Cooke did not possess the elegant figure of Kemble, but his countenance beamed with great expression. His most prominent features were a long and somewhat hooked nose, a pair of fiery and expressive eyes, a lofty and somewhat arched front, and the lines of his countenance, the muscles which move the lips, were pointedly marked. His countenance is certainly not so dignified as that of Kemble, but discovers greater passion; and few actors are, perhaps, capable of delineating, in such glowing colors, the storm of a violent passion, as Cooke. His voice is powerful and of immense compass; a pre-eminence he possessed over Kemble, of which he skilfully avails himself. His exterior movements are inferior in the picturesque to those of Kemble.”

#### ANOTHER AND COMIC VIEW OF COOKE.

It is well known that this justly celebrated actor, like Edmund Kean and the elder Booth, was in the habit of getting very “mellow” at times. The following lines were composed by a poetical wag, as to Cooke’s merits:

“In characters new, and characters old,  
Cooke must be allowed a good fellow;  
For act what he will, we are certainly told  
That in every part he is perfectly *mellow* !”

## COOKE'S MARRIAGE.

The following lines were composed on George Frederick Cooke's marriage with an estimable young lady of the name of *Lamb*:

“To expiate the sins of yore,  
The fool of custom gave his store,  
Perhaps a ewe or lamb;  
So to atone for those of wine,  
Repentant grown at Hymen's shrine,  
Cooke offers up a *Lamb*!”

## CHAPTER XLII.

### The Great Actor, George Frederick Cooke.

A TRULY AMUSING ANECDOTE OF, OR EPISODE IN THE GREAT ACTOR'S LIFE AS RELATED BY THE RENOWNED MIMIC AND ACTOR, CHARLES MATHEWS—COOKE PREACHES TEMPERANCE WHILE GUZZLING DOWN JUGS OF WHISKY PUNCH—PASSAGE UP THE HUDSON RIVER IN THE STEAMER CHANCELLOR LIVINGSTON—COOKE'S MONUMENT IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, NEW YORK, ERECTED BY EDMUND KEAN, THE GREAT ENGLISH ACTOR, ETC., ETC.

Dunlap, the biographer of the great actor, George Frederick Cooke, relates the following incident which occurred while on his passage from New York to Albany, in 1823, on board, what was at that time considered the very *ne plus ultra* of self-propelling hotels, the steamer Chancellor Livingston. Among the two or three hundred passengers, were the celebrated novelist, James Fennimore Cooper, and the far-famed mimic and actor, the elder Charles Mathews. The anecdote was told and acted out by Mathews. Those who have ever seen Mathews perform, will readily appreciate it :

“ We had but one regular meal on the passage, a very plentiful supper with tea and coffee, at about seven o'clock. We had embarked at 5 P. M., and arrived at Albany by sunrise. The meal was not suited to the habits of Mr. Mathews, and he was offended by both the matter and manner of it; but when the preparations for sleeping took place, and he found that the whole company, females excepted, must seek rest in the same cabin, some in berths and others accommodated with mattresses on the floor, his feelings re-

volted, and he protested against taking rest on such terms. To this feeling I am indebted for a night of much amusement; I should be unjust if I did not add, and some instruction. I had secured a mattress on the floor of one of the cabins and should have slept away at least a part of the night, but that Fennimore Cooper gave me an intimation of Mathews' wish to set up, and of his (Cooper's) success in obtaining the captain's cabin on the deck of the vessel, where Mathews, Francis, and himself, had determined to enjoy a supper, whisky punch, and such convivial pleasure as could be extracted from such circumstances and such a meeting. I readily accepted the invitation to make one of the party.

“Seated in the captain's cabin, and free from all annoyance, Mathews became, as usual, the *fiddle* of the company, and story, anecdote, imitation and song, poured from him with the rapidity and brilliancy of the stars which burst from a rocket on a rejoicing night. To make himself still more agreeable to the senior, he introduced the memoirs of George Frederick Cooke with that flattery which is delicious to all men, and peculiarly so to an author. ‘The story of Cooke and Mrs. Burns,’ he added, ‘you have told remarkably well, and when I have introduced it in my *youthful days*, I have always taken your words; but Tom Cooper, from whom, as I understand you had it, forgot the termination of the story,—the real *denouement*,—which makes it infinitely more dramatic. All joined in the request that Mathews would tell the story in his own way, and he, nothing loth, began:

“I was a raw recruit in the Thespian corps, and it was my first campaign in Dublin. Chance made me a fellow-lodger with Cooke, at the house of Mistress Burns. I had looked at the great actor with an awful reverence, but had not yet been honored by any notice from him.

“In getting up Macklin's *Love a la Mode*, I had been cast for *Beau Mordecai*, and assuredly a more unfit repre-

sentative of the "little Jew" can scarcely be imagined. As tall as I now am, I then had all the rawboned awkwardness of a hobblethoy, and no knowledge of the world or the stage. But Mr. Cooke must be shown to the Dublin public in Sir Archy, and there was no other Mordecai to be had. I was, however, perfect in the words, and if I murdered the Jew, I did it impartially; I murdered him 'every inch.'

"After the farce I *tarried*, as you Yankees say, a *considerable time* at the theatre, rather choosing to linger among the almost expiring dipped candles of the dressing-rooms, than to seek, through mist and mud, my lofty but comfortless abode in Mrs. Burns' garret; but the property-man gave me my cue to depart by putting out the lights, and I was slowly mounting to my bed when, as I passed the room of the great man, I saw him (the door being open) sitting with a jug before him, indulging after the labors of the evening. I was stealing by to my apartment when I was arrested by a loud high-pitched voice, crying, 'come hither young man.' I could scarcely believe my senses—I hesitated. 'Come in,' was repeated. I advanced. 'Shut the door, and sit down.' I obeyed. He assumed an air of courtesy, and calling upon Mrs. Burns for another tumbler, filled for himself and me. 'You will be so kind, my good Mistress Burns, as to bring another pitcher of whisky-punch in honor of our young friend.' 'To be sure and I will, Mr. Cooke.' The punch was brought, together with a hot supper, an unusual luxury then to me. After supper the veteran, quite refreshed and at ease, chatted incessantly of plays and players,—lashing some, commending others,—while I, delighted to be thus honored, listened and laughed, thus playing naturally and sincerely the part of a most agreeable companion. After the third jug of punch I was sufficiently inspired to ask a few questions, and even to praise the acting of the veteran.

"To use your own words, as I have often done before,"

said Mathews, addressing himself to the biographer, "one jug of whisky-punch followed the other, and Cooke began to advise his young companion how to conduct himself on the real and on the mimic scene of life." "You are young, and want a friend to guide you. Talent you have, but talent without prudence is worthless, and may be pernicious. Take my word for it, there is nothing can place a man at the head of his profession but industry and sobriety. Mistress Burns!—shun inebriety as you would shun destruction. Mistress Burns! another jug of whisky-punch, Mistress Burns." "Oh, Mister Cooke." "You make it so good, Mistress Burns—another jug." "Yes, Mister Cooke." "In our profession, my young friend, dissipation is the bane of hundreds; villianous company—low company, leads to drinking, and the precious time is lost which should have been employed in gaining that knowledge which alone can make man respectable. Ah! thank you, Mistress Burns; this has the true Hibernian smack!" "You may say that, Mister Cooke."

"It is needless to remind the reader that with the aid of Mathews' powers of imitation, sometimes called ventriloquism in this humbugging world, all this and much more would be extremely pleasant, and more especially as the company had repeated supplies of the same inspiring beverage from the steward, and almost as good, certainly as strong, as that of Mistress Burns.

"Mathews went on to describe the progress of Cooke's intoxication, during which his protests against drunkenness became stronger with each glass. He then undertook to instruct the tyro in the histrionic art, and especially in the manner of exhibiting the passions. Here it would be vain to endeavor to follow Mathews. Cooke's grimaces and voice—while his physical powers, under the influence of whisky, rebelled at every effort against the intention of the lecturer—were depicted by the mimic in a manner beyond the conception of even those who have seen the



public exhibition of his talents; here all was unrestrained mirth and fun, and the painting truly *con amore*, and glowing from heart and glass.

“It must be remembered,” continued Mr. Mathews, “that I was but a boy, and Cooke in the full vigor of manhood, with strength of limb and voice Herculean. I had the highest reverence for his talents, and literally stood in awe of him; so that when he made his horrible faces, and called upon me to name the passion he had depicted, I was truly frightened—overwhelmed with the dread of offending him, and utterly at a loss to distinguish one grimace from another, except as one was *more* and another *most* savage and disgusting.

“‘Now, sir—observe—what’s that?’

“‘Revenge, sir!’

“‘Revenge! you booby! pity! pity!’

“Then, after making another hideous contortion of countenance, he cries:

“‘What is that, sir?’

“‘Very fine, sir; very fine, indeed!’

“‘But *what* is it, sir?’

“Forced to answer, and utterly unable to guess the meaning of the distorted face which he then again thrust before me, I stammered out, ‘Anger, sir!’

“‘Anger!’

“‘Yes, sir; anger, to be sure.’

“‘To be sure, you are a blockhead! look again, sir; look again!’

“‘It’s fear, sir—fear!’

“‘*You* play! you a player!’”

“Mathews then exhibited the face of Cooke as he distorted it to express the *tender passion*—a composition of satanic malignity, and the brutal leering of a drunken satire—and imitating Cooke’s most discordant voice, cried: “There, sir; that’s love!” “This,” continued Mathews, “was more than I could bear; even my fears could not restrain

my laughter; I roared. Cooke stared at first, but immediately assuming a most furious aspect, he cried, 'What do you laugh at, sir? Is George Frederick Cooke to be made a laughing stock for a booby? What, sir?' Luckily, at that moment Mrs. Burns stood with the door partly opened, and another jug in her hands. 'You must pardon me, sir,' I said, with a quickness which must have been the inspiration of whisky, 'but you happened to turn your soft and languishing look towards the door just as Mrs. Burns opened it, and I could not but think of the dangerous effect of such a look upon her sex's softness.'

"He laughed; and embracing the jug as the good woman put it down, he looked at Mrs. Burns, and with some humor, endeavored to sing, '*How happy could I be with either, were t'other dear charmer away,*' but with a voice which defies art and nature for a comparison.

"Mrs. Burns now protested against any more punch; but after some time agreed, upon Cooke's solemn promise to be satisfied with one more jug, to bring it.

"'But remember your honor, Mister Cooke; and that is the jewel of the soul, as you say.'

"'I said no such thing; but I'll be as good as my word, and one more jug you shall have, and the divil a bit more, jewel or no jewel!' I was heartily tired by this time, and placed my hope on Mrs. Burns' resolution. The last jug came, and was finished; and I wished him good night.

"'Not yet, my dear boy.' 'It's very late, sir.' 'Early, early; one jug more.' 'Mrs. Burns will not let us have it, sir.' 'She will not! I'll show you that presently!'

"Then followed a fine specimen of imitation: Mathews, as Cooke, calling upon Mrs. Burns, (who was in the room below, and in bed,) and then giving her answers, as coming up through the floor, in the manner called ventriloquism.

"'Mistress Burns! Do you hear, Mistress Burns?' 'Indeed *and I do*, Mister Cooke.' 'Bring me another jug of whisky-punch, Mistress Burns!' 'Indeed *and I won't*,

Mister Cooke!’ ‘You won’t?’ ‘Indeed and *so I won’t.*’ ‘Do you hear that, Mistress Burns?’ (smashing the jug on the floor). ‘Indeed *and I do*, and you’ll be sorry for it to-morrow.’ He then regularly took the chairs, one by one, and broke them on the floor immediately over Mrs. Burns’ head, after every crash, crying, ‘Do you *hear* that, Mistress Burns?’ and she as regularly answering, ‘Indeed *and I do*, Mister Cooke.’ He next opened the window, and threw the looking-glass into the street.

“I stood,” continued Mathews, “in a state of stupid amazement during this scene, but now attempted to make my escape, edging towards the door, and making a long stride to gain the garret stairs. ‘Come back, sir! Where are you going?’ ‘To bed, sir.’ ‘To bed, sir! What, sir! desert me! I command you to remain, on your allegiance! Desert me in time of war! Traitor!’ I now determined to make resistance; and feeling pot-valiant, looked big, and boldly answered, ‘I will not be commanded! I *will* go to bed!’ ‘Aha!’ cried the madman, in his highest key, ‘Aha! do you rebel? Caitiff! Wretch! Murderer!’

“He advanced upon me and I shrank to nothing before his flashing eye. ‘Murderer!’ and he seized me by the collar with Herculean grip. ‘You will go! I will send you to the place you are fitted for! Murderer! I’ll drag you to your doom! I’ll give you up to fate! Come along, caitiff!’ and he dragged me to the open window, vociferating, ‘Watch! watch! murder! murder!’ in his highest and loudest key.

“Immediately the rattles were heard approaching in all directions, and a crowd instantly collected. He continued vociferating ‘Watch! watch! murder!’ until the rattles and exclamations of the watchmen almost drowned his stentorian voice.

“‘What’s the matter? who’s kilt? who’s murdered? where’s the murderer?’

“‘Silence!’ screamed Cooke—‘hear me!’

All became hushed. Then holding me up to the window, the raving tragedian audibly addressed the crowd: "In the name of Charles Macklin, I charge this culprit, Charles Mathews, with the most foul, cruel, deliberate and unnatural murder of the unfortunate Jew, Beau Mordecai, in the farce of 'Love a la Mode.' Then pulling down the window, he cried, 'Now go to bed, you booby! go to bed! go to bed!'"

The steamboat party remained together until near morning, and then retired to rest. Let it not be supposed that they imitated the folly of the hero of the above tale because whisky punch has been mentioned. The evening, or night, was one of real interchange of mind, heightened by the peculiar powers and habits of the very extraordinary histrionic artist who gave this instance of Cooke's eccentric and pernicious propensities.

Shortly after the arrival of the celebrated Edmund Kean in New York, which was in November, 1820, he paid a visit to the place of the interment of Mr. Cooke, and then determined, prior to his departure for Europe, to erect a suitable monument to the memory of him whose extraordinary powers, though he himself had never witnessed them, had been so highly lauded by every admirer of Shakspeare and the lover of nature.

Accordingly, in June, 1821, the body of Mr. Cooke was removed from the Strangers' vault, in St. Paul's church-yard, New York city, to a most eligible spot in the centre of that extensive burial ground. Mr. Cooke died in September, 1812, and the monument over his remains was erected on the 4th of June, 1821. It is well executed in marble, by the Frazees, and consists of a square pedestal on two steps, surmounted by an urn, from the top of which a flame issues towards the Park Theatre, the scene of Mr. Cooke's greatest efforts in this country. The inscription on the tomb was furnished by Dr. Francis,

who had superintended the removal of the remains, is as follows:

“ERECTED TO THE MEMORY OF  
GEORGE FREDERICK COOKE,

BY EDMUND KEAN, OF THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE, 1821.

“Three kingdoms claim his birth,  
Both hemispheres pronounce his worth.”

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts his brief hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

### The Old Trowbridge Museum.

FIRST MUSEUM IN ALBANY, 1798, CORNER OF GREEN AND BEAVER STREETS—HENRY TROWBRIDGE DISCOVERS AND PRODUCES ILLUMINATING GAS, USING IT INSTEAD OF “PENNY DIPS” AND OIL IN HIS MUSEUM—CHARLOTTE TEMPLE—HER TOMB IN TRINITY CHURCHYARD, NEW YORK—THAT VERITABLE “OLD HAND ORGAN”—ITS DULCET NOTES—YANKEE HILL—HE FIRST APPEARS IN SONGS AND YANKEE STORIES IN THE “LITTLE DARK ROOM” OF THE OLD MUSEUM—HE NEXT MAKES HIS DEBUT AT THE PEARL STREET THEATRE—HIS AMOURS WITH A PRETTY ACTRESS—HIS FINAL RUIN AND MELANCHOLY “EXIT” FROM LIFE’S BUSY STAGE.

In the series of our “Theatrical Reminiscences,” published from time to time in the Albany Morning Express, but slight allusion was made to either the old Trowbridge Museum or Meech’s Albany Museum.

Before proceeding with a fuller sketch of the two Museums above mentioned, we would state that Trowbridge’s Museum was not, as was supposed, the “first” establishment of the kind in Albany, as will appear by the annexed announcement of 1798: “A Museum is now established in this city, (Albany), and is open for inspection at the corner of Green and Beaver streets, opposite Denison’s Tavern, every day, (Sunday excepted,) from nine o’clock in the morning till nine at night. It contains a number of living animals.”

### Trowbridge and his Illuminating Gas.

Mr. Trowbridge gave the first exhibition of his gas light in 1817, to a large audience who were there mainly with a

view to reward him for his indefatigable exertions, and who expressed much gratification at the result of the novel experiment. Mr. Trowbridge afterwards tried various experiments with gas, such as collecting it in glasses, allowing persons to inhale it, and on application of fire a bright flame would issue from their mouths. Mr. Trowbridge clearly explained the difference of lighting his establishment with gas, or with tallow candles and oil—the difference being as follows: lighting with oil and tallow candles, per night, from \$1.88 to \$2.25; and the coal and wood consumed in producing sufficient gas for one hundred and twenty burners, amounted to only *sixty cents* per night! Mr. Trowbridge, it would appear then, was one of the first, if not the *first*, to discover and to introduce gas for illuminating purposes.

