

ART OF VENTRILOQUISM.

ONE WHO CAN "THROW HIS VOICE" SAYS IT IS NOT A GIFT.

With Perseverance Any One Can Learn the Trick—There Are Three Divisions of What is Generally Called Ventriloquism—A Few Practical Hints.

Ventriloquism is without doubt an ancient art, one which was and is at the present time surrounded by a halo of mystery. It is remarkable that in this advanced age so much doubt and misconception prevail respecting ventriloquism. This is due in a great measure to the fact that the happy possessors of the gift are inclined to retain the secrets for their own profit, and so prevent a host of competitors from taking the field.

Ventriloquism is not a gift; it depends in a great measure on the histrionic ability of the student as to whether he will succeed in making a mark or not, but it is nevertheless true that any one possessing a certain amount of perseverance and zeal can become to a certain extent an exponent of the fascinating art, causing their friends to wonder at the number of voices within them. Those so endowed are able, if they seize the opportunity, to cause considerable amusement or annoyance to their fellows, but not to the extent that a great many people believe.

The writer has been asked on numerous occasions to "throw" his voice to the side of a person some distance off, so that it would appear to proceed from his own pocket or some other equally absurd place. Now as to the meaning of the word ventriloquism. It is derived from the Latin roots venter, the belly, and loquor, to speak; but belly speaking is certainly a misnomer, and leads many people to imagine that the voices are produced from that portion of the body. That is not so, the ventriloquial voice being formed purely and simply in the throat, the muscles of the stomach only being requisite to give sufficient strength or power to the voice.

Ventriloquism may be classed under three heads: Ventriloquism proper, colloquism and polyphonia. Under the first of these heads comes the distant voice; that is, imitation of sounds as they appear when heard from a distance and in various places and directions. The "man-up-the-chimney, on-the-roof and down-the-cellar" illusions, which nearly every one has had an opportunity of hearing, are the outcomes of this voice. Again, there are the "street cries," in which the performer has a miniature drawing room window, and gives imitations of varied and humorous well known street cries, heard first a long way off; then gradually the man is heard coming nearer and nearer, passing the window, and going slowly away again in the distance. The window being made to open and close makes the illusion perfect.

Colloquism consists of the imitations of various human voices; for instance, it is usual for most ventriloquists to introduce comical, life size, talking automata, the heads of which are made of papier mache, the interiors being fitted with springs and cords, by the aid of which the performer controls the mouth, eyes, hair, etc., of his talking family—the mouths of which being made to move at the same time as the words are uttered by the performer, and, owing to the uncertainty of the direction from which sounds emanate, and which, by the way, is the true secret of all ventriloquial illusions, the voice really appears to proceed from the figures.

DEAD BY THE TRACK.

While His Loving Mother Waited and Watched in Vain for Him.

"The Western and Atlantic train left the track last night at McVior's, and Richard McClain, fireman, was killed." That was the message, almost brutal in its brevity, that was flashed over the wires from Atlanta to Brunswick. He was only a fireman, of small consequence to this matter of fact world, with its rush and bustle, and so a three line paragraph in the morning papers was his obituary.

But back of this bare notice of McClain's death is one of the most pathetic stories in the history of railroad accidents in Georgia. The dead man had a mother and family who lived in the valley of the famous Chickamanga, and about them centers the pathos of the story. But let Engineer Adamson, who stood weeping over the body of his friend, tell it:

"He was a good boy," he said; "one of the best hearted men in the world. And he loved his family so! Every night when he would run by his home his mother would put out a light to let him know that all was well, and he would answer with a light. Last night she may have watched all night, for he didn't pass, and no doubt she was troubled with the thought that something was wrong."

And something was wrong. While the faithful mother, with her lamp of love a-flame, was straining her eyes through the darkness of the night to catch a gleam of the flashing headlight that announced "all's well" with her son, that son was stark in death.

