

# EARTH'S DEAR OLD ACTORS.

## A VISIT TO PICTURE-SQUE REFUGE HOME FOR THE SPIANS.



stories as have these old kings and queens of the stage.

For them the curtain has gone down forever, but their minds and memories are as keen as ever, and the Home is a little greenroom where intruders never come, and where, day after day, and evening after evening, they may live over again the scenes of their lives, waiting contentedly for the time to come when they shall forget it all and go to sleep in the burying ground over the hill.

### Saw Days as Favorites.

Most of them were leading men and women in the day when our grandfathers and grandmothers were young. They were popular favorites in the New York theaters before we were born, and many of them were small hamlets grow into great cities since they began playing.

And now at 70 and 80 years they are yet apparently as young and cheerful, as if life and all its pleasures were just beginning instead of drawing to a close. That is one of the interesting things about these old people—their remarkable preservation through all the hardships their profession has placed upon them.

Back over the years their memories run, telling you of the things that happened in the '40s and '50s and '60s, telling of the triumphs and failures of those days, and recalling each name and incident as if all had happened but last week.

Nor have they closed their eyes on the things of today, by any means. They are just as much interested in the players of the present as in their old friends of half a century ago, but it is a sort of grandfatherly and grandmotherly interest they have in the actor folk of our time, and this feeling is indulged to an extent that can be understood only by those who know how deep and genuine is the feeling of fraternalism among members of the theatrical profession.

Scarcely a day passes in the Summer season when from five to fifty well-known actors and actresses do not journey over from New York to see some of the old folk. Men and women who are most conspicuous on the stage today were "mashed" by them as they now at the Home, and the sentiment of the younger generation for the old folk is like that of children for their own parents.

Mrs. Nellie Tannehill is one of the younger members of the Home group. She is only a few years past three score and ten. "I used to hold Ethel Barrymore in my lap when she was a baby," said she. "And you can imagine that I am very fond of her. I can hardly realize that so many of these children have grown up and are now taking our places. Ethel comes out often to see us, and I like to tell her about the things that happened when she was a baby."

### Favorites of Anti-Bellum Days.

Long before the Civil War began Nellie Tannehill was a favorite in the leading playhouses of America. In the old days she played with McCullough, Neilson, Modjeska and others of their class.

Probably there is no woman now living so well known to the stage celebrities of half a century ago as Nellie Tannehill, yet as you talk with her now you somehow have the feeling that she is still young, and it is indeed very hard to realize that her stage work is finished.

"But it is finished," she said with a sigh that had just the tinge of regret. "I was before the footlights continuously for more than fifty years, and now I am very contented to rest here awhile and dream about the dear old days."

Everything about the place suggests "dreaming about the dear old days." The walls are adorned with faces that recall the old days, and at night when the embers glow in the big fireplace the old people cluster about it and recount the happy times in the years that are gone forever.

Down in the basement is the "propertiary room," and there again we found the walls adorned with faces that recall the old days. In one end of the room a hundred trunks, battered and worn by their years of journeying, are stored away, never again to be moved out. Looking over the lettering upon them is like reading the history of the

American stage. There are names of famous old stock companies and popular stage people that have not been heard of in a generation. Some of the trunks are so old as to make them look like relics of another age. Under their dusty lids are hidden costumes, records and letters that would tell a thousand interesting stories of the forgotten years.

In one corner we saw a sprightly old couple looking over the contents of one of the trunks. They were reading old letters apparently, and their manner was that of two young lovers. So they are, and so they have been for more than 60 years.

Away back in 1859 Samuel K. Chester was a callboy in the old Baltimore Museum. A pretty little girl was playing there as a fairy. They were lovers then, and they were still lovers that day as we saw them bending over the old trunk trying to unearth a package of sweetheart letters which neither of them had seen for more than 50 years.

### Memories of the Past.

All these years they have traveled together, playing leading parts with the greatest actors of their generation, and in all that time they have been separated but one season. In the early days Chester played all leading parts in the Shakespearean company with Edwin Booth and Edwin Forrest, and he tells you of those old celebrities with a vividness that seems to bring them actually before your eyes.

"Yes," he said, "those were dear old days, when we were beginning, back there in Baltimore, 40 years ago. It hardly seems so long as that. Joe Jefferson was stage manager of the old Museum at that time, and the girl who later became his wife was a southerner. Only a few of the old boys and girls of that day are now living. We are going to celebrate our golden wedding in a few days, and I'm afraid it won't be much of a task to write the invitations for those who knew us when we were married."