#### “Trowbridge’s Museum,”

or, New York State Museum, was located on the North-east corner of Hudson and Court, afterwards South Market street, (now Broadway.) Previous to Mr. Trowbridge’s occupancy of the building as a Museum, the State occupied it for public purposes, the Legislature holding its annual sessions there till the present Capitol was erected. Mr. Trowbridge, in 1830, removed his traps to the new marble building corner of State street and Broadway, erected by the celebrated stage proprietors, Messrs. Thorpe & Sprague.

Trowbridge’s Museum, in those days, was considered quite an institution, it being the only establishment of the kind, of any consequence, north of New York. Trowbridge had a sprinkling of the tact, taste, and go-ahead-iveness of Barnum, but little of his “humberging” propensities. Trowbridge was ever on the *qui-vive* securing all sorts of monstrosities that love or money could pro-

cure—such as huge reptiles, double-headed and six-legged calves, lambs, and other wonder-exciting curiosities!

### Charlotte Temple's Tomb in Trinity Churchyard, New York.

Among the prominent features in the "show department," were the execution of the unfortunate "Louis the Sixteenth," "Charlotte Temple," (the remains of this unfortunate woman were interred in Trinity Churchyard, New York. Her grave can be seen on the east side of the church, simply her name engraved upon the dark marble slab that lies flat upon her tomb. It is said that when her remains were first placed there a large brass plate with her name engraven thereon, was set in the marble slab, but some "body snatcher" or sneak thief, supposing the plate to be gold, detached it and carried it off,) "Tam O'Shanter and Souter Johnny," the "Witch of Endor raising Samuel from the Tomb," "Punch and Judy," the "Great Leviathan 'Turtle," or shell, fifteen feet in circumference; the "rope with which Hamilton was hung" for shooting Major Birdsall, near the old arsenal in the Colonie, while on parade. Then there was the veritable "OLD HAND ORGAN!"

"From rosy morn to dewy eve."

grinding out such soul-thrilling and fashionable airs as "Molly Hang the Kettle on," "Yankee Doodle," (minus the variations!!) "Barney Leave the Girls Alone," "The Rogue's March," and other equally choice music! The "Old Organ," as thousands will be very apt to long remember, was also prominent among the features of the new Albany Museum!

Attached to the *old* Museum was a tolerably fair sized but very dark apartment, bearing the imposing title of "Lecture Room!" where most of the exhibitions were



given at night. In this room the antiquated "Phantasmagoria," with the "Dance and Multiplication of Witches," was nightly exhibited to unsophisticated and awe-stricken crowds! Occasionally appeared in this lecture room a "star" itinerant comic singer or dancer, in the way of *extra* luxury for the patrons of the establishment.

### "Yankee Hill."

It was in this little dark lecture room that Yankee Hill, who ranked among the very first in this country as a representative of Yankee character, commenced his dramatic career, entertaining his audiences with comic songs and Yankee stories. One of those songs we well remember, each verse ending with "Mr. York, you're Wanted," which was nightly repeated to a delighted and encoring throng!

In speaking of Yankee Hill, we would state that it was at the suggestion and interposition of the writer of this work, that an arrangement was made with the managers, Messrs. Duffy & Forrest, to bring Hill out on the boards of that theatre in his Yankee characters. The suggestion was at once entertained and acted upon by the managers, and in a short time he made his *debut* in the Yankee character in Woodworth's beautiful comedetta of the "Forest Rose," in which he at once made a hit—a "palpable hit"—and rapidly rose in the profession, finally reaching the very highest niche in the temple of dramatic fame.

Hill was a Yankee by birth—his voice, with the natural nasal twang, peculiarly and admirably adapting him to the character. He was easy, quiet, and perfectly natural in his every impersonation, surpassing, beyond all doubt, Hackett, Dan Marble, and others who assumed the Yankee *role*. Hill immediately commenced "starring" it throughout this country, afterwards making a professional tour

through the principal cities of England, Ireland and Scotland, meeting with a success theretofore unknown to an American actor.

### Hill's Amour with a Pretty Actress.

Hill accumulated a very handsome competency, and returned to his native land. Unfortunately for him, however, while in London he became *enamored* of a fascinating but very *artful* young actress of the name of Miss R——, whom he brought with him to this country. She appeared at the principal theatres in the United States, meeting with considerable success. While in the city of Washington, which was during John Tyler's ("Tippecanoe and Tyler too") administration, she produced so decided a sensation among the magnates of that city by her cunning manœuvring, coquetting, and shrewd strategy, as to actually succeed in controlling the appointment of many a "scurvy politician" to an office in some of the government departments at Washington, as well as elsewhere. "Bob" T——, it was strongly suspected, had been inveigled in the meshes of this artful girl, which may in a measure account for the influence she had in controlling affairs to the extent she did.

### "Wine and Women" Hill's Ruin.

It was through the wiles and intrigues of this young actress that Hill was ultimately driven to an utter state of despair and final ruin! "Women and wine," so often the ruin of young men of the present day, was the cause of destroying poor Yankee Hill! His sad fate should be a solemn warning to our young men generally. He died at Saratoga Springs, September 27, 1849, in the 51st year of his age, in rather embarrassed circumstances, leaving an amiable and very exemplary wife and several children, who at last accounts were residing at Batavia, Genesee county,

N. Y. Hill once owned a beautiful villa at Batavia, located near the New York Central Railroad depot, situated on an elevated plat of ground, commanding an uninterrupted view of the beautiful village of Batavia and surrounding country; but whether this property was saved from his wrecked fortune and secured as a home for his wife and children, we have never been advised. We, however, understand that Hill's life was insured for \$5,000, which his wife, without doubt, received. In conclusion, we would mention that after Hill relinquished the dramatic profession he adopted the dentistry profession, in which he was engaged until within a short period of his demise.

After Hill's retirement from the stage, it was very evident the interest in Yankee character began rapidly to decline, as none were found capable of filling his place, or even to touch his cast-off mantle; he was beyond all doubt or cavil, the very best delineator of Yankee characters in the world.

## CHAPTER XLIV.

### The Albany Museum.

SKETCH OF THE SAME FROM 1830 TO ITS FINAL CLOSING—THE VARIOUS MANAGERS—ENLARGEMENT OF THE DRAMATIC DEPARTMENT—NAMES OF THE VARIOUS PROMINENT STARS, AND OF MANY OF THE VARIOUS STOCK COMPANIES—SKETCH OF DANIEL LAMBERT—ANECDOTES, ETC.

As was stated in a previous chapter, Mr. Trowbridge, in 1830, removed from the old Museum to the new marble building corner of State street and Broadway, his stock of curiosities and fixtures. No building in the country was so admirably adapted to the purposes designed by the proprietor as the one which he had just taken possession of. Originally, the entrance to the Museum was by the spiral stair-way on the corner of State street and Broadway, connecting with an ample balcony. A few years subsequently the entrance to the same was changed to the present one on State street, the spiral stair-way removed, and the balcony left remaining for the accommodation of the Museum band, consisting of a Kent bugle, clarionet and bass drum, which was wont to discourse, aided occasionally by an accompaniment on the veritable hand-organ, most excellent music—regaling night and day the aural sensibilities of the visitors as well as the passing throng!

In speaking of the musical department of this establishment, we should have said that the organ, as well as the bass drum, were not *done* generally by musical artists, but usually by a genteel class of young men who, by getting

on the sunny side of the proprietor's nature, worked themselves in as permanent "dead-heads."

This was one of the largest and most admirably arranged Museums in this country, with the exception, perhaps, of Barnum's; the collection of rare and beautiful birds, native and exotic, far surpassing even Barnum's, Peal's or any other establishment of the kind in the Union, as was the frequently expressed opinion of Professor John Bell and other celebrated taxidermists. The collection of animals, aquatic fowls, etc., was also very rare, extensive and artistically prepared, as was also the very fine collection of wax figures, occupying conspicuous positions in various parts of the spacious "show rooms;" the whole forming an attraction worthy the attention and study of visitors.

#### Daniel Lambert.

As this remarkable personage constituted the *largest* feature among the countless monstrosities, and as many incredulous people who gazed upon the wax figure of Daniel "didn't believe such a person ever existed, and that he was a mere myth," we subjoin the following sketch from English history as incontestible evidence that such a man as Daniel Lambert *did* "live, move—though rather slow—and have a being":

"In the year 1810, Daniel Lambert died in Stamford, England, in the 59th year of his age. He was long celebrated in sporting annals, and not less famous for his bulk and immense weight, being confessedly the heaviest human being in all Europe.

"This extraordinary person was born at Leicester, in the year 1769. His father was keeper of the Bridewell of that town, to which situation his son Daniel succeeded, and kept it till, by a new regulation, that place of confinement was merged into the new jail. Having lost his employment, and having been all his life too generous to

be very provident, he fell under the pressure of pecuniary want, from which his friends relieved him.

“He was advised to see company, or, in other words, to ‘show’ himself for his future emolument; an expedient to which, though he was extremely averse, he at last consented. He arrived at Stamford, and sent a message to the printer with the request that, “as the *mountain* could not wait on Mahomet—Mahomet would come to the mountain,” or, in other words, that the printer would call upon him and receive an order for executing some handbills announcing Mr. Lambert’s arrival and desire to see company.

“The orders he gave showed no presentiment that they were to be his last, but were delivered with his usual cheerfulness. He retired to his bed—he had no indisposition, only a sense of fatigue—but before nine o’clock the next morning he was dead. His corpulency had increased till the machinery of life, clogged with flesh and fat, stood still! Upon being weighed, his weight was found to be *seven hundred and twenty-eight pounds!* His coffin, in which he was with great difficulty placed, was six feet four inches long, four feet four inches wide, and two feet four inches deep. It consisted of one hundred and twelve superficial feet of elm-wood, and was fixed upon two axletrees and four clog wheels, and on that he was rolled to the grave!”

### Capacity of the Museum in its Early Days.

In the early days of the Museum the accommodations for theatrical representations were rather limited, there being only a small sized auditorium and stage arranged on the east side of the third story, the auditorium accommodating some three or four hundred persons. The class of entertainments were light vaudevilles, farces, singing, dancing, phantasmagoria exhibitions, ventriloquism, sleight-

of-hand, with such other novelties as were supposed to possess the all-important requisite in a manager's eye, that of *drawing!*

Many actors and actresses made their *debut* at the Albany Museum, on this seven-by-nine stage, who in later years became quite noted, as well as great favorites, in the theatrical profession, among whom we will name the following: E. Eddy, Charley Kane, Sidney Smith, Mary Gannon, Mary Wells, etc.

## CHAPTER XLV.

### The Albany Museum.

NEW DRAMATIC DEPARTMENT—ITS ORNAMENTATIONS—SIGNOR GUIDINI, THE CELEBRATED SCENIC ARTIST—JOHN M. TRIMBLE, ARCHITECT—OPENING ADDRESS OF C. W. TAYLOR—NAMES OF DIFFERENT MANAGERS.

The dramatic department of the Museum was enlarged by the addition of the two adjoining buildings north, and the celebrated theatre architect, the late John M. Trimble, employed, and in an unprecedentedly brief period the entire upper stories of the adjoining buildings were transformed into a very spacious theatre, which was subsequently denominated "Museum Saloon." The auditorium was of sufficient capacity to easily accommodate fifteen hundred people, and consisted of a parquette, family circle, with proscenium or private boxes, elegantly and elaborately furnished.

The orchestra, though not extensive, (forming a prominent and pleasing feature,) was under the leadership of the late Lewy Underner, assisted by our well known musical artist, Richard J. Carmody, the popular organist of the Cathedral.

The stage was quite ample, sufficiently so to produce extensive spectacular and other heavy pieces in all their completeness. The frescoing and ornamentations throughout were the work of the famed Italian artist, Signor Guidini, who decorated the old National Opera House, New York, so universally celebrated as a *chef d'uvre* in sister art.



The outlay in effecting the entire improvement amounted to between nine and ten thousand dollars.

It was opened to the public for the first time, on the evening of February 1st, 1841, and presented an appearance of extreme beauty and elegance. Charles W. Taylor, musical director and vocalist, delivered the following opening ADDRESS, which met with a warm response from the large and fashionable auditory:—

“LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

“I have been requested to step forward in my official capacity, on the opening of this new and elegant Saloon, to offer a few words of explanation to the generous friends who have to-night extended to us their favor and their patronage.

“It cannot be denied, ladies and gentlemen, that the regular drama has ceased to be a favorite object with the citizens of Albany, and I may add elsewhere ; and he is a bold speculator who would venture an outlay of capital on any attempt to revive dramatic taste amongst them.

“The numerous lectures, the vast increase of books and periodicals, the various absorbing topics which now engross public attention, have left but little space for the successful operation of dramatic literature, and the closet or the lecture room has now nearly superseded the once prevalent and all-powerful influence of the histrionic stage.

“It must be admitted that most people have, at one time or other, been pleased, excited and benefited by the noble productions of its master-spirit—Shakspeare—whose works cannot now keep the stage, is still the theme of critical wonder—the storehouse from which the pulpit and the rostrum still draws, as they ever must, their choicest and most elegant illustrations.

“True it is, the management and discipline of the drama, not always having fallen into good hands, its true

design has been perverted, and its native moral tendencies changed. Yet all acknowledge, if its abuses could be effectually guarded against, it would still be an object worthy the admiration and encouragement of the most fastidious. It is also true that a taste for dramatic art exists to a very great extent in some parts of this country and in Europe—and though the theatres in themselves have ceased to attract—yet private theatricals a tableaux—living picture—are now more prevalent than ever.

“The proprietors of the Albany Museum intend, as far as possible, to evade the difficulties which have proved so fatal to places of amusement in this city. This Saloon is intended for exhibitions in musical science—lectures on art and on science—display of extraordinary skill in scientific illusions, and for the occasional representation of that peculiar kind of drama known as the French Vaudeville, in which, generally a single scene, conception of the author, together with the neat and skilful personification of the characters he has sketched, form the sole attraction.

“Vulgarity has no place in the true Vaudeville, it is a species of living painting, that imparts no offence to the eye or the ear, to the most particular auditor or the most sedate.

“The proprietors, therefore, disclaiming any wish or intention to make theatrical amusement their *exclusive* object, will offer, from time to time, such chaste and pleasing productions as may be free from the charges which have been made against the regular theatre, and in too many instances not without a cause.

“The character of those who will appear on this stage, the proprietors trust, will prove a further guarantee of the sincerity of these expressions, and to this particular test they invite public and individual scrutiny.

“In the adjoining rooms will be found collected the treasures of art and of nature, which continue to form a

prominent feature in the attractions of the evening—while here, the melody of song, the inspiration of harmony, wit and humor of the passing scene, will merit commendation, and challenge the patronage of our enlightened and liberal community.”

## CHAPTER XLVI.

### The Albany Museum.

ANECDOTE OF BRANDON, THE ACTOR—DENNIS MAHONEY — VARIOUS MANAGERS — LIST OF THE VARIOUS COMPANIES—DEATH OF H. T. MEECH.

There were many very amusing scenes and incidents connected with the Museum to which we would like to refer, did room permit. We will, however, relate one little episode, on account of its having created more real amusement than probably the best farce ever represented on the Museum boards.

It is pretty well known, that some few years since, a young painter of the name of Dennis Mahony, resided in Albany, and was in the employ of Joseph Davis, at the time extensively engaged in the painting business. Dennis usually executed most of the fancy sign painting, and priding himself upon his taste and talent as an artist, made it an invariable practice of painting in small letters at the bottom of the sign "Mahony for Davis." Attached to one of the various stock companies at the Museum was an actor by the name of Brandon, who, while enacting a rather lengthy part, to use a stage parlance, "got stuck" in the middle of an important sentence which required rapid and loud utterance. Brandon waited some time for the prompter's cue, but in vain. At length a well known wag sitting in the parquette near the stage, directly in rear of Mr. Carmody, the pianist, discovering the dilemma of the actor, placed one hand to the side of his mouth in

order the more effectually to throw his voice upon the stage, sang out, "say Mahony for Davis!" Brandon being a good deal confused and thinking it the voice of the prompter, instantly exclaimed in a loud tone of voice—"Mahony for Davis!" It is scarcely necessary to say the entire audience were thrown into inordinate shouts of laughter, accompanied with round after round of deafening applause, lasting several minutes. Brandon often boasted that, "after all, it was the only good or *palpable* hit he ever made on the stage."

### Names of some of the Prominent Members

OF THE VARIOUS DRAMATIC COMPANIES ATTACHED TO THE MUSEUM.

We close our rather imperfect sketch of the Albany Museum, by giving the names of some of the prominent members of the various dramatic companies attached to its dramatic department from 1834, '5 and '6, most of them familiar not only to the old patrons of this once favorite place of amusement, but to the play-going public at large.

E. Eddy, C. W. Taylor, Charley Kane, Gillespie, William Ellis, James Cannoll, C. T. Smith, William Warren, J. B. Rice, Thompson, Sprague, Kent, Mr. and Mrs. Hendrickson, Mr. and Mrs. Skerrett, Mr. and Mrs. P. F. Stone, Brandon, Purdy, Lingard, Tom Tyrrell, Fleming, George Barton, Mary Wells, Mary Gannon—both afterwards attached to Wallack's Theatre—Bland, Languish, John Drew, Frank Drew, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Hunt, (Mrs. John Drew), Mr. and Mrs. Isherwood, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lovell, D. Myron, Lewis, Charley Salsbury, Ponissi, Joe Parker, Kelly (U. S. Marshal), Charley Mestayer, Germen, George Mossop, Mike Hennessy, J. O. Sefton, Mrs. Meader, Mrs. Vernon, Mrs. Bradshaw, Miss E. Dearing, Mrs. and Miss Georgiana Kenlock, Mrs. Wray, Miss St. Clair, Julia Turn-

bull, the Misses Emmons, dansesuses, and hosts of others whose names we do not now remember.