The eyes that had watched for the light in the window that told of the safety of mother and kindred were glazed by death. No more would they strain through the dusk of the valley for the red ray which conveyed to him a message of love from home.

Richard was dead by the track! The loving mother, what of her? Through the dark watches she waited at the window, in her hand the beacon that assured Richard of the well being of the jewels of his heart.

But the rush and roar of the engine, and the flashing of the headlight through the swart reaches of the valley never came. The minutes ticked slowly by. "Richard is late to-night," thought the loving woman, "but I'll wait a while longer. It is almost like a visit from him to catch a glimpse of the headlight."

So she waited till her eyes grew heavy with sleep. And Richard was dead by the track! Finally she said:

"I'll leave the lamp in the window and lie down a while. I can hear the roar of the engine in time to wave the light."

Slumber came unconsciously to the loving but tired eyes. When she awoke the sun was shooting his silver arrows through the chinks of the room. The faithful heart turned toward the window. The lamp was extinguished. The mother sat up with great eyes staring at the darkened lamp. A shadow of woe came darkling over her, chilling the warm love currents of her heart.

For—Richard was dead by the track! Light and love had died together.—Brunswick (Ga.) Times.

Heavy Liabilities. "Say, girls," said one of a trio of young ladies, "let's go up on this car. The walks are very slippery." "Oh, I prefer the exercise of walking," answered one of her companions.

"Well, I don't," said the remaining one, a tall blonde, "I'm going to ride." With little parley the three boarded the car. They conversed pleasantly until near Pearl street, when, as the conductor approached for their fares, two of the girls began nervously unbuttoning their gloves.

"Blanche, will you please pay my fare?" said one, turning to her neighbor. "I can't. I have only ten cents. But," said she, turning to the imperial blonde, "will you pay for us?" "I haven't a cent," sententiously replied the blonde. And with burning cheeks the young ladies signaled the conductor and stepped silently but thoughtfully from the car. Their liabilities exceeded their assets.—Albany Argus.

Cheese Faring. Cheese parings—are they worth boarding? Certainly not, and yet thousands find in them an interesting occupation. It is a singular fact that there are many persons who spend all their time in peevishly saving scraps, the accumulated value of which is of no consequence whatever, yet who will now and again give away large sums of money. Some even will regularly subscribe to charitable objects sums a small percentage of which would alter all their human relations, and make a number of fellow mortals who come in contact with them happy day by day. Which is the wiser—to endow a Charity (with a capital C, mind) for strangers or to show charity at home?—New York Ledger.

Knows Only Two Tunes. Speaking of music, here is a true story of a well known and greatly esteemed Boston journalist to round out with:

"The journalist is so far from being a musician that he is accused of being destitute of the sense of tune. One time he was rallied on this point by a lady of his acquaintance, who asked him point blank:

"Is it true, Mr. A., that you don't know one tune from another?"

"It is a fact," he said, "that I can't readily distinguish tunes apart. There are only two tunes that I really know well."

"What are they?" "Old Hundred and the long meter Dooology!"—Boston Transcript.

Worse Than Doing Nothing. "What in the world are you doing?" yelled Cumso to his youngest, when he caught him pounding his papa's watch with a hammer.

"Killin' time," replied the precocious infant.—Harper's Bazar.

RELICS FROM THE SHIPS.

SOME OF THE QUEER THINGS SEEN IN OLD SOUTH STREET.

Quaint Figureheads Which Have Interesting Histories—How Some of Them Were Handled During the Draft Riots. A Pessimistic Old Salt.

A battered looking old fellow, wearing an antiquated chin beard that was the color of picked oakum, stood on South street yesterday, gazing at one of the big clipper ships that was loading preparatory to a trip around the Horn to San Francisco. His gaze was somber. He seemed in some way discontented with affairs as they stood. Evidently he was not pleased with his immediate surroundings.

"Handsome ship, that," remarked a bystander to the veteran.