Then the old couple told us many interesting stories of the early lives of some of the great actors, most of whom have been dead or off the boards for many years. One of these stories related how Stuart Robson, as a youngster, used to annoy the actors in Philadelphia until he was finally driven away from the theaters altogether.

"Maggie Mitchell is still one of us young folk," said Chester, "and we frequently go up to New York and have dinner with her. We have known her for more than 50 years."

In the palmy days of Wallack's old theater, at Broadway and Thirteenth street, Edie Germon was the popular favorite. For nearly 20 years she was the reigning queen of high comedy, and as well known, almost, as the old theater itself. Today she is one of the old women at the Home, dreaming of the old days, with the others.

"Oh, those dear old Saturday matinees," said with an air of melancholy reflection as she looked away over the fields of the island. "Somehow I cannot make it seem that they have been forever. I used to wish they would never end, but they did. Everything that I had to live for has been taken away from me. First I lost all my property in Wall street, then my boy died, and here I am with nothing but the 'dreams of the past.'"

One of the liveliest among the "old girls" at the Home is Marion P. Clifton, now in her 80th year. She was born in Ringwood, England, in 1832, and began her stage career in the Pavilion Theater in Whitechapel road, London. That was in 1852. The same year she came to this country in 1854 and played continuously from that time until her last appearance in Chicago in 1904.

She is as bright and active as a woman of her age, and she takes care of her own room, reads all of the current literature without glasses, has few gray hairs in her head, and scarcely knows the meaning of illness.

For 20 years she played most of the time with Maggie Mitchell and Kate Claxton, and they often visit her now at the old home. The delights in talking of her early experiences in London 60 years ago, and of the interesting episodes of her life in this country.

"The first time I was ever in a theater," she said, "I became an actress. At 13 I was a widow. One of our

neighbors was an actress who played in the old Pavilion Theater, and one night she asked me to go with her. I had never been in a playhouse before, and had my first glimpse of it from the stage. It so happened that an extra girl was needed to fill in that night, and before I knew it my friend had put a white dress on me and I was shown on the stage with a group of other girls.

"Something about the place fascinated me completely, and from that hour the stage was my home. It all seemed to come very naturally, and I well remember that when I got so that I could faint and do a back fall I was the happiest woman in England. Yes, it has been a hard life, I suppose, but I have enjoyed it all and I am very happy here. I can remember the old times."

All through the afternoon our little party visited among the old people, listening to their interesting stories, but somehow we could not make ourselves realize that they were really talking about them, except their anecdotes of ancient days, indicated their age.

### End of Bright Career.

Harry D. Clifton, a well-known Shakespearean actor of the past generation, began his stage work at Wallack's Theater in 1859 and last appeared in "Hamlet" in 1904. At one time, he told us, he played with Edwin Forrest 300 nights, never appearing twice in the same country. Today, with the exception of a slight defect in his sight, one would imagine that he could take a part as well as ever.

Antonio Roig, the well-known "Tony Roche" of 40 years ago, was born in Spain in 1824, and after 50 years of active life as an actor and manager is still able to play tennis like a college boy.

John Leon Vincent, born in London in 1836, began his American career at Niblo's Garden, New York, in 1853, and after more than 50 years is one of the most active of the home's swarms.

George Morton is another of the same type. His stage work began at the old National Theater in Washington in 1856 and was finished at Nassau, N. H., in 1907, and he still has the appearance of a young man.

Frank A. Du Bois began in New York in 1856 and until 1897 was either on the stage or acting as manager for the Frohman. He still seems like a young man.

Rosina Newell began playing in 1852 and made her last appearance with Percy G. Williams in 1903. No one who meets her at the home would dream of placing her in the old woman class.

And so it goes through the entire list of the 25 guests at the home. Their records tell that they are in reality old people, some of them very old, but there are few outward evidences of age, physically or mentally. The majority of them have been topplers during the greater part of their careers, and most of them have at one time or another possessed independent fortunes.

But the money slipped away from them, as it usually does from actor folk, and finally the time came when they awakened to the fact that they were tired and a little out of date, and being without funds or friends there was no other permanent refuge except the comfortable home on Staten Island which the Actors' Fund of America maintains in such praiseworthy manner.