The Albany Museum, from 1833 to the final closing of the establishment about the year 1856 or '7, was under the management, for short seasons, of various individuals, viz: Henry Trowbridge, Trowbridge & Meech, Meech & Vanderwater, (R. J.), George Randall, John Fursman, John Bell, the celebrated Taxidermist, Meech & Canoll, (James Canoll, the actor,) F. M. Kent, Skerrett & Anderton, and lastly and alone, Henry T. Meech.

#### Death of Henry T. Meech.

Mr. Meech died at Hartford, Conn., in 1870. Some two months previous to his death, the family and immediate friends of Mr. Meech were startled by the sudden breaking down of his physical powers, and the serious impairment of his mind. His recovery was regarded by his attending physicians as extremely doubtful, and it was deemed practicable to remove him to Hartford, Conn., where two of his sons, Rev. Robert H. and Charles E. Meech reside. Some time before his death, the cloud which had temporarily dimmed his faculties passed away, but left him so far exhausted physically that he continued to sink rapidly till the hour of his death. He suffered but little during his illness; and in its early stages he had strong presentiments that his decease was near at hand.

Henry T. Meech was born in Worthington, Mass., in May, 1805, and was consequently in the sixty-sixth year of his age at the time of his death. He came to Albany, N. Y., at the age of sixteen, and found employment with his uncle, Henry Trowbridge, who was proprietor of the Albany Museum. From the small pittance allowed him as a salary he managed to lay up something for emergencies, and in a few years had so far mastered the business of the Museum as to earn for himself its sole proprietorship. Under his management the Museum flourished, and

many of the finest actors and actresses the country has known, made their advent under his auspices, and remember him with kindness. Among the dramatic profession it is known of him that he never failed to pay salaries when they were due,—a record of which but comparatively few theatrical managers can boast. While yet the youthful manager of the Museum, he was married to Miss Adeline Hendrickson, daughter of the late venerable John Hendrickson, of Albany, a lady of marked personal beauty and fine womanly character, who bore him nine children, eight of whom are still living. For several years he was the proprietor of a line of canal boats which plied between this city and Buffalo, and for some time he conducted an extensive manufacture of oilcloths. In various other departments of business he figured with varying success, and triumphs and reverses alternated with him—the latter, generally attributable to over-confidence in friends—till he resolved to “go west,” casting his lines in Buffalo. Even while suffering from a financial embarrassment which would have sadly demoralized most men, he built in Buffalo the Metropolitan Theatre, now the Academy of Music; and the great improvement of that, at an early day, he had determined upon only a few months previous to his death. In 1858 he moved to Buffalo with his family and assumed the proprietorship of the Wadsworth House, now the Continental Hotel. Shortly after his wife died, and her memory he always held in the loftiest veneration. Mr. Meech’s life had been an eventful one, and he was wont to review it circumstantially, to his friends with a good deal of satisfaction; and as it drew near its close he derived much consolation from his devotion to his family, and from his success in providing for their future comfort. Two of Mr. Meech’s sons, John H. and Henry, inheriting the tact, energy and enterprise of their father, are the present popular managers of the Buffalo Academy of Music.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

ORIGIN OF NEGRO MINSTRELSY—FIRST EFFORT MADE AT THE ALBANY GREEN STREET THEATRE BY “HOP.” ROBINSON—“DADDY, OR JIM CROW RICE”—GEORGE WASHINGTON DIXON—NED. CHRISTY—HIS POPULAR MUSIC—HE ACCUMULATES A LARGE FORTUNE—HIS MELANCHOLY DEATH!

The *Atlantic Monthly*, some time since, in an article on the subject of negro minstrelsy, gave S. C. Foster the credit of being the originator of negro minstrelsy, which was by no means correct. The negro song, entitled the “Battle of Plattsburgh,” commencing with—

“Back side Albany standee Lakey Champlain,  
A leetle pond half-full ob water,”

*was* sung first—as we are informed by an old friend who is well posted in matters of this kind—at the old Green Street Theatre in this city, by a member of the theatrical company, of the name of “Hop.” Robinson, which is about the only truthful statement made by the *Atlantic* in relation to the origin of negro minstrelsy; and after this event scarcely anything of account was heard of in this class of music for many years. George Washington Dixon was the first who made anything like a feature of it in his song of “Coal Black Rose,” “Long Tailed Blue,” etc., which he sang in full character, and with great *eclat*, in New York, at the old North Pearl Street Circus, and in Albany, at the old South Pearl Street Theatre. “Daddy Rice,” as he was called, did not make his advent until after Dixon was “played out,” when Rice introduced the song and dance



of "Jim Crow," which created an immense *furor* at the old New York Bowery for a long time. Rice, after making a professional tour of the States, went to London, where his success was equally great. He accumulated a handsome competency in this line of business, but soon squandered it, dying very poor. After Rice's *exit*, many efforts were made by itinerant aspirants to introduce minstrelsy, but they proved miserable failures. Ned. Christy successfully revived, and gave the *coup de grace* to negro minstrelsy, as the thousands who have listened with delight to his inimitable troupe in their palmy days, can fully attest. The credit is solely due to Christy for rendering negro minstrelsy the most popular amusement of the age. His beautiful and heart-melting melodies were once the accepted and favorite music in the parlors of the wealthy and fashionable of that day. Christy inaugurated minstrelsy at Buffalo, with an old banjo and a very seedy wardrobe, but a large amount of indomitable energy as his capital. He made his *debut* at Harry Meech's Museum with a troupe of three or four persons, and after playing a short time at this establishment with indifferent success, went to New York, leased and fitted up Mechanics' Hall, on Broadway, the enterprise being attended with unprecedented success, and enabling him in a short time to retire upon an ample fortune; which, however, he did not long enjoy, as the poor fellow was killed by falling from the three-story window of his residence on Fifth avenue, a few years ago.

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

“Lord Adancourt” and C\*\*\*\* F\*\*\*\*\*.

A HIGHLY SENSATIONAL FARCE IN THE PALMY DAYS OF MISS C\*\*\*\*—HOW SHE SUCCEEDED AS A FISHER-WOMAN IN CATCHING A SPRIG OF ONE OF THE F. F. A. (FIRST FAMILIES OF ALBANY) BY THE GILLS.

Notwithstanding the events related in the subjoined sketch occurred many years ago, and was published at the time in a journal with which the writer was connected, we trust the ventilation of this affair, which caused no little sensation at the time, especially among “good society,” will be none the less acceptable now, at least to those who doubtless remember the circumstances, as well as the actress and actors who assumed the principal *roles* in this most amusing farce.

We would here remark, *en passant*, that meeting the lamented WILLIAM CASSIDY on the street a short time previous to his decease—it being the last time we had the pleasure of speaking to him—in the course of our conversation he referred to the “Lord Adancourt” affair, remarking that, “were it properly dressed up, it would form an amusing feature in our work.” Acting partly upon his suggestion, therefore, we concluded to give it a place.

C\*\*\*\* F\*\*\*\*\*.

There is magic in the name, the theme of criticism, the universally admired actress and the accomplished lady; she who has been the subject of poetry, flattery and acros-

tic—who is not, if we are to believe the expressions of her admirers, mere womanly flesh and blood, but an angel, yea, verily, a real angel, a theatrical Peri—such a one as Tommy Moore sang of when he complimented the inhabitants of Heaven by raising to the skies the earthly passion of love. Yet C\*\*\*\*, notwithstanding all that has been written and sung about her, has been the admired actress of one *farce* which we have never seen noticed in the public prints.

A young gentleman claiming to be a sprig of good society, (C—— B—n,) who shoved a goose-quill, (not exactly as *we* do, for a living,) fancied himself irresistible in love affairs, and determining to become the Paris of Gotham and rob the theatre of its Helen in the person of Miss C\*\*\*\*, exchanged the gloomy apartments of his father's mansion, (old Schuyler mansion,) for lodgings at one of our most fashionable and elegant hotels in Albany, procured an introduction to the F\*\*\*\*\* family, and was at once pronounced the most elegant and accomplished young gentleman this side of the Atlantic.

#### Lord Adancourt on the Hook.

The young F\*\*\*\*\* had him upon the hook, and he, poor fellow, was determined not to let go his *bait*. At dinner it was champagne and porter, and porter and champagne, until the purse of the quill-driver felt that it was like what nature abhors, viz.: a vacuum! Out of cash, but not destitute of credit, *tick* was the order of the day until mine host had become convinced that the man of *quills* was also a man of *letters*, for he had become deeply acquainted with his *books*! Mine host, however, perceived, or fancied he perceived, that there was something very like symptoms of a mutual affection between F\*\*\*\*\* and Adancourt. This was enough for him; and as Adancourt was not troubled with “dun-fish,” and credit was good, matters went on “swimmingly.”

### Going to Saratoga.

After the termination of the theatrical engagement, a jaunt to Saratoga Springs was proposed; and as a nobleman was a great *bait* of attraction in the eyes of the "upper-tendom," especially both upon the male and female sides of the question, "the actress of all work," at no loss of invention and ingenuity *in the changing of characters*, aided by mine host and the way-bill of the post coach line—no railroads or Pullman palace cars in those days—transformed the driver of quills into an English nobleman, with the high sounding title of LORD ADANCOURT!!! Upon one fine sunshiny morning, off started the cavalcade, bearing with them the newly-made patent English lord.

### Arrival at Saratoga.

Arrived at the Springs, C\*\*\*\* played off the *game* with admirable tact, and outshone every *actress* in the *scene* in carrying out the belief that our hero was a real lord! He was a lord; and in addition to his being a lord, he was a lover that had crossed the Atlantic for love of her, and a real *English* lord; and what was more passing strange and wonderful, he was a lord in love! Champagne, with the lady of the lord in love; porter, with the mother and brother of the lady of his love, was the rule and practice with my lord. Of such astonishing celebrity had he become, that the moment he appeared upon the piazza every adjoining window was raised, and many a beauteous belle inwardly sighed for the smiles of the gallant, accomplished, and fascinating nobleman. But to one star, and to one only, did he bend in humble adoration, and that star did he worship with the devotion of a Persian at the shrine of the sun.

The ladies smiled upon him, the gentlemen courted his acquaintance with the greatest assiduity, the dandies imitated him, and the negroes, as he passed or exhibited him-

self upon the piazza, refrained from pitching cents, and rolling up the whites of their eyes with most expressive grins, scratched their woolly heads, and swore by the "geminy hokey, dere was de English lord wat was a courten de bootiful and accomplis Missy F\*\*\*\*." In fact, no person ever excited so much attention on this side of the ocean as did Lord Adancourt; not even excepting Tobias Morgan and La Fayette. Toby, who was at the Springs, was the oracle of the colored gentry, and as he had waited upon La Fayette, and had even been seen familiarly conversing with a lord, Toby was at the highest pitch of African glory. He was a wag, and his mysterious manner of talking about the nobleman, contributed nothing to allay the ferment. Through the agency of Lord Adancourt and Toby, the Springs became the scene of a real *Morgan excitement*.

"Tobe" Morgan was a "character," as many of our old denizens will remember, who prided himself upon his *polished* looks and good manners.

The funds of my lord at last became exhausted. After numerous ineffectual attempts to borrow or procure the acceptance of a draft, he at last hit upon a happy and successful expedient, and wrote to mine host of the hotel, "that affairs went on charmingly, he was in town, and C\*\*\*\* would shortly gently *float* with him into the clear and transparent waters of matrimonial felicity." Mine host was *hooked*, and after some little hesitation forwarded the money, and Lord Adancourt again shone in undiminished and regenerated splendor.

The time for a return soon came, but no news of the wedding had yet reached the ears of the impatient host of the hotel. His eyes were soon delighted, however, with the forms of his happy visitors returning from the Springs.

Lord Adancourt still held out fair inducements—but alas, alas, that the *farce* should have so *tragical* and limited a conclusion! The right honorable and noble Lord

gallanted his charmer to the steamboat on her way to New York, and sighed a sorrowful and an affectionate farewell.

The actress went to the South again to delight the theatrical world, and Lord Adancourt retired to his solitary sanctum to chew the bitter cud of disappointment, to reflect upon the uncertainty of all sublunary things, and, above all, the fickleness of woman!

Thus ended the "farce." The landlord subsequently arranged the affair, and the "patent right," honorable and noble Lord Adancourt became a persevering driver of the gray goose-quill.

"Oh, my countrymen! what a fall was there!"

### Lord Mortimer.

In speaking of Lord Adancourt, we are reminded of quite a sensational event that occurred in Albany about the time the C\*\*\*\* F\*\*\*\*\* and Lord Adancourt farce was enacted. A dashing young Englishman paid Albany a visit, passing himself off as "Lord Mortimer," and by his highly polished and insinuating address soon ingratiated himself in the good graces of several members of fashionable society, playing his game so successfully as to swindle them out of large sums of money in the shape of accommodation "bank checks," "promises to pay," etc. This Lord Mortimer repeated his swindling game in New York and other large cities with equal success.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

### Caroline Richings.

HER ARRIVAL IN AMERICA WHEN A MERE CHILD—IS ADOPTED AS THE DAUGHTER OF PETER RICHINGS—HER DEBUT AT PHILADELPHIA AS A PIANIST—HER FIRST APPEARANCE IN OPERA—HER APPEARANCE IN ALBANY AT MEECH'S MUSEUM IN HER EARLY CAREER—AT A LATER DATE AT THE GREEN STREET GAYETY THEATRE—SHE ORGANIZES THE RICHINGS' ENGLISH OPERA TROUPE—IS MARRIED TO P. BERNARD, THE VOCALIST.

The private and professional character and career of this highly accomplished lady, eminent vocalist, and sprightly comedian, is so well and favorably known and appreciated, not only in Albany but throughout our land, that it would be simply

“To gild refined gold,  
To paint the lily,  
Or add new perfume to the rose,”

to give more than a brief sketch of her rather eventful private and professional career.

Caroline Richings was born in England—not in Philadelphia, as has been supposed by many—coming to this country with her parents when a mere child, and was soon afterwards adopted as his daughter by the late lamented Peter Richings, and he loved and cherished her with as much sincerity as though she was of his own flesh and blood. Peter Richings came to America in 1821, making his *debut* at the Park Theatre, New York. His name, as well as that of Caroline, has been, for over a quarter of

a century, as familiar to the public, and particularly to Albany, as household words.

It would seem that Caroline Richings made her first appearance before the public of Philadelphia, as a pianist at a Grand Concert of the Philharmonic Society, at Musical Fund Hall, in 1847. Her first appearance on the regular stage was at the Walnut Street Theatre, in 1852, in the opera of "The Child of the Regiment." As a comedienne, Miss Richings appeared as Stella in the comedy of the Prima Donna, a piece first played in this country for the benefit of Mr. Richings.

Her first appearance in Italian opera was in Philadelphia, in 1857, in the opera of Norma, at the Academy of Music, and produced a very favorable impression upon the *elite* of society in the Quaker city. From this time she rose rapidly as an opera singer, ranking among the first musical artists in this country. At the opening of the dramatic season of the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, 1857-8, she became a permanent member of the company, in which position she remained till 1859. Since that time she traveled as a "star," and lastly as manageress of the Richings' English Opera Troupe; she was for two seasons a prominent member of the Parepa Opera Combination Troupe. In 1867, Miss Richings was married in Boston, to P. Bernard, the vocalist.

Peter Richings and his daughter, in their earlier days, frequently appeared at the Albany Museum in light musical pieces and comedy, never failing to meet with excellent success. At later dates, Mr. and Miss Richings played very lengthy and profitable engagements at the Albany Green Street Gayety Theatre. The last appearance of this charming vocalist and comedienne in Albany, was at the Trimble Opera House, 1872, when the Enchantress, and other popular operas were produced with fine effect and success.



## CHAPTER L.

### Mrs. Scott Siddons.

HER RELATIONSHIP TO THE GREAT ENGLISH ACTRESS, MRS. SIDDONS—  
HER EARLY INCLINATION FOR THE STAGE OR THE DRAMA—HER  
FIRST APPEARANCE IN A SMALL FRENCH PLAY IN GERMANY—HER  
SUBSEQUENT SUCCESS IN THE PLAYS OF THE GREAT SCHILLER, RA-  
CINE, AND OTHER DISTINGUISHED PLAY-WRITERS—HER DEBUT IN  
AMERICA—HER APPEARANCE IN ALBANY AS AN ACTRESS AND  
READER.

Few members of the theatrical profession, or lecturers and readers, have secured so large a number or warmer-hearted friends and admirers, particularly among the *elite* of Albany, than this remarkably beautiful woman and unequalled comedienne and tragedienne—in proof of which it is only necessary to refer to the very numerous and fashionable audiences that greeted her appearance during her several engagements at the Trimble Opera House.

There are few play-goers who will be likely to forget Mrs. Siddons' unapproachable interpretation of Juliet, Julia, in the "Hunchback," Rosalind in "As You Like It," the Duchess d'Torreneuva in "Faint Heart," and, above all, her *blind girl*, in the beautiful and affecting drama of "King Renes' Daughter," rendering the character with such truthfulness and thrilling effect as to elicit the warmest sympathies as well as unrestrained demonstrations of delight. Mrs. Siddons was truly fortunate in having the very able support of two such excellent actors as Walter Montgomery, and the present indefatigable manager of the Capitol Theatre, Walter Keeble.