"Humph," snorted he of the oaken beard. "Mebbe you're a jedge o' ships."

"Well, no, but I thought"—

"Oh, you did," retorts the veteran.

"Well, I thort you did. Well, that air clipper she air well enough for her. I ain't sayin' she ain't a bit handsome to look at, but I've seen a heap better. Thar wuz the Davy Crockett. She wuz a ship as was bamsun an' as did hansun. An' there wuz—but what's the use? Times is changed an' ships is changed an' South street is changed. There's more wrecks along here than anything else."

"What d'ye think I seen along here a while ago? Well, I went in one of them junk shops where they keeps all sorts of things that they picks up from old ships, an' shiver me ef thar in that shop wuzn't the figurehead of a ship I sailed in thirty years ago. 'Twas all battered an' broke, but I knew it at once. Well, I bought it, an' I'm goin' to take it up to C'nettykut, where I live, an' keep it there. An' I ain't goin' voyagin' through South street any more. It makes me feel like a castaway hulk myself!" With this the ancient one lapsed into a silence which he would not break.

THE OLD STYLE FIGUREHEAD. In one respect the old salt was right enough. South street can show an abundance of queer relics of wrecks and relics of brave men who have gone down to the sea in ships within the last thirty years or more.

There are a number of shops that keep all sorts of queer things on hand. They pick these things up in a variety of ways, and there is a considerable sale for them.

There are figureheads, for instance. In the olden time every ship of any pretensions had a figurehead. Owners of vessels vied in their efforts to secure fine designs, and the enterprising gentlemen who modeled the representations of fair maids, sea nymphs, of trim midshipmen or of admirals in uniform did a right pretty business. A simple sort of scroll work has taken the place of the dashing figures of the past.

Of course there are exceptions. The big English four master, the Falkland, has an excellently modeled representation of the Fair Maid of Perth above her cutwater. The clipper ship Seminole has a Seminole brave in full war paint, and there are others. In the main, however, the old time figurehead has fallen into desuetude.

Just off South street, before a shop in which nautical instruments are sold, there is the figure of a sailor that has evidently seen many and many a storm. He looks as though he had been crimped and shanghaied times beyond number. Part of his nose is gone, some one has made a pot shot at one of his eyes, but there is a jaunty, wicked leer upon his face and an expression that says:

"Here's a salt as has sailed, an' be blowed to ye!"

EFFIGY OF GEN. BOLIVAR. There are a couple of old figureheads to be seen on South street that have had very hard experiences on land as well as on sea. One of these is an effigy of Gen. Bolivar, and was the figurehead of the ship of that name.

Originally the effigy was so painted as to appear dressed in full naval uniform, cocked hat and all. At the time of the draft riots the rioters, having nothing else to do at one time, stood across the street and fired bullets at him. He received full many a wound that day, but he stands in his place still, stiff and erect.

Another figurehead fared even worse at the same hands. It was intended to represent Saunuel Kimball, of Kennebec, Me., but it left the sea some forty years ago. It was then placed where it now stands, to call attention to a store. The draft rioters had rare sport with it one day. They tied a rope around its neck, dragged it here and there in wild glee. Then they made it the central figure of a bonfire. Just as it was being consumed the police came down and rescued it. It was repainted, and today, impassive and dignified, it passes its time studying human nature as it is on South street.

But there are other curios to be found in this locality besides figureheads. There is one shop where more or less warlike articles can be found. There you can see ugly weapons taken from Chinese and Malay pirates; you can find queer looking weapons taken from natives on the African coast or the war clubs of the Patagonians—at least you will be told they are.—New York Mail and Express.

It is not alone the composition which determines the quality of a bell; very much depends upon its shape. Moreover, the proportions between its height, width and thickness are all to be taken into consideration. The dimensions, roughly stated, which are deemed to be the best for large bells, are one-fifteenth of the diameter in thickness and twelve times the thickness in height.

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