### Made to Feel at Home.

In all material respects the place is unlike any other charitable institution of its kind. In fact, everything that suggests the charitable institution is studiously eliminated, and the old people, so far as possible, are made to feel that they are really in their own home with the full enjoyment of individual liberties and without any of those institutional rules and restrictions.

That make such places little better than prisons for persons who have been accustomed to the ways of prosperity and personal freedom.

The old people are never spoken of as "inmates." They are "guests," just as if they were sojourning at a big hotel, and their daily lives are about what they would be at a quiet family hotel.

The few rules laid down are those that are necessary for the maintenance of ordinary protection and discipline. In the first place, no person can go there so long as he or she has any other source of support. But once entered as a guest there is no further concern about food, shelter or clothing. Provision is even made for the

last resting place in the little burying ground not far from the Home.

Any guest is at liberty to go away for a reasonable time, but notice must be given in advance of the intended absence, and when away reports must be made regularly to the Home. Another inflexible rule is that once having entered the home a guest cannot thereafter appear on the stage or take part in any professional work for compensation.

It often occurs that after a guest has become thoroughly recuperated through a few months' rest at the Home he becomes eager to get back in the harness again, but that he cannot do, except he sever his connection with the Home.

And each among the crew Desired to grab the tiller. Neath skies serene and blue. There's naught that e'er could tip her. Save such contention great. Now who shall be the skipper? And who shall be the mate? Washington Star.

### MIDSUMMER.

Bright falls the sunshine on the living. It is the high tide of the happy year; The long, sweet days change into nights so clear. That heaven seems leaning to our lifted hand. Each sentient creature in his measure knows The high tide of the utmost joy of life; No longer with the elements at strife, All revel in the bliss each hour bestows. The soft, deep grasses ripple like the sea. The south wind dreams among the fair, glad flowers; Thick plumes of verdure crown each stately tree. Birds come and go among the leafy bowers; And evermore we wonder, "Can it be That heaven is fairer than this world of ours?" Ninette M. Lowater.

BY BYRON A. NEWTON.

WE were out for a little spin on Staten Island. Our automobile was humming along a quiet country road near West Brighton when a singularly stately old mansion, a short distance from the main thoroughfare, caught the attention of our little party. It was unlike any other country place along the road. Somebody who wanted seclusion and a place for undisturbed dreaming had picked out this spot, and then somebody, with much thought, had designed the house and tucked it in there with consummate taste and an air of naturalness that made it look as if it had grown

up with the hills and trees that surrounded it.

An old gentleman who somehow looked as if he belonged to the place was strolling along the road, and we asked him whose house it was.

"The Actors' Home," he said.

"And are callers welcome?" we asked. He assured us that we were most welcome, and showed us where to drive in.

It was not yet noon when we drew up under the shadow of the great maples, but the stars were out before we departed, and even then we came away with a feeling of genuine reluctance.

Truly, it is the dream spot of Stage-land. I doubt if anywhere on this broad continent there dwells another group of men and women who have so much of the world's real romance in their life.

# Ten Minutes With The Funny Men.

SOME OF THE QUIPS AND JESTS FROM PENS OF THE NEWSPAPER HUMORISTS.

### Terse Tales From Humorous Pens

**WHY GEORGE WAS FAMOUS.**  
The incumbent of an old church in Wales asked a party of Americans to visit his parochial school. After a recitation he invited them to question the pupils, and one of the party accepted the invitation.

"Little boy," he said to a rosy-faced lad, "can you tell me who George Washington was?"

"Yes, sir," was the smiling reply. "E was a Merican General."

"Quite right. And can you tell me what George Washington was remarkable for?"

"Yes, sir. E was remarkable 'cos e was a Merican an' told the 'truth.' Youth's Companion.

**NEEDED AN INTERPRETER.**  
The best way to learn to speak a foreign language with a pure accent is to learn to speak it in one's childhood. Hence, in Europe—and the custom is also being adopted here—infants have French nurses, German nurses, Italian nurses, and so forth. Thus, unconsciously and without effort, they become superb linguists.

Miss Eleanor Sears, apropos of this wise custom, told a story at a luncheon in Philadelphia.

"One afternoon," said Miss Sears, "I dropped in at a young Boston matron's."

"Oh, she said, 'I'm so glad you've come. Jack's so ill, and I can't make out what ails him.'"

"I've got a car outside," I said. "Shall I run for a doctor?"