Mrs. Scott Siddons is the great grand-daughter of the eminent English actress, Mrs. Siddons, and sister of John and Charles Kemble. Mrs. Scott Siddons was born in the East Indies, in 1844, and is consequently in the twenty-ninth year of her age. At a very early age she evinced a decided taste for dramatic recitations. On the death of her father, his widow and four children returned to England and took up her residence in Germany, for the better purpose of educating her daughters—and here, the subject of this sketch being only eleven years of age, attracted much attention by her very intelligent rendition of small parts in a French play called “Ester,” and soon subsequently appeared in the plays of Schiller, Racine, and other distinguished play-writers.

Mrs. Siddons’ first appearance in England was in the character of Lady Macbeth. Her first appearance in America was as a reader at Providence, R. I., in 1868, and after appearing as a reader at Steinway Hall, New York, she made her *debut* as an actress in America, at the Boston Museum. Her first appearance in New York as an actress, was in 1868, at the Worrell Sisters’ Theatre, in the *role* of Rosalind, in “As You Like It.”

In 1869 Mrs. Siddons again visited England, and, after a brief absence, returned to this country, opening at Daly’s Fifth Avenue Theatre as Viola, in Shakspeare’s “Twelfth Night,” creating a very decided impression.

It would appear that her married name was *Canter*—but her husband’s father objected to his name being used on the stage—so Canter, jr., by law, took out the name of Scott Siddons, the first (Scott) the name of his mother, the second (Siddons) the name of his wife. Mrs. Scott Siddons’ last appearance in Albany, was as a reader before the Young Men’s Association.

## CHAPTER LI.

William J. Florence,

BORN IN ALBANY, 1831—HIS FIRST DRAMATIC EFFORTS—FIRST APPEARANCE AT THE OLD BOWERY THEATRE, NEW YORK—HE RUNS RAPIDLY UP THE DRAMATIC LADDER—MARRIES MRS. LETTELL—MR. AND MRS. FLORENCE GO TO EUROPE—THEIR SUCCESS IN THE PRINCIPAL CITIES OF ENGLAND, IRELAND AND SCOTLAND—RETURNS HOME AND “STARS IT” THROUGH THE STATES—MAKES A LARGE FORTUNE, ETC.

William J. Florence, or as he is more generally and familiarly called “Billy Florence,” as many may not be aware, is a native of Albany, “to the manor born.” He was born in 1831, and is consequently in the 42d year of his age. Mr. Florence, in appearance, is exceedingly prepossessing, both on and off the stage, courteous and gentlemanly in his intercourse with all, and is, beyond doubt, one of the very best delineators of certain characters, especially Irish, on the American boards. His acting is always natural, easy, graceful, seldom, if ever, overdoing or coming tardily off in any *role* he assumes. He also possesses great versatility of dramatic talent which enables him to render difficult dialect characters in an unexceptionable manner, especially that of Bob Brierly, in the “Ticket-of-Leave-Man,” in which character he has hardly an equal.

Mr. Florence was engaged by Tom Hamblin, of the old Bowery Theatre, New York, with the elder Chippendale and John Sefton, with whom he made his *debut*, in 1849,

in the character of Peter, in the play of the "Stranger." He soon after appeared at Brougham's Theatre.

On New Years' day, 1853, he married Miss M. Pray, who speedily made her *debut* in the character of "Nan, the Good for Nothing." The Florences shortly after visited England, meeting with flattering success, in their delineation of the "Irish Boy" and "Yankee Girl," at Drury Lane Theatre. At the close of their London engagement, these artists played to enthusiastic audiences at Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, Dublin, Belfast, and other large towns.

Returning to America, in 1857, Mr. and Mrs. Florence appeared in the principal cities of the United States, with a *repertoire* comprising "Handy Andy," "Temptation," "St. Patrick's Eve," "Kathleen Mavourneen," "The Yankee Housekeeper," etc.

In 1863 Mr. Florence achieved his greatest hit at the Winter Garden Theatre, New York, in the "Ticket-of-Leave-Man;" and as a burlesque artist he secured distinction in light pieces at Wallock's Theatre. The pieces he played were "The Returned Volunteer," "Orange Blossom," "Knight of Arva," "Fra Diavolo," "Lady of Lyons," and "Coleen Bawn."

Mr. Florence has displayed his versatility by the assumption of *roles* diametrically opposed to each other, in character and coloring; as, for instance, George d'Alroy, in the play of "Caste," and as Obenreizer, in "No Thoroughfare." Many of the pieces enacted by Mr. and Mrs. Florence are his own, including "Mike, the Miner," a three act drama, "The Yankee Housekeeper," "Lord Flanagan," "The Irish Brogue Maker," "Mischievous Annie," "Lalla Rookh," and a version of the "Field of the Cloth of Gold," produced a few years since at Wood's Museum, New York, in which Florence played the part of King Henry VIII.

Mr. Florence, yet in all the vigor and freshness of youth,

continues "starring it," adding, if possible, new laurels in his dramatic chaplet.

Mrs. Florence was formerly Mrs. Lettell—maiden name Malvina Pray. She was married to Joseph Lettell, from whom she was divorced, and married Mr. Florence in 1853. Mrs. Florence is a sister of Mrs. Barney Williams.

## CHAPTER LII.

### Albany Actors and Actresses.

THOSE WHO WERE TO THE MANOR-BORN, AND THOSE WHO COMMENCED THEIR DRAMATIC CAREER IN ALBANY.

In speaking of Billy Florence, a native-born citizen of Albany, we are reminded that the "good old Dutch Burgh" has probably produced as many members of the dramatic profession as any city of its size in the Union, with perhaps the exception of Philadelphia, which is conceded to be the "mother of actors."

Of those who were native-born Albanians, we very well remember the names of Hopkins and William Robinson, ("Hop." and "Bill,") who made their *debut* at the old Green Street Theatre. Alexander Simpson, printer, who first appeared at the old North Pearl Street Thespian Theatre; William Duffy, Mrs. Forbes, *nee* Miss Easton or Eaton, Lansing Daugherty, Mike Hennessey, Charley Kane, George Stone, Sidney Smith, James Cannoll, William J. Florence, Frank Lawlor, Mrs. Capt. John Cooke, and others, whose names we do not now remember.

James Cannoll made his first appearance as Ned Greyling, at the Albany Museum. After leaving Albany, he was attached to the dramatic company at Niblo's, but his health becoming much impaired by the labors of his profession, was compelled to abandon it, and secured a prominent appointment on the Metropolitan Police, which position he held until his death, which occurred November 5, 1867. His remains were brought to Albany for

interment in the Albany Rural Cemetery, his funeral being very numerously attended.

As an evidence of the high appreciation of Mr. Cannoll's dramatic abilities, during two of Mr. Forrest's engagements in New York, he prevailed upon the superintendent of the police to allow Mr. Cannoll a respite from police duty in order to secure his services in supporting him in his principal *roles*. Certainly a very high and well deserved compliment to Mr. Cannoll as an actor and as a gentleman.

Among those who were not born in Albany but who commenced their dramatic career here, are E. Eddy, James Hall, Joe Parker, Mary Gannon, Mary Wells—both of these latter afterwards filled prominent positions at Wallock's, New York—Lucille and Helen Western, the Bateman girls, Miss Davenport (Mrs. Lander) who, like Edwin Forrest, took her first grand start on the journey to dramatic fame, in Albany. Here the first laurels were gathered that formed the dramatic chaplet of Edwin Forrest and Mrs. Lander. Why may not, then, Albany justly claim the credit of being ONE of the principal mothers of actors and actresses, many of whom have occupied positions of distinction in the dramatic profession?

## CHAPTER LIII.

### Actors' Lives,

THEIR VICISSITUDES, MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY—THEIR MENTAL AGONY ON PARTICULAR OCCASIONS—THEIR PRIVATE AND PROFESSIONAL CHARACTER—ERRONEOUS IMPRESSION IN REGARD THERETO—GREAT AGES OF ENGLISH ACTORS.

In speaking of the causes of the short lives of actors, the late venerable actor and manager, W. B. Wood, remarks:

“The truth is, that the facts assumed by some in regard to the causes of the short lives of actors, are utterly unfounded, and the conclusions deduced from them are as little true. The exposure on the stage, though often severe, at the time, probably tends, in its constancy, to harden the constitution of an actor; and the charge of ‘idleness and dissipation’ can be made by only those who have no more knowledge of an actor’s daily habits than they have of those followed by the Caucasian or Esquimaux.”

#### An Actor’s Routine of Duty.

Let it, for example, be remembered that an actor passes his hours for months together in the following routine, and it will require no little ingenuity to find time for either “idleness or dissipation”: His “rehearsal” begins at 10 o’clock, on an average, and usually occupies till 1 o’clock, or more frequently, until 2 o’clock. Between this hour is his time for study, which in long and new parts is



often most severe, and which must be constant, even with short or old parts. Costume, or mechanical or personal arrangements for the stage, require much attention always; and by 7 o'clock in the evening he must be at the theatre for the important labors of the night, frequently protracted to the very hour of morning. The hours therefore devoted to study are limited to a short term after rehearsal, and what can be snatched after midnight or after rising early in the morning. Nothing is said, of course, about those cares of a family, or of interests not professional, but yet common to an actor along with other men, of those which, though not connected with the immediate daily and nightly duties of his profession, yet spring more or less directly from that source.

#### An Actor's Professional Sufferings.

Of the professional sufferings of an actor, some little idea may be formed by any person who feels himself compelled *only to appear* cheerful at a social party for a few moments, where no effort is expected from him, and no disappointment felt if he proves silent, gloomy or reserved. But the poor actor, while writhing under severe physical pain and anguish day after day, and month after month, must rise from his bed of sorrow to encounter the severity of winter in a dress only suited to the torrid zone, and not only appear gay and happy, but be expected to communicate a part of this feeling to the audience; or, what is far worse, he must rouse himself from the bedside of some beloved object, whose life perhaps hangs upon a thread, and hurry into the din and forced labor of a theatre, doubtful whether his return may be in time to close the eyes, perhaps, of the last remaining object of affection upon earth!

Garrick used to remark that the privileges of an actor's life were to be *petted and pelted!* This is true of some

avored performers; while the life of others resemble that of the politician, commencing in frenzy, and continuing in a wild and ceaseless struggle! Garrick's own memoirs furnish evidence how deeply even this cherished favorite was compelled to suffer in feeling, and in that which some person affected to consider more dear to him—his purse!

How perfectly absurd, then, to talk of the "idle life of an actor!" There is hardly a more laborious professional life in the whole range of professional careers. It is speaking, of course, of those who unite a praiseworthy ambition with an honorable feeling of a duty to the public and their employers.

So far as concerns the *causes* of short life, as found in "idleness and dissipation," and as respects the result of such causes, the following table shows exactly what might be expected. Here is placed after the names of several actors and actresses their age at the time of their death, as follows:

Smith, Drury Lane Theatre, 83; Moody, 85; Dibden, 76; Johnstone, 72; Bannister, 71; Wroughton, 74; Fawsette, 70; Beard, 75; Yates, 95; Munden, 74; Bensley, 71; Hull, 70; King, 75; Murphy, 75; Miss Pope, 76; Quick, 83; Inledon, 68; Mrs. Mattocks, 88; Mrs. Pitt, 70; Knight, 70; Whitlock, 70; Mrs. Davenport, 70; Talma, the great French actor, and Madame Mars, the distinguished French actress, died at 66, or upwards; Lafond lived to upwards of 80; Mrs. Gibbs and Mrs. Grover, eminent actresses, were also upwards of 70; Lady Grosvenor reached 72, and Catalain was hale and hearty at 70. All these were distinguished actors, actresses, or singers. Byrne, the great dancer, was a fine healthy man, in 1860, at 88 years!

These persons, it must be observed, embrace chiefly the names of eminent actors and actresses of London. While in the Provinces, many instances have occurred of actors

attaining a great age in earlier times, as, for instance, Macklin, who reached the extraordinary age of 97! Garrick was 67; Quinn, 70; Batterton, 74; John Kemble and his sisters, Mrs. Siddons and Mrs. Whitlock, were near 70. A London paper stated, in 1858, that Charles Kemble, father of Fanny Kemble, was in his 81st year. Braham, the great singer, the same paper stated, still survives, at the age of 70, a musical wonder. Of the prominent actors who died in America, we give the ages (which, it will be observed, nearly average those who died in England) at the time of their death: Jefferson, 62; Warren, father of the great American comedian, 63; Bernard, 74; Darley, 77; Hallem, 75; W. B. Wood, 75; Blissett, 78; Morris, 84; Mrs. Darley, 79; Holland, nearly 80.

## CHAPTER LIV.

John Hanbury Dwyer,

THE EMINENT COMEDIAN AND JUSTLY CELEBRATED ELOCUTIONIST.

There are many of our older citizens who no doubt remember Mr. Dwyer not only as an actor but as a highly polished gentleman and a finished elocutionist. His last appearance in Albany was at the old Pearl Street Theatre, where he made his *début* before a large audience, comprising our first class citizens.

Mr. Dwyer was born in Tipperary, Ireland. His father held the office of colonel in an Irish brigade under the unfortunate King Louis the Sixteenth of France. Mr. Dwyer arrived in New York from England in 1810. His name was originally O'Dwyer. He was conceded by eminent dramatic critics equal to the great actor Garrick, as a comedian. The elegance of his person, the fascination of his deportment, and that perfect knowledge of stage business which never suffered the slightest embarrassment to appear, confirmed him in the public mind as the best comedian who had appeared since the time of Garrick. It is related that the mere manner of drawing and sheathing his sword would elicit rounds of applause from the large audiences assembled at Drury Lane Theatre.

Mr. Dwyer's first appearance on the American stage received from an eminent theatrical critic the following highly flattering notice:

"The American stage has received, in the person of Mr. Dwyer, one of the greatest acquisitions that it has ever

had to boast of. He is an actor of great merit, and in his line, of the very first promise. Light dashing comedy is his forte, and in it he is always faultless. Nature has been uncommonly bountiful to this actor—he possesses all the commendation to please the eye—stature, bone, muscle, symmetry and comeliness.”

It may be gratifying to the friends and admirers of the late Mr. Dwyer, to learn that his estimable widow is still living, in the sixty-sixth year of her age. She has resided in the family of Mr. Vose, on Madison avenue, in this city, for the past seventeen years, and we are pleased to say she is still in an excellent state of preservation, retaining all her mental faculties in a remarkable degree.

Mr. Dwyer's "Essay on Elocution," a work of three hundred pages, and which has had a wide circulation, not only in this country but in Europe, is one of the most perfect works on that subject extant. For several years previous to his death, Mr. Dwyer devoted his time and attention to teaching and lecturing on the subject of elocution, his efforts meeting with the most flattering success.

## CHAPTER LV.

### A Pleasant Episode in the Life of Charlotte Cushman.—A Valuable Present.

It was our intention when writing up the sketch of Charlotte Cushman, which appears in a previous chapter, to have incorporated in the sketch the following account of a pleasant episode, which occurred on the last night of this lady's engagement in January, 1873, at McVicker's Opera House, Chicago:—

It is not often that the world at large is permitted to gain a glimpse of life "behind the scenes," much less obtain an inkling of the personal relations which exist between stage people of the various degrees of prominence before the public. The last day of Miss Charlotte Cushman's engagement at McVicker's Theatre was the occasion of a peculiarly interesting episode, and one which that greatest of living actresses will remember with pleasure during her life. There seems to have sprung up between Miss Cushman and the members of McVicker's company a mutual feeling of the most genuine regard, growing out of the extreme kindness and friendly interest which the distinguished actress has manifested toward each and all of the people employed on and about the stage. Their appreciation of this unusually pleasant state of things took the form of an elegant little testimonial—not especially rare or costly, nor intrinsically of great value, but exceedingly tasteful and appropriate—which was presented to Miss Cushman by the manager in the green-room of the

theatre. By general request, the presentation devolved upon Mr. McVicker, who, without a moment's warning, was called upon to do the honors. He acquitted himself neatly and fluently, first assuring Miss Cushman that it gave him peculiar pleasure to thus act in behalf of the members of his company, her relations toward whom he had from time to time observed with especial pride and gratification. He then read the following letter :

“ McVICKER'S THEATRE, CHICAGO, }  
January 11, 1873. }

“ *Miss Charlotte Cushman :*

“ As members of a profession to which you, not only as an artist, but as a lady and a true woman, have contributed the earnest zeal and heartfelt labors of a lifetime to enoble and honor, we, the members of the company of McVicker's Theatre, desiring to express to you our appreciation, present, through our worthy manager, this circlet of gold, inscribed with the motto that has so endeared you to us, and which is no less engraven in our hearts, viz.: ‘ KIND WORDS.’ May your happiness here, and in the great hereafter, be only symbolized by the golden circlet—endless.”

Signed, J. O'Neill, J. Howard Rogers, W. H. Power, and ten other members of the company.

Opening a little morocco case, Mr. McVicker took therefrom a heavy gold ring, a plain Etruscan band, on the surface of which these words were engraved and inlaid with black enamel: “ Miss Charlotte Cushman. McVicker's Theatre, January 11, 1873. Kind Words.” Though plain in appearance, the ring was beautifully fashioned and engraved, and reflected credit both upon the taste of the donors and the workmanship of the makers.

During all the preliminary proceedings Miss Cushman had stood like one utterly at a loss to know what it was all about. The perspiration stood in beads on her forehead, and she who had faced hundreds of thousands

glanced about her as nervously and uneasily as the veriest novice. When, however, Mr. McVicker placed the ring in her hand, with the accompanying letter, her expressive face relaxed into a broad smile of unmistakable surprise and pleasure, and as a tear glistened for a moment in her eye, and then stole down her cheek, in a few broken words she expressed her deep gratitude and delight at receiving such a token in such a way and from such a source. She said that her three weeks' stay in the theatre had been the pleasantest engagement of her life; that the constant desire of the members of the company to anticipate her every wish, and conform to it to the best of their ability, had made her sojourn so happy and free from annoyance, that she heartily wished she were going to remain three weeks longer. "So do I!" heartily interpolated Mr. McVicker. But she might come again some time, she said, and hoped she should. She should value the testimonial as she had never valued anything in her life, the more so, perhaps, because it was the first time in her stage experience that such a thing had happened to her. Once more she thanked them from her heart, and so ended one of the pleasantest little episodes imaginable.



## CHAPTER LVI.

### How the Printer Collects his Bill.

AN AMUSING INCIDENT AT THE OLD PEARL STREET THEATRE—THE  
MANAGER NONPLUSSED—FORREST'S LAST APPEARANCE AT THE  
OLD PEARL—FORREST APPLAUDS THE PRINTER'S MODUS OPERANDI.

Frequent allusions have been made in a previous part of this work to Thomas Fuller, who was generally known as the "Artful Dodger," and who was the last manager but one (Mr. Preston) of the Pearl Street Theatre. To settle a question frequently asked, why the sobriquet of "Artful Dodger" was applied to Fuller, it is only necessary to say that it was simply because he had a very peculiar faculty of "dodging" his creditors, who were generally exceedingly numerous. He left many persons in Albany with standing accounts, as "reminders" of his theatrical reign in Albany, when he made his rather hasty exit. This man Fuller was in no way related to or connected with the venerable "Sam" Fuller, fat and jolly,

"A fellow of infinite jest and excellent faney,  
Whose flashes of merriment kept the table in a roar,"

and who kept the Washington Hall, an excellent hotel adjoining the theatre on the south, where Luke's dry goods store stands.

A little incident occurred during Fuller's management of the theatre which may prove interesting to our readers, and especially to printers. It was the closing night of the season, Forrest playing "Metamora" to a house filled from

pit to dome, large numbers being unable to gain admission. Fuller's creditors, at least a few of them, were on the alert. Among the number was the bill printer, and the writer of this work, who had seen service in the theatrical line; that is, in the way of printing, and had suffered "many a time and oft" from the failure of managers to liquidate the claims he held against them. Well, the printer held a claim of \$125 against the establishment, and in order to circumvent Fuller, he adopted this dodge: In the building adjacent to the theatre on the north, and in which the fire that destroyed the Academy of Music originated, Mr. Benj. M. Briare kept a confectionery and ice cream saloon. The arrangement between the manager of the theatre and the printer was, that the printer should have the privilege of giving written passes, they being charged to his account. George Randall, who is still living and well, had charge of the box-door of the theatre at the time, as well as of other internal arrangements of the building.

The printer accordingly prepared a large number of written passes—labeled "Box" and "Pit"—a sufficient number to cover the amount of his claim against the manager. He opened a ticket office in Briare's saloon, and placed a couple of young fellows, "well up in their parts," in front of the saloon to inform the people, as they crowded about the ticket office of the theatre, that they could obtain tickets in the "side office," instead of being jostled and elbowed, and without the fear of having their pockets picked! The "dodge" succeeded admirably, the printer disposing of his tickets so rapidly, that long before the performance commenced he had realized a sum sufficient to liquidate his claim, and held a balance of seventy-five cents due the manager!! Early the morning following, manager Fuller sent post haste for the printer to come and settle, he supposing from the way the tickets poured in, the printer had received a sum far exceeding the amount

of his claim. The summons to appear at the box office was promptly obeyed, the tickets were counted, and the result exhibited that the printer had received *seventy-five cents* in excess of his bill, which amount was paid over to manager Fuller, the printer remarking: "This is the first time I ever knew a *printer* to be indebted to the manager of a theatre!" Fuller was quite chopfallen, but accepted "the situation" gracefully! Forrest was informed of the printer's successful "dodge," and had a hearty laugh over it, remarking: "Served the d—— snob right." (Fuller was a shoemaker before he became manager of the theatre.) Forrest had secured his money before the curtain "rang up," so he was all right.

Soon after this Fuller left town, and, if we mistake not, at a greater rate of speed than pedestrians are generally in the habit of exhibiting. Some people were so uncharitable as to intimate that he was impelled in his hasty retreat through fear of lynching. The last we heard of him he was running a shoe shop on Chatham street, New York, having adopted the good old motto, "Stick to your last."

## CHAPTER LVII.

### Female Dramatic Performers—Then and Now.

It is a very notable fact, that not until some time after the Restoration, did a *female* appear on the stage of England. Sir William Davenport, proprietor of one of the London theatres, it appears, first innovated upon this ancient custom, by bringing out Mrs. Hughes in the character of Desdemona, she being the first female who ever appeared on the English stage as an actress.

The annexed lines, written by a young English lady, is a capital hit at the absurd, unnatural custom, of “perriwig-pated” *bearded* fellows assuming *female* characters, enacting, for instance, such delicate *roles* as Juliet, Desdemona, Ophelia, etc.

#### MALES ACTING FEMALE PARTS.

In days of yore, th' historic page  
Says women were proscib'd the stage ;  
And *boys* and *men* in petticoats  
Play'd *female* parts with Stentor's notes !  
The cap, the stays, the high-heel'd shoe,  
The 'kerchief and the bonnet too,  
With apron as the lily white,  
Put all the *male* attire to flight—  
The *culotte*, waistcoat, and cravat,  
The bushy wig, and gold-trimm'd hat.  
Ye Gods ! behold ! what high burlesque,  
Jane Shore and Juliet thus grotesque !

King Charles one night, jocund and gay,  
To Drury went to see a play—

Kynaston was to act a queen—  
But to his *barber* he'd not been ;  
He was a mirth-inspiring soul,  
Who lov'd to quaff the flowing bowl—  
And on his way the wight had met  
A roaring bacchanalian set,  
With whom he to the *tavern* hies,  
Regardless how time slyly flies ;  
And while he circulates the glass,  
Too rapidly the moments pass.  
At length in haste the prompter sends,  
And tears Kynaston from his friends ;  
Tho' he'd much rather there remain,  
He hurries on to Drury Lane.  
When in the green-room he appear'd,  
He *scar'd* them with his *bushy beard* !

The *barber* quick his razor strops,  
And lather'd well *her royal chops* !  
While he the "stubble" mow'd away,  
The audience curs'd such long delay ;  
They scream'd—they roar'd—they loudly bawl'd,  
And with their cat-calls *sweetly* squall'd ;  
Th' impatient monarch storm'd and rav'd—  
"The *Queen*, dread sire, *is not quite shav'd* !"  
Was bellow'd by the prompter loud—  
This cogent reason was allow'd  
As well by king as noisy crowd !!

## CHAPTER LVIII.

### Amusing Anecdotes of Edwin Forrest.

FORREST AND THE ALBANY WATCHMEN—FORREST AND ESQUIRE  
JOHN O. COLE—FORREST AND MRS. WOOD.

Soon after Forrest arrived in Albany and joined Gilfert's company, he, with several boon companions—among them the lamented Capt. George Hendrickson, for a long time commandant of the old Albany Artillery, and one of Ned's warmest friends, a generous, genial, noble-hearted fellow, who often equipped, *cap-a-pie*, a new recruit to his company, (the Republican Artillery,) at his own expense if not able to do so himself. As we were about to say, Ned and his companions, one night after the theatre was out, sallied forth on a bit of harmless lark. They came up old South Market street, (now Broadway,) and when opposite the building where the Exchange now stands, and which was occupied by the old Albany Bank, a hardware or crockery store. On either side of the main entrance to this building was an iron railing, enclosing quite a space—when the young larks arrived at this spot, they were met by several watchmen, or as they were called, "leather heads," they wearing large, stout, leather caps. The party were all jolly, of course, and full of fun, and pitching their voices at a higher key than the night guardians deemed agreeable to the quiet people who had retired to the arms of Morpheus, they reprimanded them rather harshly. High words arose, and strong insinuations made about "watch-house" and "lock-up." Ned, seeing mat-

ters were assuming rather a serious turn, at once hit upon a lucky expedient, or dodge,—he leaped over the railing, and commenced spouting passages from some favorite Shaksperian character, which had the effect of giving altogether a different and more favorable aspect to the affair. While “Ned” was spouting with such electric effect as to absorb the earnest attention of the watchmen, Ned’s companions, one by one, slipped off, leaving him and the watchmen sole masters of the situation! Finding the “birds had flown,” and the tables so artfully turned upon them, the watchmen took it as a capital joke, and Ned was allowed to go on his way rejoicing!

#### Anecdote of Forrest and 'Squire John O. Cole.

While we have been so long “talking” theatre and actors, it will not be deemed out of place, we are satisfied, to relate an incident that occurred while Forrest was a member of Gilfert’s Pearl Street dramatic company, and when he was what might be termed, rather fast. Being out on a lark one night with several boon companions, he was “taken in by the watch,” and comfortably provided quarters under the old Howard Street Mansion. In the morning he was brought, with his companions, before 'Squire Cole, who, finding the offence rather trivial, discharged the party. As Forrest was about to leave the office, the 'Squire deeming it a fitting occasion to give him a little friendly admonition, threw himself back in his chair, assuming a slight theatrical air,—(the 'Squire was well posted in theatricals in his younger days and well versed in Shakspeare)—and addressed Forrest in true theatrical style, quoting the following well known passage from Othello:—

“What’s the matter,  
That you unlace your reputation thus,  
And spend your rich opinion, for the name  
Of a night-brawler? give me answer to it!”

The effect was electric, and "Ned" made an unusually hasty exit, not a little chagrined, as well as greatly astonished, at the aptitude of the quotation.

### Forrest and Mrs. Wood.

When Forrest was playing an engagement in London, his benefit and that of the celebrated actress Mrs. WOOD, happened to take place on the same night—one at Drury Lane, the other at the Hay Market Theatre. The next day Forrest meeting Mrs. Wood, who was rather of *petite* figure, politely asked her, "What sort of a benefit she had?" Mrs. Wood instantly and laughingly replied, "O, the people deserted the *little* WOODS and fled to the *big* FORRESTS!" As much as to say her benefit was light.



## CHAPTER LIX.

### Amusing Anecdotes of Edwin Forrest.

FORREST AND THE TWO PORTRAITS IN HAMLET—THE SHAVING-BOX AND LATHER-BRUSH—A LUDICROUS SCENE—FORREST IN THE LION'S DEN—FORREST'S COURAGE TESTED.

The following very amusing incident was related to us by Mr. Forrest, it having occurred while playing an engagement at the Cincinnati Theatre, in the rendition of Hamlet, which caused him no little chagrin. On leaving his room at his hotel, he had forgotten to place the two miniatures in his pocket that were to represent his "father and uncle," and being in haste to reach the theatre it did not occur to him that he was minus the pictures until he was called on in the scene with the Queen, (his mother,) where he is to "speak daggers but use none." He felt in his pocket, but the miniatures were not there, and while the Queen was preparing to take her seat, Forrest happened to discover an attaché shaving himself in a corner behind the scene. He made a rush, grabbed the attachés shaving-box, lid, soap, brush and all, and thrust them in his bosom, and took his seat by the side of the Queen, leaving the poor attaché standing and gazing in utter amazement at the strange proceedings. The interview between Hamlet and his mother takes place; he thrust his hand into his bosom and pulled out the lid of the shaving-box, which contained a miniature looking-glass, exclaiming, "look here, upon this picture, (presenting the lid of the box,) and now look on *this*." "This *was* your husband—this *is* your husband." As he presented the shaving-box with a sudden jerk, out

tumbled the cake of soap, lather-brush and all, into the Queen's lap! The Queen was somewhat astounded, but finally recovering herself, turned her head from the audience and enjoyed a hearty laugh at Forrest's discomfiture. Those of the audience near the stage who saw the incident, enjoyed the joke with perfect gusto. Forrest said, "I do believe if there had been a stage trap open near by, I should have pitched into it, I was so confoundedly mortified."

### Forrest in the Lion's Den.

The following anecdote is related of Forrest and the animal tamer Driesbach. This incident occurred while he was playing at the old Broadway Theatre, New York. Forrest's pieces were followed by an exhibition of lions by their tamer, the renowned Herr Driesbach. Forrest was one day saying that he had never been afraid in all his life—that he could not imagine the emotion. Driesbach made no remark at the time, but in the evening, when the curtain had been rung down, he invited Mr. Forrest home with him. Forrest assented, and the two entering a house, walked a long distance through many devious passages—all dark—until finally Driesbach, opening a door, said: "This way, Mr. Forrest." Forrest entered, and immediately heard the door slammed, and locked behind him! He had not time to express any surprise at this, for at the same moment he felt something soft rubbing against his leg, and putting out his hand touched what felt like a cat's back; a rasping growl saluted the motion, and he saw two fiery, glaring eyeballs looking up at him! "Are you afraid, Mr. Forrest?" asked Driesbach. "Not a bit," replied Mr. Forrest. Driesbach said something—the growl deepened, became harsher, the back began to arch, and the eyes to shine more fiercely. Forrest held out two or three minutes, but the symptoms became so terrifying that he

owned up in so many words, that he was *afraid!* “Now let me out, you infernal scoundrel,” he said to the lion tamer, “and I’ll break every bone in your body.” He was imprudent there, for Driesbach kept him, not daring to move a finger, with the lion rubbing against his leg all the time, until Forrest promised not only immunity, but a champagne supper in the bargain!!

### A Stage-Struck Youth’s Appeal to Mr. Forrest.

While Mr. Forrest was playing an engagement at the Albany South Pearl Street Theatre, in 1834, he placed in our hands the original of the following letter, to which we give place for the especial benefit of young dramatic aspirants, Mr. Forrest remarking, “This is only a single sample of the innumerable and *precious morceau* with which I am constantly annoyed, and absolutely *bored*, by unfledged would-be young American Rosciuses!” Here is the letter in its *entirety*—spellatem, et punctuatem, et capital-letterem. Of the qualifications for an actor, so glowingly set forth by this young man, we leave for those to judge, far better posted in theatrical matters than we ever dared claim to be:

“BALTIMORE MARYLAND }  
“June 24 1834 }

“To Mr E FORREST  
“Albany Theatre State of N. York.

“My Very dear sir—Knowing you to be distinguished for your Noble Efforts to encourage Native Talent in Actors and Authors I am very Anxious to become an Actor and with your Encouragement and a little of your Teaching I think I might in Time make my Mark in the theatrical Line I have been in the Occasional habit of Spoutting Shakspeare at School and they all said I would make a first rate Actor in Time I have a pretty fair Edducation I am about 18 years old 5 feet 6 inches high in my stock-

ings—Boddy well Knit together strait as a young sappling  
—Nose Roman—legs plump and needs no Padding as so  
manny have to—and my eyes as I have often been told  
somewhat resembling Lucius Junus Booth's—If you  
should think these quallifications Sufficient, be so good  
as to Answer this as Early as Convenient.

“Your Admirer Always

“W. S. DANIELSON.”

## CHAPTER LX.

C. W. Taylor.

HE MAKES HIS ADVENT IN BOSTON—ENTERS AS HEAD CLERK IN AN EXTENSIVE IMPORTING HOUSE—HE FALLS DESPERATELY IN LOVE WITH A BEAUTIFUL OPERA SINGER—JOINS AN OPERA TROUPE—HE MAKES HIS FIRST APPEARANCE ON A PUBLIC STAGE AT NORFOLK, VA.—NEXT APPEARS AT THE OLD CHATHAM GARDEN THEATRE, NEW YORK—MAKES HIS DEBUT AT THE NORTH PEARL STREET AMPHITHEATRE—GOES TO THE ALBANY MUSEUM—REMAINS TILL ITS FINAL CLOSE—GOES TO NEW YORK, JOINS HAMBLYN'S BOWERY COMPANY—RETIRES ON THE DRAMATIC FUND.

Probably no member of the dramatic profession was longer or more favorably known to an Albany public than the subject of this brief sketch, C. W. Taylor, or "Charley Taylor," as he was more familiarly called, and who was a resident of Albany for over a quarter of a century.

Mr. Taylor was born in England, as nearly as can be ascertained, in 1800, making his *debut* on a public stage at Norfolk, Va., in 1819, as Patrick, in the operatic comedy of "The Poor Soldier." After playing a brief engagement at Norfolk, he proceeded to New York, appearing at the old Chatham Garden Theatre, in Woodworth's ever popular musical drama of the "Forest Rose." Leaving New York, Mr. Taylor cast his lines in Albany, making his *debut* at Parson's North Pearl Street Theatre, assuming the position of vocalist and "utility business." He soon after appeared at the old Pearl Street Theatre, and finally became what with propriety might be termed a fixture, at the Albany Museum, as he remained at that establishment

uninterruptedly, until a short time previous to its final winding up as a place of public amusement.

Mr. Taylor then bid adieu to Albany and took the situation of musical director of the New York Bowery Theatre, at that time under the management of Thomas Hamblin.