"No, said the poor young mother. 'Run for an interpreter. Jack's Italian, and I can't understand him, and none of

that you will have every rag-tag and

bobtail in the State of Virginia riding on our road. That's why!'—Every-body's.

### WISHING FOR WEALTH.

"I don't care if I never become rich enough to own a motorcar."

"So?"

"No, and what's more, I'm not dead anxious to be able to afford a trip to Europe now and then."

"Contented, sir?"

"Not exactly. Only I'm not losing any sleep because I haven't money enough to build eight or nine two-family flats."

"What is the matter with you, then?"

"As I was saying, I haven't any ambition to corner the money market. All I want is enough to live on, and—"

"Enough for rainy day, and—"

"No. I'd just like to be rich enough to afford an ice box with attachments so that I wouldn't have to empty the pan underneath it every night and morning."—Detroit Free Press.

### NEXT!

The widower had just taken his fourth wife and was showing her around the village, says the National Monthly. Among the places visited was the churchyard, and the bride paused before a very elaborate tombstone that had been erected by the bridegroom. Being a little near-sighted, she asked him to read the inscriptions, and in reverent tones he read:

"Here lies Susan, beloved wife of John Smith, and Jane, beloved wife of John Smith, and Mary, beloved wife of John Smith."

He paused abruptly and the bride, leaning forward to see the bottom line, read to her horror:

"Be Ye Also Ready."

### Quips and Flings

Sorrowing Sarah (endeavoring to break the news gently)—Peter, father has left us.

Practical Peter—How much? Philadelphia Record.

"Oh, Ma'am, Ma'am, I've swallowed a safety pin."

"So, that's where my safety pins go, is it?"—Funch.

"Your son certainly sticks to his job."

"Yes, he's like a postage stamp, he always sticks when he is licked first!"—Houston Post.

"Ran into town yesterday to do some shopping."

"Buy much?"

"No; ran out of money."—Boston Transcript.

Dawson, "I'll—Neil, how much longer must I—"

Neil Courtwright (interrupting)—Chicago Tribune.

"I say, isn't that hat rather curious in shape?"

"Of course, it is. Any hat that wasn't curious in shape would look silly!"—P. I. P.

Young Mistress—Do you think my Ernest really loves me, Emmy?

Maid—Of course, he's such a nice young man; he likes all the girls—Fleegende Blätter.

"I see that Holder isn't one of your

bank's most reliable and entirely trusted employees."

"Why so?"

"He's been at his desk 20 years. I notice that it's always the trusted and reliable that go away to Canada."—Browning's Magazine.

Patience—Don't you think he is a very unusual man?

Patrice—Yes, I do.

"Why?"

"Because I saw him open a car window the first time he tried yesterday."—Yonkers Statesman.

"I married a suffragette," said Mr. Cholmondeley Rippington, of Hyde Park, "and for five years have found unappealing happiness."

"I'm glad to hear it," said the suffragette leader.

"Yes," said Rippington, "Mrs. Rippington has been in jail four years and three months altogether."—Harper's Weekly.

Wife—My husband is not well. I'm afraid he'll give out.

Wife's Mother—Well, he may give out. He certainly never gives in.—Town Topics.

"What's the matter, Youngbuddy," said Oldboy. "You look pale around the gills."

"I guess it is lack of nourishment," replied Youngbuddy. "My wife knows 100 ways to use a chaffing dish, but she can't boil an egg."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

He—Did you enjoy yourself at the ball the other night?

She—Yes; everybody told me that I was the most beautiful girl there.—Philadelphia Telegraph.

### Among the Poets of the Daily Press

**FASHION.**  
Oh, Fashion's a whimsical lady. She changes her mind every day. One day she brings out a new hobby. And the next day she puts it away. She's always in search of the novel. And she doesn't care what it may cost. And the queerest of all things about it is the whole world submits to be bossed.

Oh, Fashion's a terrible tyrant. She issues her changeable decrees. And, although we protest we don't like it.

Still we all of us drop on our knees. We worship her while we're protesting. And her whimsical rules we obey. Till the question all others transcend— Is: What's the most stylish today? —Somerville Journal.

**THE SHIP OF STATE.**  
The men who stoutly framed her Were giants in their day. They launched her and they named her The "Glorious U. S. A." And every tribe and nation Beheld her flag unfurled. The hope of all creation, The pride of all the world.

Her course was swift and easy. With skill she was controlled. She sailed o'er waters breezy That sunshine turned to gold. And since the wind and weather No tumult would afford The whole crew got together