Mr. Taylor was an invaluable acquisition to a Theatre, having a thorough practical knowledge of its multifarious duties. He was highly educated, a ripe classic scholar, a remarkably ready and terse writer. [Should any reader entertain doubts as regards Mr. Taylor's literary attainments, we would simply call their attention to the very eloquent address delivered by this gentleman at the opening of the new dramatic saloon, published under the head of the Albany Museum, in a preceding chapter of this work.] He was the author of a number of popular plays, two or three of them being "prize plays" of Dan Marble and Yankee Hill. He was also the author of the celebrated nautical drama of the "Water Witch," which was produced at the Bowery Theatre, New York, at a large outlay, and had an unprecedentedly long and successful run. As a dramatic writer and musical artist, Mr. Taylor ranked among the very first of the day. He possessed remarkable versatility of dramatic talent, ready at all times to sing a song, do a low comic *role*, the eccentric old man, the blustering, gruff old sea captain, a juvenile lover, or almost any *role* in the range of the drama, rendering his parts with singular aptitude, and with entire satisfaction to his audiences.

Charley possessed, in a remarkable degree, one peculiarity or faculty, which was that of ekeing out, changing or adapting his rather scanty private stage wardrobe to the various characters he enacted. His wardrobe for light pieces, generally consisted of a black frock coat, white vest, white linen pants, red cap, ornamented with a gold lace band, and a crimson colored silk sword sash. It was really amusing to observe with what tact and ingenuity

he would adapt his wardrobe to the character of an emperor, admiral, duke, count, grand marshal, general, captain, private gentleman, and with his wig of raven locks, would often enact the young lover equal to a youth of seventeen!

Soon after his advent in Boston, Mr. Taylor entered an extensive importing house in that city, as head or managing clerk, and by his upright conduct and indefatigable application to business, soon won the entire confidence and respect of his employer. After remaining in this establishment for a year he was entrusted with its most important interests. He was entrusted with large sums of money and frequently sent to England as principal agent of the house to purchase goods, which responsible trust was so faithfully and scrupulously discharged that the young clerk at once became confirmed in the estimation of his employers. The probabilities are, that had Mr. Taylor remained in this establishment he would have become one of its partners in due course of time. That there is a "tide in the affairs of men if taken in the flood, leads to fortune," is quite true, as was evidenced in the case of Mr. Taylor. He failed to take advantage of the flood-tide, allowing his finely rigged bark to drift down the ebb-tide of disappointment and misfortune.

### Why Charley Taylor became an Actor.

At the time Mr. Taylor held the position of clerk in the importing house above alluded to, a traveling opera troupe visited Boston, and as Mr. Taylor himself was an excellent musician, it was quite natural for him to visit the opera. The prima donna was an accomplished artist, and a very beautiful and fascinating young lady of some seventeen summers. Whether it was the effects of her exquisite vocal powers or her beauty that *trepanned* the heart of our *amoroso*, we were never advised—but certain it is

he at once became smitten; cupid's unerring dart performed its delicate mission most effectually! There being no other alternative for Charley, he at once relinquished his position as clerk in the importing house and joined the opera troupe, in order the more fully to "breathe the same air, and constantly bask in the smiles of his lady love," where he would have no further cause to "rehearse" the good old song commencing with—

"Thou art so near, and yet so far!"

Thus was Charley first introduced behind the scenes of the mimic stage, making his first appearance as an actor, as before stated, at Norfolk, Va. He "strutted his brief hour upon the stage" until within some ten years since, when the "sere and yellow leaf of time" reminded him it was time to leave the mimic stage, which he did, and retired upon the dramatic fund. When last heard from he was residing in Philadelphia, hale and hearty, figure erect, step as elastic, apparently, as when he was in his prime, and his locks were of the raven's hue.



## CHAPTER LXI.

### An Actor's Regard for the Observance of Good Friday—A Theatrical Incident.

The occurrence of Good Friday invariably brings vividly to mind a little episode that occurred at the Pearl Street Theatre, when under the management of Charles Gilfert.

The great celebrated actor, Conway (we use the word *great*, as Conway was not only great, as an actor, but *great* in stature, being considerably over six feet in his stockings, and fairly proportioned) was playing an engagement here during Holy Week. The bills were out, announcing Conway in Shakspeare's "Coriolanius," and the company had assembled at the theatre on Good Friday morning for rehearsal at the usual hour. After waiting for a long time, and Conway not appearing—he ever being prompt in his attendance at rehearsal—the circumstance created no little surprise, and a messenger was at once dispatched to Conway's lodgings, at Congress Hall, to ascertain the cause of his non-appearance at rehearsal. Conway very promptly responded to the message, by appearing in *propria personæ*, and in a highly excited state of mind. He informed Gilfert that he had been so deeply absorbed in preparing for the observance of Good Friday that he had entirely forgotten that he had to appear on the stage that evening, and had it occurred to him when he made the engagement, he would most assuredly have had a proviso in the engagement that the night of Good Friday be excepted—that he was an Episcopalian, and from his youth up, he had made it an invariable practice of scrupulously and re-

ligiously observing that day above all others in Lent. There was of course no performance that night at the theatre. Notwithstanding it was a great disappointment as well as damage to Gilfert, as he had anticipated a large house, many seats having been early secured, Gilfert most magnanimously declined Conway's offer to pay the amount of damages Gilfert had sustained in consequence of his non-appearance. Gilfert was likewise an Episcopalian of the strictest cast.

Here, then, we have evidence that in the *theatrical* profession, so much abused, there are to be found highly educated, honorable christian men—men who would adorn the highest walks of life and the most refined society.

Poor Conway, in a fit of deep despondency or aberration of mind, while on passage in a ship from New York to Charleston, S. C., and as the vessel hove in sight of that city, he walked deliberately to the after-deck and sprang into the sea, his body never having been recovered. He was educated for the ministry, and had so far advanced as to "take orders" for the same before he adopted the theatrical profession.

### Annoyances of Theatrical Managers.

Probably there are few professions subject to more grievous annoyances than the dramatic profession, especially the manager. Besides his various legitimate duties, which are at times exceedingly onerous, he is very frequently and grievously annoyed by the persistent importunities of unpledged would-be authors and actors. The venerable W. B. Wood, manager of the old Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, relates the following incident as a specimen of the ordeals through which he was constantly obliged to pass:

"One day, while sitting in my private office, a young man entered, apparently seventeen or eighteen years of

age, slender, awkward, neatly dressed in a short blue jacket, striped waistcoat, nankeen pantaloons, and half-boots. His first salutation was :

“ ‘ Good morning. Are you the gentleman that takes play-actors ? ’ ”

“ My reply was, ‘ I have the direction of the theatre. ’ ”

“ ‘ Well, do you want any actors ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Any person of extraordinary talent would find employment. Do *you* know of any one wanting to engage as an actor ? ’ ” was our response.

“ ‘ I want to go on the stage *myself*, sir. ’ ”

“ ‘ *You!* Did you ever attempt to go on the stage ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Only at the Academy, sir. ’ ”

“ ‘ You are an American, of course ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Yes, sir ; true blue ! ’ ”

“ ‘ Where were you educated ? ’ ”

“ ‘ At Goshen, sir. ’ ”

“ ‘ What plays did you perform at the Academy ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Why, we played the *Catos*, the *Tambalines*, and such ! ’ ”

“ ‘ And pray, may I ask, what did *you* play ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Why, sir, I played *Cato* and *Bajazet*—and in the play of *Bold Stroke for a Wife*, I played the Colonel. You see I was the biggest boy, and I played all the *biggest* parts ! ’ ”

“ ‘ I don’t think you would do, young man, as we have no parts *big* enough for you to play ! ’ ” was our reply.”

## CHAPTER LXII.

### Encoring Actors—A Question of Taste—Should be Denounced.

The sins of audiences, in encoring at amusements, have been pretty freely ventilated by the press, in many parts of the country, in which the abominable practice is most unqualifiedly condemned.

The injustice of the proceeding is often so palpable, and it is carried to such extremes, as to provoke disgust. An occasional reappearance of a favorite performer is all well enough, but the habit of encoring anything and everybody is a practice which ought to be abated. Often a small percentage of an audience start the thing, applauding continuously, and thus prolong the programme till it becomes tedious to every one else. It is a mere habit, without sense or discrimination. It is an imposition both upon the sensible part of those who attend and a torment to performers. A poor piece on the programme is as often encored as a good one, and persons of taste and judgment who are bored by it the first time are inflicted with more of the same sort, all because a few foolish "claquers" enjoy the fun of hand, or worse, foot applause. To the actors, singers, etc., the practice is still more unjust. Performers have rights as well as the public. They furnish a programme as inviting as they can make it, generally, too, of considerable length, and ought in conscience to be asked for no more. An artist, too, is often exhausted by his first effort, and should not be asked to repeat. But these chronic applauders

pay no attention to that, or rather in such cases they persist all the more in their demonstrations. The performer appears and bows in mute entreaty to be let off. He or she says as plainly as it can be said, "For God's sake, let me off," but the applause increases, the weary actor drags himself back on the stage, and with but half a heart, goes through the ordeal of another song or dance. This is sometimes kept up for the third or fourth time.

The public are not impelled by heartless cruelty, but they do not appreciate the effort expended by performers from the highest to the lowest grades. It looks easy enough, but the truth is, an actor or singer of any ambition throws into their part so much vital energy in endeavoring to please, that an immediate and great exhaustion is the consequence. The thing which electrifies an audience is not the mere going through with, in a mechanical way, an assigned part, but the life, the delicate and artistic touches of the soul which is infused. The nervous system must, in a genuine artist, be wrought up to the highest pitch, and a day's ordinary labor may not prostrate the system so much as the exertions of a few moments. This being so, every consideration of good taste requires a "letting up" by the enthusiastic portion of the public in their habit of encoring. Albany audiences are by no means free from this grievous iniquity, or positive *bore!* For the sake of our reputation as a city of sensible, well-bred people, let the thing be stopped. If encores *are* insisted on, let *some* discrimination be used, and not demand the repetition of the good, bad, and indifferent parts of an entertainment, with the same senseless persistency!

## CHAPTER LXIII.

### Remarkable Instance of Stage Effect.

THE CONFESSION OF A HIGH CRIME IN CONSEQUENCE OF A YOUNG MAN WITNESSING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE TRAGEDY OF GEORGE BARNWELL—AN HISTORICAL FACT, BEING ONLY ONE OF NUMEROUS OTHERS OF A SIMILAR CHARACTER.

The following sketch of one of the most remarkable instances of the effect of a well acted play upon a guilty conscience, will, we venture to say, be perused with no little interest. It is only one of innumerable instances of a similar character, in the history of the stage.

The great poet of Nature, Shakspeare, "who so well knew the qualities of the human heart," thus discourseth upon this subject:

"I have heard  
That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,  
Have, by the very cunning of the scene,  
Been struck so to the soul, that presently  
They have proclaimed their malifactions,  
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak  
With most miraculous organ!"

The famous actor, David Ross, of London, had, during the Christmas holidays, been playing the tragedy of *George Barnwell*, and the great Mrs. Pritchard that of *Millwood*. Dr. Barrowby, a physician belonging to the hospital of St. Bartholomew, told Ross that three days after the play he was sent for by a young gentleman, an apprentice of a very opulent merchant, whom he found very ill of a fever. The nurse told the doctor that his patient fre-

quently sighed bitterly, and she was sure he had something on his mind. After much intreaty on the part of the physician, the youth confessed he had something which lay very heavy on his heart, but that he had rather die than divulge it; as, if known, it would be his certain ruin. The doctor assured him, that if he would confide it to him, he would do all in his power to serve him, and that the secret, if he desired it, should be buried in his breast, or only told to those who could be able and willing to relieve him.

After some subsequent conversation, he told the doctor that he was second son to a gentleman of good fortune, and that he had made an improper acquaintance with the mistress of an East India captain, then abroad. That in one year he should be out of his time; and he had been entrusted with cash, drafts, and notes to a considerable amount, from which he had purloined two hundred pounds. That three nights before, as he witnessed the play of *George Barnwell*, he was so forcibly struck that he had not known a moment's quiet since. The doctor asked where his father was? He replied, that he expected him there every moment, as his master had sent for him as soon as he was taken so very ill. The doctor desired the young gentleman to make himself easy, as he would undertake, with his father, to make up matters; and in order to set the mind of his patient entirely at ease, he told him if his father would not advance the money, he would.

On the arrival of the father, the doctor took him into an adjoining room and explained the cause of his son's illness. With tears in his eyes, the old gentleman gave him a thousand thanks, and immediately went to his banker's for the money, while the doctor returned to his patient, and told him every thing would be settled to his satisfaction in a few minutes. When the father returned, he put the two hundred pounds into the hands of his son, and an affecting scene followed of tears and embraces between

the parent and the child. The son soon recovered, broke off a connection which had nearly proved so fatal to him, and became, in time, by his attention to business, one of the most opulent merchants in the city.

He was always punctual in his attendance at the benefit of Mr. Ross, who, though he never knew the name of his benefactor, constantly on that occasion received in the morning a note sealed up, containing ten guineas, and the following words:

“A tribute of gratitude from one who was highly obliged, and saved from ruin, by seeing Mr. Ross’ performance of *Barnwell*.”



## CHAPTER LXIV.

### Theatrical Sympathy.

EDWIN FORREST AND MARY STUART—AN EXCITING EPISODE—A FACT—ANECDOTES OF CELEBRATED ACTORS—GREEN ROOM DROL-  
LERIES.

Instances are frequently related of persons witnessing a play when their feelings have been so strongly wrought upon as to cause them to spring from their seat and express them audibly, especially where an innocent, unprotected female is supposed to be wronged. Many years ago, when the play of "Mary Stuart" was being enacted, an incident of this kind occurred. It may be remembered by those who have seen this play, in one scene Mary's wrist is seized by a member of the court, the grip being so violent as to leave the impress of his heavy hand upon it. Forrest, then quite a young man, and who was personating Douglas, steps between Mary and her persecutor, pointing to the arm and exclaiming, "Shame! Shame!" At this moment an honest fellow in the pit jumped upon his feet crying out, "So it is a shame, knock the scoundrel down, Forrest!" It is hardly necessary to say the incident brought down the house with thunders of applause.

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#### A Real Tragedy! Effects of Good Acting!

An old English work says: The history of Sweden records a very extraordinary incident which took place at the representation of the "Mystery of the Passion," under King John II, in 1519. The actor who performed the

part of Longinus, the soldier, who was to pierce Christ on the cross in the side, was so transported with the spirit of his acting, that he really killed the man who represented *our Lord*; falling suddenly, and with great violence, he overthrew the actress who represented the Holy Mother. King John, who was present at the spectacle, was so enraged at Longinus, that he leaped upon the stage, sword in hand, and with one blow struck off the actor's head! But the spectators looked at the matter in a different light—they were really *delighted* with the too violent, but *natural* acting—became terribly infuriated against their King, and immediately fell upon him in a throng and killed him!

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#### Roscius, the Roman Actor—His Many Excellencies.

This extraordinary man's name is immortalized by Cicero, who has in various parts of his works panegyricized him no less for his virtues than for his talents. Of him that great orator, philosopher and moralist, has recorded that he was a being so perfect that any person who excelled in any art was usually called a Roscius—that he knew better than any other man how to inculcate virtue, and that he was more pure in private life than any man in Rome.

Roscius not only had the power of pleasing on the stage more than any other actor of antiquity, but as a man, seems to have been more estimable than any other man of his day. The greatest personages of his time delighted in his company, and were proud of being ranked among his friends, while such as survived him underwent the most profound sorrow for his death; and as if they were anxious to excel each other in posthumous praise and testimony of his personal worth, have poured forth the most enthusiastic tributes of love and esteem to his memory.

Though his person was not free from imperfection, and his eyes were distorted by nature, his transcendant powers so far counteracted those defects, that the Romans compelled him to act *without a mask* in order that they might the better hear his elegant pronunciation, contemplate his physiognomical expression, and be delighted with the enchanting melody of his voice and the harmony of his words. Some poets compared his person to the refulgent beauty of the sun!

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### ANECDOTES OF CELEBRATED ACTORS.

A rich episode in the palmy days of Finn, the great American Comedian.

George H. Finn, one of the most eminent comedians as well as the greatest wit and punster of his day,—“a fellow of infinite jest,” while, though he was ever ready to crack a joke upon a boon companion to the momentary annoyance of his victim and the unalloyed delight of the company, yet he could himself become a target for the shaft of another’s wit, with equal grace and forbearance. No one, however, attempted to *play upon* poor Finn, but that he sooner or later discovered to his cost, that it was, at best, rather a dangerous experiment.

Tom Hamblin and Tom Flynn, (the Tom Flynn who broke Booth’s nose.) were whilome wout to be sworn friends. They had indeed almost everything in common, one couldn’t wear a *white overcoat* but ’tother must needs follow *suit*. Flynn couldn’t dine on a roast leg of pork but Hamblin must have the same, or if he hadn’t it at home, “fat Tom” would send him a share, or send a card of invitation *to dine*. So with their horses, carriages, their rides and drives, their places of “drop in,” their benefits, and *pretty women*.

In these halcyon days of Auld Lang Syne, one of their chosen friends was poor *Finn*. About nine o'clock of a misty evening in September, eighteen hundred and forty, Hamblin, Barrett, Jerry Bell and Finn, were crossing from the Bowery to Broadway through Walker street. As they passed the corner of Mott street they were espied by Flynn who was sitting at the window of his dwelling, puffing a real habana, and cogitating on some new "gag," in Frederic Morton, in Norman Leslie. No sooner did he catch a glimpse of the party than a thought struck him that a good *rig* might be run upon Finn, so donning his rusty white brown castor, he rushed into the street, and the first emblem of humanity he stumbled upon was 'black Nanny,' waiting woman to Miss Waring of the theatre. Look here! bawled Flynn to the ebony damsel, 'Take this half dollar—you know Mr. Finn—he's just gone down the street—follow him—throw your arms about his neck—and swear that he owes you *ten dollars for work and labor* done for him in New Orleans. Stick to him, and don't leave him till he pays you.'

The wench who'd done such things before, hesitated not a moment, but followed on, seized the astonished comedian *in no faint embrace* about the neck, and exclaimed, 'oh! you naughty wretched man, oh! you've deceived, you've cheated me. Pay me the ten dollars you owed me in New Orleans or I'll never leave you.' and thus she went on for some minutes, until Finn, entirely exhausted, and out of all patience, offered to compromise by paying the wench \$5, which she gladly accepted and vanished. Flynn who had been all the while standing opposite holding both his sides, and though seen by all Finn's companions, was unnoticed by himself, now come forward, and with a burst of laughter which came to his relief, joined the party. Finn said not a word on the subject of the good joke which had just been perpetrated, but proceeded on in quest of new adventure fully determined however on ample re-

venge. But little time elapsed before an opportunity offered. The same party met a few evenings after at the North American Hotel, in the Bowery. They had all been drinking pretty freely, and Finn, who was standing in front of the bar, was seen suddenly to assume all the symptoms of one laboring under the effects of intoxication. He reeled about, faltered in his speech, gave to his eyes an unwonted glare, and finally fell upon the floor in a state of apparent insensibility, with nothing escaping his lips in answer to the enquiries of those around, but oh! oh! dear, the doctor! the doctor!

As Finn had anticipated, Flynn proposed that the *body* should be removed to his house, which proposition being acceded to, Flynn and Hamblin, assisted by Bell and Barrett gathered up the remains of the *defunct* comedian and took up their line of march for Mott street. A shower of rain had just set in and being excessively warm at the time, the party were, on reaching Flynn's house, well drenched without and within; they were all in a state of profuse perspiration. Finn was carefully laid upon a sofa and a man of medicine shortly in attendance.

The affair had, meanwhile, got wind in the neighborhood, and numerous were the anxious enquiries for the next two hours after Mr. Finn's health, to the no little annoyance of Mrs. Flynn and her domestics.

For half an hour Finn lay in the same state of *immovableness*, and many were the remarks of anxious solicitude which passed among the party relative to the *case* in hand.

Barrett vowed that it was the first time that Finn had ever *got so*.

Flynn swore that Finn could drink a little ocean dry and 'carry it all off.'

Bell *thought* that something had been the matter with him all the evening.

Hamblin advised, that as Finn's reputation might suffer

if his situation was made public, that the real facts should be concealed, and that it should be given out that Finn was dangerous.

The party had by this time become somewhat *in want*, and it was proposed to leave Finn and adjourn to some place in Broadway, it being then too early to separate for the night. This was agreed upon, and the four friends walked over to the Carlton, where, surrounded by a large party of persons, all anxious in their enquiry after Finn's welfare. Among the persons present was one who seemed to doubt the truth of the statement of Finn's illness, and offered to wager Flynn an X that Finn would be in Broadway again before midnight. The bet was accepted and the stakes just lodged in the hands of the barkeeper, when in popped Finn himself with a "good health to ye all," and with a leer to Flynn, "hadn't you better pay over the stakes to *black Nanny?*"

It is needless to add that the person who bet with Flynn was in the secret of Finn's illness, and that the latter had been *playing possum*.

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### Finn's Last Pun!

Poor Finn, he was such an inveterate punster that at the time of his most imminent peril, or in the moment of the most sober and melancholy reflection, no matter what the hour or occasion, he always had a pun applicable to it, and calculated to turn it into ridicule.

At the burning of the Lexington, and when a hundred and fifty human beings were expecting each moment to be swallowed up in a whirlwind of flame, or engulfed in the waves of the sea, and in hopes to save their lives, were throwing themselves from the burning boat, clinging to bales of cotton, Finn, the lamented Finn, who was one of that unhappy multitude, cried out in the midst of the awful confusion:

“Why are we like criminals escaping from death?”

An awful pause ensued. “D’ye give it up?”

“Because we take *bale* for life;” and he sprang from the boat to a cotton bale, and in a moment more he was forever

“In the deep bosom of the ocean, buried.”

### The Great Actor, John Kemble, and the Rhinoceros. A Truly Amusing Incident.

Mr. Kemble had been dining with a noble duke of high convivial habits, and on this particular occasion the libations to Bacchus were so frequent and of so long a continuance, the party did not wend homewards until four o’clock in the morning. At a quarter past four, Mr. Kemble (who insisted on walking) found himself alone in the Strand, opposite Exter ’Change, in the upper apartments of which was exhibited the menagerie of the celebrated Polito. The ‘matins’ roar of a lion called forth Mr. Kemble’s attention; he paused—and, with the fumes of wine floating on his brain, he was seized with a peculiar whim, and uttered to himself,

“To be or not to be, that’s the question.”

“It shall be!—no man ever attempted it. In any book of natural history—nay, in all the voyages and travels I ever perused, no man ever did it. I—I will do it!—the world shall say, *alone* I WILL HAVE A RIDE ON A RHINOCEROS!” He here took a pinch of snuff, and exclaimed, “What ho! Exter ’Change! Nobody stirring?” He then made a staggering effort to pull the bell. After he had rang the bell several times with tipsy vehemence, one of the keepers of the wild beasts, who slept in their apartment as a sort of groom of the chamber, made his appearance in an ancient *beef-eater’s* dress, and a Welch wig.

Kemble—"Sir, are you Mr. Polito?"

Keeper—"No, sir; master's abed, and asleep."

Kemble—"You must wake him, good fellow."

Keeper—"I daren't, sir, unless it's *werry particklar*."

Kemble—"Next time say '*very particular*.' Hark you, *it is* very particular. You have up stairs, if I remember rightly, an animal denominated a rhinoceros?"

Keeper—"We've got a rhinoceros, and a fine *feller* she is."

Kemble—"Introduce me to him. You object. Go call Mr. Polito, your very noble and approved good master."

On the arrival of Mr. Polito, Kemble addressed him—"Mr. Polito, I presume?" Polito bowed.

Kemble—"You know me, I suppose?"

Polito—"Very well, sir. You are Mr. Kemble, of Drury Lane Theatre."

Kemble—"Right, good Polito! Sir, I am seized with an unaccountable and uncontrollable fancy. You have a rhinoceros?"

Polito—"Yes, sir."

Kemble—"My desire is to have a ride upon his back."

Polito—"Mr. Kemble, you astonish me!"

Kemble (elated)—"I mean to astonish the world. I intend to ride your rhinoceros up Southampton street to Convent Garden market."

Polito—"It is next to an impossibility."

Kemble—"Were it an impossibility I would do it."

Polito—"Suppose any accident should happen—the beast is valuable. I would not permit him to be led down in the street under the sum of ten guineas."

Kemble—"Here are ten guineas, Mr. Polito—a bargain. Lead forth my charger—speed! speed!"

Polito finding that he could not get rid of the extraordinary application, pocketed the ten guineas, and told the keeper (who was on intimate terms with the rhinoceros) to bring the animal out, with the provision that it was to



go no further than Convent Garden. When in the street, ridiculous as it may appear, the grave John Kemble actually mounted on the back of the beast, who hardly knew what to make of it, but led in the strap of its feeder, went quietly enough, until his rider, highly elated by the achievement of his whim, thought it necessary to spur with his heels.

Keeper—Gently, sir. Let *vel* alone. This is *rayther* a crusty buffer; if you makes him unruly he'll pitch you off, and rip you up."

Kemble—"Rip *me* up! Ha! ha! ha! What would they do at Drury?"

It was daylight; and, of course, a mob was collected from Convent Garden market. At this moment Emery, who was also returning from a late party, saw the extraordinary cavalcade. Emery, somewhat startled at the situation of Mr. Kemble, immediately went up to him, and walked by his side to the top of Southampton street, when Kemble deliberately dismounted, gave a crown to the keeper, patted the rhinoceros, saying, "Farewell, poor beast!" and, holding Emery's arm, uttered, "Mr. Emery, I have doubtless committed a very silly action; but after imbibing a certain quantity of wine, no man's deeds are under control; but, nevertheless, I have done that which no living being can say he ever accomplished.

"What man dare, I dare.

Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,  
The arm'd rhinoceros ——'

"Bless my soul, I am getting on the rhinoceros again. Mr. Emery, will you have the goodness to see me home?"

Sol Smith—A Laughable Episode—Act First, Scene First, at the American Theatre, New Orleans, of which Sol. was Manager.

“*You’re a nice young man, but you can’t come in!*”—  
“Hollo there, friend, you can’t come in!” said a faithful doorkeeper one day to a tall, eccentric looking individual, who was hurrying with long strides into the new American Theatre.

“O, just allow me to take a peep,” said the tall customer, stopping and turning abruptly.

“Can’t do it, sir. My orders are to let no person in but the owners and lessees.”

“Is Alonzo, the Spanish prisoner, confined here?” said the intruder.

“*What!*” said the honest doorkeeper, opening his eyes, with a bewildered expression, at the question.

“Tell me, soldier, hast thou a wife?” said the stranger, grasping the poor doorkeeper’s arm.

“Well, I reckon,” said the man, while the blood flew from his cheek, and he looked into the tall gentleman’s eyes, expecting to detect some symptoms of insanity.

“And children?” said the enquirer, with a tragic start.

“Well, mister,” replied the doorkeeper, “I don’t know how its any of your business, but I reckon I is got a small chance of a family.”

“Here, take this wedge of massive gold!” exclaimed the stranger, picking up a block of wood that was lying at his feet, and thrusting it into the doorkeeper’s hand.

The man looked at the wood, and then at the stranger, with a great deal of astonishment, and then said, with very solemn deliberation, “look here, now, my good man, it’s pretty clear to me your mother don’t know you’re out, but it won’t do for you to come fooling in this way ’round me. *You may be a very nice young man, but you can’t come in!*”

“Well, well,” said the stranger, laughing, “you’re a trusty, honest fellow, and you’ll find I’ll like you the better for it hereafter. So let me pass, for I’m in somewhat of a hurry.”

“You *can’t* come in, friend, I tell you. Who are you, any how?”

“You don’t know me, my good man?”

“Well, I don’t.”

“My name is Smith.”

“You don’t say so! How is Mrs. Smith and the family? and what has become of *John*?”

The stranger gave vent to a hearty laugh.

“You may laugh, neighbor, as much as you please, but *you can’t come in!*”

“My name is *Sol. Smith*,” said the individual, changing his tone, and assuming that dignified manner and graceful attitude peculiar to him; “I have just got here from the Gen. Pratte, which is still aground five hundred and seventy miles above Vicksburg. I am the lessee of this establishment, and I like your attention to business. You shall retain your situation as one of my doorkeepers as long as you please; and now, sir, please allow me the favor of passing in for a few moments.

The man fell upon his knees, just as Triptolimus Muddlework did before Charles XII, and *Sol.*, waving his hand graciously, walked in.

## GREEN ROOM DROLLERIES.

Cora's Child and Pizarro, an Incident in Forrest's Dramatic Career—What Good Comedy Is—Hamlet's Madness.

A beautiful little girl with large and lustrous dark eyes, just old enough to chat interestingly, was playing Cora's child in Pizarro. She had a very pretty little pair of red sandals upon her feet which seemed to excite in her a great deal of curiosity. First she would lift up one foot, and then another, to admire the fanciful shoes, keeping the audience laughing so that not a word spoken by Alonzo or Cora could be heard.

The young lady personating Cora was an elder sister of the child, and as she held it by the hand she commenced squeezing and pinching its little fingers to make it keep quiet and not set the audience laughing. After standing this for some time, the spirited little girl—her lips pouting and her eyes seemingly just about to launch forth a cataract of tears—suddenly pulled her hand free from Cora, and running to Rolla, who was just entering, she exclaimed, calling him by his proper name, "*Mr. Forrest, wont you make Sis stop pinching me?*"

The audience had been all along tickled half to death, and at hearing this the whole house went off into the wildest outbreak of fun.

Little Alonzo and the sandals formed after this nearly the whole interest of the play, and in another scene the audience were favored with a still more ludicrous effect arising out of the child's independent spirit.

Cora leaves her child sleeping on a bank while she runs to answer the call of Alonzo. Now this part of the business the little girl didn't like. Two Spanish soldiers were to seize and carry her off, and at rehearsal in the morning, the men had used her ungently, so that she was not in-

clined to submit again to the operation. As soon as Cora turned from her, she lifted her head (though she should have been asleep), watched her sister off the stage, looked at the Spanish soldiers coming, and then quietly walked off O. P., saying to the audience with a pretty courtesy, "*I'll come and play this for you to-morrow day!*"

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### What Good Comedy Is.

"Comedy is 'a graceful ornament to the civil order—the Corinthian capital of polished society.' Like a mirror it reflects the images of grace, gaiety, and pleasure, and completes the perspective of human life. To read a good comedy, is to keep the best company in the world, where the best things are said, and the most amusing happen. The wittiest remarks are ever ready on the tongue, and the luckiest occasions are always at hand to give birth to the happiest conceptions. We don't know which to admire most—the observation, or the answer to it. In turning over the pages, or witnessing the performance of the best comedies, we are almost transported to another world, and escape from this dull age to one that was all life, and whim, and mirth, and humor." This is the opinion of a well-known English author, and a very just one it is: we admire comedy, 'tis a picture of life, as it was, as it is, and as it ever will be,

" — a walking shadow—a *poor player*,  
That struts and frets his hour upon the *stage*."

Therefore, since "grieving 's a folly," like true philosophers, we say,

" With mirth and humor let old wrinkles come ;  
For why should man, whose blood is warm within,  
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster ? "

## Hamlet's Madness.

The question of the madness of Hamlet has been a good deal discussed and variously decided, as well in America as Europe, and the very highest medical authority has pronounced upon this much mooted question. But, as an eminent writer remarks, the induction has been drawn from too narrow premises, being based on a mere diagnosis of the case, and not on an appreciation of the character in its completeness. We have a case of pretended madness in the Edgar of King Lear; and it is certainly true that that is a charcoal sketch, coarsely outlined, compared with the delicate drawing, the lights, shades, and half-tints of the portraiture in Hamlet. But does this tend to prove that the madness of the latter, because truer to the recorded observation of experts, is real, and meant to be real, as the other to be fictitious? Not in the least, as it appears to me. Hamlet, among all the characters of Shakspeare, is the most eminently a metaphysician and psychologist. He is a close observer, continually analyzing his own nature and that of others, letting fall his little drops of acid irony on all who come near him, to make them show what they are made of. Even Ophelia is not too sacred, Osrick not too contemptible for experiment. If such a man assumed madness, he would play his part perfectly. If Shakspeare himself, without going mad, could so observe and remember all the abnormal symptoms as to be able to reproduce them in "Hamlet," why should it be beyond the power of Hamlet to reproduce them in himself? If you deprive Hamlet of reason, there is no truly tragic motive left. He would be a fit subject for Bedlam, but not for the stage. We might have pathology enough, but no pathos. Ajax first becomes tragic when he recovers his wits. If Hamlet is irresponsible, the whole play is a chaos. That he is not so might be proved by evidence enough, were it not labor thrown away.

## CHAPTER XLV.

### Theatrical Emeute.

FARREN, AN ENGLISH ACTOR, SLURS THE AMERICAN CHARACTER—  
HE REFUSES TO MAKE A RETRACTION—IS NOT ALLOWED TO AP-  
PEAR AT HIS OWN BENEFIT—MOB TAKES POSSESSION OF THE  
STAGE—FORREST TO PLAY METAMORA—HE MAKES A SPEECH  
TO THE EXASPERATED CROWD.

Many old play-goers will no doubt remember something of the great theatrical riot at the New York Bowery Theatre, July, 1834, which was hardly surpassed by the great Kean and Anderson riots that took place in New York several years previous. The disturbance was caused by the publication of an affidavit of one Abraham Curtiss, who deposed that Farren, the actor, (Farren was the husband of Mrs. Farren, the talented actress who was attached to Frank Lawlor's company at the Division Street Theatre,) belonging to the Bowery Theatre, had spoken disrespectfully of the American nation, and when requested to retract his objectionable language he repeated it and actually struck the deponent. This took place at a hotel near the Bowery Theatre on Saturday evening, and the Monday night following was set apart for Farren's benefit. A contradiction of the charges contained in the affidavit were published in the post bills of the theatre.

Very early in the evening the performance commenced—Metamora being the first piece, Forrest taking the principal character. The play had progressed to the first scene of the third act, and Mr. Forrest had just made his

exit from the stage when the people, who had congregated in immense numbers outside of the theatre, made a rush and soon filled all parts of the house. The scene which ensued baffles all description. Few ladies were present, as it had been anticipated there would be a disturbance, and those few were obliged to jump from the windows and escape through an alley to an adjoining street.

Those dissatisfied having got possession of the stage refused to permit the play to proceed, and demanded the immediate discharge of Mr. Farren. Mr. Forrest came out and said that, having arrived from Philadelphia late that afternoon, he had appeared before them without the slightest intimation or knowledge of any feeling against Mr. Farren. This explanation was received with hearty applause. After it had subsided somewhat Mr. Hamblin attempted to make an address, but was refused a hearing.

A second demand for Mr. Farren's discharge was made, when Mr. Forrest again appeared and stated that Farren *was* discharged, and asked if the play should proceed? This question was at once decided in the negative, when the curtain fell, and the house remained in full possession of Mr. Farren's opponents. The utmost disorder prevailed, but, with the exception of breaking the front lobby doors, no damage was done. The room was cleared about 12 o'clock, and the doors closed without any renewal of hostilities. The number of persons who had at one time congregated in front of the theatre, could not have been less than fifteen thousand!

Four English actors, viz.: Kean, Anderson, Powers and Farren, have been very summarily dealt with for the unjust and uncalled for remarks or insinuations against American institutions. Happily things have vastly changed since those events occurred, for now the best feeling exists between us and our English cousins, individually and otherwise. The more they hear and see of Brother Jonathan, the better they seem to like him. May it ever be thus.



## CHAPTER LXVI.

### A Convenient Dramatic Record.

NAMES, AGES, AND PLACE OF BIRTH OF WELL-KNOWN ACTORS, ACTRESSES, VOCALISTS, ETC., OF THE DRAMATIC PROFESSION.

A large number of names of prominent members of the dramatic profession appear throughout this work, but in order to render a reference more convenient, we have embodied in one chapter many of the names above referred to, as well as many others which do not appear in the body of this work. And we would here mention that for many important facts, data, etc., we are indebted to Col. T. Allson Brown, whose "History of the American Stage" is one of the most concise, and really valuable works on the drama extant, and to the profession particularly, it is an invaluable record.

Edmund Kean, born in England, 1797, died 1833, aged 64 years. His son Charles, born in Ireland, 1811, died 1868, aged 67.

Charles Gilfert, first manager of the old Albany Pearl Street Theatre, born in Germany, 1797, died in New York, 1829.

George Barrett, first stage manager in Gilfert's company, and the finest light comedian in the country, born 1794, died in New York in 1860, in abject poverty. He was the leading high comedian in Gilfert's Pearl street company. His wife, also attached to Gilfert's company, a beautiful woman and accomplished actress, died at the Sisters of Charity Institution, New York, 1857; both of

their deaths, under the sad circumstances, being a remarkable coincidence.

Henry Placide — whom Forrest pronounced the best actor on the American stage—born 1799. Mr. Placide was living, in 1871, on his beautiful farm on Long Island. We think, however, he is dead.

Edwin Forrest, born in Philadelphia, March 9, 1806, died Dec. 12, 1872, in the 67th year of his age.

Edwin Adams, born in Massachusetts, 1830, is 39 years of age.

Lucius Junius Booth, born in England, 1795, died 1834, aged 52.

Edwin Booth, his son, of Booth's Theatre, born in Baltimore, 1833, is in his 44th year.

John Wilkes Booth, also son of Lucius Junius, born in Baltimore, 1838, was 35 years of age when he was killed.

J. B. Booth, the oldest son of the elder Booth, born in 1821, is 52 years old.

George Boniface, born 1833, is 40 years of age. Mrs. Boniface, born 1840, is in her 33d year.

John Albaugh, born in Baltimore, 1837, is 33 years old.

Barney Williams, born in Dublin, 1828, is 50 years old.

John D. Murray, born in Edinburgh, Scotland, 1849, is 24 years old.

Edward Eddy, born in Troy. Made his first appearance on the stage at the Albany Museum, when quite young. He married Miss Mary Mathews, a popular actress, who died in New Orleans, 1865.

Mrs. Geo. Farren made her first appearance at the old Chatham Garden Theatre, New York, when a mere child, 1824. She is yet, although advanced in years, an excellent actress, and following the profession.

Wm. Emmet Coleman, born in Albemarle county, Va., 1843, is 30 years old.

George Ryer, born in New York. Made his first appear-

ance at Chicago, 1847, as Hamlet. One of the best "old men" in the country.

Mrs. H. E. Baily, born in Providence, R. I., 1847, is 26 years old.

F. J. Morris, born in Berkenhead, 1849, is 24 years old.

Frank Chanfrau, born in New York, 1824, is in the 49th year of his age. Mrs. Chanfrau, born in Philadelphia, 1837, is 26 years of age.

J. E. Nelson, born in New Orleans, 1855.

George A. Hill, born in Albany, 1839. Commenced his dramatic career as "property man" at the Albany Museum.

Jean Davenport, (Mrs. Lander,) born in England, 1830, is 43 years old.

Mrs. D. P. Bowers, born in 1830, is in the 43d year of her age.

Lester Wallack, born in New York, 1819, is now 54 years of age.

Sothorn, (Lord Dundreary,) born in England, 1830, is 43 years old.

Mark Smith, son of "old Sol. Smith," born 1827, is 44 years old.

Ristori, born in Italy, 1826, is 47 years of age.

William Warren, the eminent comedian, born in Philadelphia, 1812, is 53 years of age.

C. T. Smith, (Charley,) born in England, 1817, died in Buffalo, 1869, aged 51. Charley was for a long time attached to the Albany Museum as actor and stage manager.

Mrs. Maeder, (Clara Fisher,) born in England, 1811, is 62 years of age, and is still on the stage, doing the *role* of old woman.

Lucille Western, born 1843, is in the 31st year of her age. In 1859, was married to J. Harrison Mead, of St. Louis.

Helen Western, sister of Lucille, born 1843, died at Washington, 1868, in the 25th year of her age. Lucille and Helen Western are the daughters of the late George

Western, known as the "Great Western." His imitative powers were most remarkable. He would imitate the whistle of a railroad locomotive, its movements from its start until under full headway so perfectly natural as to astonish the most incredulous. He was for a long time at the Albany Museum, and was a favorite. He died at Binghamton in 1858.

Pauline Markham, born in England, is 27 years of age.  
Maggie Mitchell, born 1832, is in her 38th year.

James E. Murdock, born in Philadelphia in 1812, is 61 years old.

Mrs. James A. Oates, born in 1840, is aged 33 years.

John E. Owens, born 1823, is in the 50th year of his age.

Lydia Thompson, born in England, is 35 years old.

E. S. Packard, born in Albany, is aged 30.

Adelini Patti, born in Madrid, Spain, is in the 30th year of her age.

Rosa Rand, born in Virginia, 1848. She was reared and educated at the Convent of Notre Dame, San Jose, California.

Fanny Davenport, daughter of E. L. Davenport, born 1850, is 23 years of age.

Charles S. Kane, born in Albany, July, 1822, died February 4, 1873, in the 51st year of his age.

Mrs. John Drew, (*nee* Mrs. Harry Hunt,) born in England, 1818, is in her 55th year.

John Drew, born in Dublin, Ireland, 1827, died 1862, aged 35.

Joseph Jefferson, (Rip Van Winkle,) born in Philadelphia, 1829, is 44 years of age.

Laura Keene, born in England, 1833, is in her 40th year.

Frank Lawlor, born in Albany, 1835, is 38 years old.

William Duffy, born in Albany, 1807, inheriting English, Irish and Scotch extraction. His first appearance on the stage was at the old Thespian Theatre, in his native city, 1822. Afterwards appeared at the old State Street

Theatre, corner State and Eagle streets. Mr. Duffy died March 12, 1836.

Jenny Lind, born 1821, in Stockholm, is now in her 52d year.

Frank Mayo, born in New Orleans, 1829, is in his 44th year.

Ada Isaac Menkin, born in New Orleans, 1835, died in Paris, France, in the Jewish faith, 1868.

Charlotte Cushman, born in Boston, 1814, is in her 59th year.

C. W. Couldock, born in England, 1815, is 58 years of age.

Henry Drayton, vocalist, formerly of the Riching's Opera Troupe, born in Philadelphia, 1816, died 1872, aged 57.

Joseph, or "Master" Burke, born in Ireland, 1818, is in the 55th year of his age.

Edward Seguin, born in New York. Was educated at the Royal *Conservatoire*, Paris; joined the Riching's Opera Troupe, 1860, and in 1867 married Miss Zeadi Harrison, the present accomplished vocalist, Mrs. Seguin.

Kate Bateman, born in Baltimore, 1843, is now 30 years old. She also appeared at the Albany Museum at an early age.

William Burton, (Toodles,) born in London, 1802, died in New York, 1860, in the 61st year of his age. When he commenced his theatrical career his *forte* was tragedy. He, like so many of the dramatic profession, was brought up a printer. He made his first appearance in this country in Philadelphia, 1834, doing Allapod, in the "Poor Gentleman." He married the widow of the celebrated actor, Hilson, who was the first to represent "Paul Pry" in this country, and who was one of the dramatic company of the old New York Park Theatre. Burton's *facial* powers were truly remarkable, probably surpassing any actor in the two hemispheres.

Walter Keeble, born in Walworth, England, 1822, is in

the 51st year of his age. Commenced his professional career in Dublin, Ireland, when about 19 years old. Is the present popular manager of the Capitol Theatre, Albany.

Edward L. Mortimer, born in Baltimore, Md., 1838, is 35 years old.

Charles Waverly, born in London, 1841, is in the 35th year of his age.

James E. Nugent, born in Boston, 1843, is 30 years old.

Mrs. J. E. Nugent, born in Calais, Maine, 1847, is 26 years old.

E. C. McCall, born in Albany, 1848, is in his 25th year.

Miss Caroline Weidman, born in Albany, 1851, is 22 years old.

## CHAPTER LXVII.

### Amusements in New York as compared with Paris.

The total receipts of the various theatres, dancing saloons, concerts, and other places of public amusement in the city of Paris, in the month of November, 1872, it would appear, amounted to 1,915,864 francs, equivalent to \$833,172. The average weekly expenditures for amusements in Paris, therefore, was nearly ninety-six thousand dollars for the whole month of November.

Paris has thirteen theatres, including the Opera House, the Francais, Odeon, Opera Comiqué, Lyrique, Gymnase, Palais-Royal, Vaudeville, Varietés, Bouffes Parisiens, Athenée, Porte St. Martin, and the Ambigu.

New York also has thirteen theatres—the Grand Opera House, Academy of Music, Wallack's, Olympic, Booth's, Niblo's, Fifth Avenue, Bowery, Stadt Theatre, Theatre Comiqué, Wood's Museum, Tammany, and the French Theatre.

It is a curious fact that in the same month of which we have the Parisian record, the amounts received at places of public amusement in New York fell short only seventy-five thousand dollars of the sum expended in similar ways in Paris. According to the internal revenue returns for November, the thirteen places in New York in which theatrical performances are given, together with the circus and the three companies of negro minstrels, received \$307,994 in that month. This was an average of seventy thousand dollars a week.

The full returns were:

Grand Opera House.....	\$17,385
Wallack's.....	34,488
Olympic.....	26,204
Booth's.....	33,814
Academy (miscellaneous).....	22,749
Tammany.....	18,928
Wood's Museum.....	14,000
New York Circus.....	18,225
Theatre Comique.....	11,468
Niblo's.....	38,450
Tony Pastor's.....	8,258
French Theatre.....	10,273
Stadt.....	11,452
Bowery.....	10,973
San Francisco Minstrels.....	8,050
Bryant's Minstrels.....	11,400
Fifth Avenue Theatre.....	11,697
	<hr/>
Total.....	\$307,994

New York has about one-half the population of Paris, but its patronage of amusements, as well as the character of the plays and entertainments provided for the public, show that it is running a close race with the greater and older city. New York has a population of about one million, and spends \$70,000 a week for amusements. Paris, with a population of over two millions, expends \$96,000 a week for similar purposes. Paris, with twice the population of New York, leads her only \$26,000.



## CHAPTER LXVIII.

### Interesting Historical Record.

A COMPLETE HISTORY OF THEATRES AND OTHER PLACES OF PUBLIC AMUSEMENT DESTROYED BY FIRE, IN THE UNITED STATES, FROM 1798 TO 1873.

By way of an addenda, perhaps few subjects would be more appropriate to this work, or would be read with more interest, especially by those interested in theatrical matters, than the subjoined very perfect history of theatres and other places of public amusement destroyed by fire, within the past seventy-five years, in the United States.

In Europe, the existence of a theatre, as shown by statistical tables, is about twenty years, and in this country their existence is much less. The interior of these structures being of the most combustible character, when the fire gets a start, it has a vast area in which to operate, generally successfully defying all efforts to extinguish it. It will be seen that the largest bulk of the fires have occurred since 1840—a period of little more than thirty years only. Only eight of the above list bear date prior to 1830, making nearly two theatres a year on an average, since that time.

Federal Street Theatre, Boston, February 2, 1798.

Daniel Bowen's Museum, Boston, January 15, 1803.

Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, April 20, 1820.

Park Theatre, New York, July 4, 1821.

Richmond Theatre, Richmond, December 16, 1821.

- Theatre, Natchez, Miss., September 5, 1822.  
 Bowery Theatre, New York, May 28, 1828.  
 Lafayette Theatre, New York, 1829.  
 Caldwell's Theatre, Cincinnati, October 22, 1830.  
 Richmond Hill Theatre, New York, July 4, 1831.  
 Front Street Theatre, Baltimore, January 5, 1833.  
 Cook's Theatre, Baltimore, February 2, 1838.  
 Mobile Theatre, Mobile, February 6, 1838.  
 Bowery Theatre, New York, February 18, 1838.  
 New Theatre, Charleston, S. C., April 27, 1838.  
 National Theatre, New York, Sept. 23, 1839.  
 National Theatre, New York, May 29, 1841.  
 St. Charles Theatre, New Orleans, March 13, 1842.  
 American Theatre, New Orleans, July 29, 1842.  
 Old American Theatre, Cincinnati, September 22, 1842.  
 State Theatre, Mobile, November 13, 1842.  
 Providence Theatre, Providence, October 24, 1844.  
 National Theatre, Washington, March 5, 1845.  
 Bowery Theatre, New York, April 25, 1845.  
 Niblo's Theatre, New York, December 18, 1846.  
 Park Theatre, New York, December 16, 1848.  
 Avon Theatre, Norfolk, Va., February 14, 1850.  
 Theatre Lafayette, Ind., March 18, 1850.  
 Wood's Museum, Cincinnati, July 15, 1851.  
 American Theatre, Sacramento, Cal., 1852.  
 National Theatre, Boston, April 22, 1852.  
 American Theatre, Placerville, Cal., January 30, 1854.  
 Chinese Museum, Philadelphia, July 15, 1854.  
 National Theatre, Philadelphia, July 15, 1854.  
 Placide's Varieties, New Orleans, November 21, 1854.  
 Vananuchi's Museum, New Orleans, May 6, 1855.  
 Metropolitan Theatre, San Francisco, Cal., 1857.  
 Lyceum Theatre, San Francisco, Cal., 1859.  
 Forrest Theatre, Sacramento, Cal., 1861.  
 Marysville Theatre, Marysville, Cal., November 17, 1864.  
 Barnum's Museum, New York, July 13, 1865.

- Bowery Theatre, St. Louis, October 6, 1865.  
Butler's American Theatre, N. Y., February 15, 1866,  
Pike's Opera House, Cincinnati, March 22, 1866  
Academy of Music, New York, May 22, 1866.  
Academy of Music, Cincinnati, July 12, 1866.  
New Bowery Theatre, New York, December 18, 1866.  
Opera House, St. Louis, February 28, 1866.  
Winter Garden, New York, March 23, 1867.  
Varieties, Philadelphia, June 19, 1867.  
Academy of Music, Albany, January 29, 1868.  
American Theatre, San Francisco, February 16, 1868.  
Barnum's Museum, New York, March 3, 1868.  
Butler's American Theatre, N. Y., April 8, 1868.  
Theatre Comiqué, New York, December 4, 1868.  
Olympic Theatre, New Orleans, December 23, 1868.  
Olympic Theatre, Detroit, January 23, 1869.  
Opera House, Dayton, Ohio, May 16, 1869.  
Theatre, Atlanta, Georgia, May 28, 1869.  
Metropolitan Theatre, Rochester, November 6, 1869.  
Gaiety Theatre, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, November 15, 1869.  
Theatre, Galveston, Texas, December 3, 1869.  
Variety Theatre, Helena, Montana Territory, Nov. 7, 1869.  
Opera House, Lafayette, Indiana, December 24, 1869.  
Opera Hall, Indianapolis, Indiana, January 17, 1870.  
Varieties Theatre, New Orleans, December 1, 1870.  
Adelphi Theatre, Boston, February 5, 1871.  
McVicker's Theatre, Chicago, October 9, 1871.  
Crosby's Opera House, Chicago, October 9, 1871.  
Hooley's Opera House, Chicago, October 9, 1871.  
Dearborn's Theatre, Chicago, October 9, 1871.  
Olympic Theatre, Chicago, October 9, 1871.  
Niblo's Garden, New York, May 6, 1872.  
Lina Edwin's Theatre, New York, November 28, 1872.  
Barnum's Circus, New York, December 24, 1872.  
Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, January 1, 1873.

### A Lucky Theatre.

On the morning of April 24, 1834, the old Albany Pearl Street Theatre came very near being destroyed by fire. It caught from a vent in the chimney in which some shavings were burning. The fire had communicated with some scenery which was standing against the chimney. In five minutes, had the fire not been discovered, it would have been utterly impossible to have saved the Theatre. Several slight fires occasionally occurred in this Theatre, but excited little alarm or caused any damage. The old Pearl Street Theatre has, probably, been one of the most fortunate in the United States in regard to fires, never having been burned but once, (under the name of the Academy of Music, in 1868,) since it was first erected in 1824—nearly fifty years ago.

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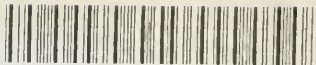
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