

AN OLD TIME THEATER.

AT "THE GRAND DUKE" MANY BRIGHT ACTORS GOT A START.

Newsboy and Footblack Vaudevilles Who Once Made a New Sight for New Yorkers—Most of Them Have Prospered and Some Are Famous in a Way.

Two decades ago the Grand Duke theater, or newsboys' playhouse, was one of the most famous institutions of this metropolis. Today the projector and chief manager of this unique resort runs an express team from a stand in the New Bowery. His name is Richard Burke. Dick Burke is not a large man physically, but he is a person of acute mental development. He is, as were all the leading newsboy players connected with the original Grand Duke theater, a typical New Yorker. He was born in the "Four" ward, and he knows about every inch of Manhattan island. He sold newspapers as early as he was able to walk, and there never was a thing in or about New York that Dick didn't know.

Now that all the boys of that time are grown to manhood, and many of them are firmly fixed in the real theatrical world, the story that Richard Burke can tell of the old days in the cellar at 21 Baxter street has a peculiar interest. That cellar was a spacious affair, its cellars go nowadays. It was entered by a flat door, which opened from the street. One dived down into this thespian home instead of climbing upward. The furnishings were primitive in the extreme. There was not even a raised stage. The boy actors played their parts on the same floor from which the spectators applauded.

About the only accessory that the cellar boasted was a curtain of bedtickings, which hid the players from the people. There were about seven boys in the original Grand Duke company, headed by Teddy Sullivan and Dick Burke. They had no paid tutors. Schools of acting did not flourish then. As Burke explains, "They went to the real theaters and caught onto their pieces."

WHERE THEY PLAYED. They played mainly negro sketches in that old cellar at the corner of Baxter and Worth streets, and many of the "kicks" played better than they knew, for nearly all of them have since distinguished themselves before the public on the professional stage. It was a time ripe for such an innovation. There was a chivalric spirit abroad in the breasts of the youth of the land which made deeds of heroic strength and valor rank high. Ned Buntline was recounting the deeds of Buffalo Bill in the New York Weekly. Leon Lewis was writing of the adventures of daring youths in The Ledger. Everywhere bravery showed its front. It was not unnatural, therefore, that these New York newsboys should strive to do and dare for themselves, and, adopting the buskin, cleave their own career in the face of many difficulties.

They were strong, healthy, sensible boys, and they knew that in minstrelsy they had their forte. That they did not aspire to the higher distinction of playing Shakespearean parts only emphasizes their good sense. So they played in black faces, and those famous old time sketches, "Beasley's Dog" and "The Coming Man," figured conspicuously in their repertory. The elite as well as the ragtag and bobtail of the town dived down into the dingy cellar to witness the antics of the merry lads. The Grand Duke Alexis, on his memorable visit to America, was a distinguished auditor one night. In fact, the theater afterward had its best known title from this august potentate, who smiled and paid for his fun at the newsboys' theater.

There was one typical episode in the career of this juvenile lyceum to which Mr. Burke still refers with pleasure. About the time that the boys' theater was in progress James Gordon Bennett was organizing souphouses throughout the city. One night a swell party entered the cellar. Among the visitors was Tony Pastor. Each person put down a dollar for his entrance fee.

ACTING FOR CHARITY. The souphouse business was uppermost in everybody's mind, and Pastor had recently created a fund for its support. J. J. McCloskey, the playwright and then actor, was one of the party. What did he do but spring up in the middle of the performance and make a ringing speech calling upon those present to contribute to the soup fund.

Dave Conroy, one of the boy players, leaped to his feet and declared that the Grand Duke company would give an entertainment to help the cause. Others of the boys seconded the motion, and it was carried amid enthusiasm.

On a later night a special programme was arranged, the souphouse benefit was given and \$156 was realized, which was handed over to Mr. Bennett. This was succeeded by other entertainments of a charitable nature, heartily entered into by the Grand Duke boys, until their theater gained a wide reputation, not only for its uniqueness, but for the practical good it was doing. But all this couldn't last. The boys grew to manhood and the things of the old time were swept away. Teddy Sullivan was drowned at the Fulton street ferry three or four years ago. Two others of the Grand Duke actors are now robust and popular policemen. Sam Bernard is a variety agent, and has made money and reputation also as a Dutch comedian. Jack Conway is of the vaudeville firm of Conway and Dempsey. Michael Coyne is a partner in the "teams" of Sheehan and Coyne, and the two seldom work for less than \$300 a week. Dave Conroy and Jack Dailey are of the funny Four Shamrocks, who are also very well paid. Frank Bush, one of the brightest of the Grand Duke lights, is known everywhere for his quaint mimicry of Hebrews. He is rich too, and the manager who hires him has to pay \$300 a week.

The old cellar is now used for other purposes. Its walls never again will echo the merry jests of the gay young spirits whose noise once shook the rafters. —New York Sun.

Opening Letters by Law.

"I noticed a short time ago," said a Washington official, "that some objection was made by Mr. Pell, of the San Domingo Shore Line road, to the opening of a private letter by the chief of the secret service bureau. It is not generally known that the rules of the postoffice department empower inspectors to open suspicious letters at discretion. The public appear to be very much astonished at this proceeding mentioned, but I assure you that it is carried to a greater extent than even those who know all about it suppose. In fact, under the rules of the postoffice department almost any private letter can be opened and read. This will surprise some people, I presume, but it is nevertheless true, and a reference to the private instructions to postoffice inspectors, which are in printed form, will convince anybody of it. Whether such secret privileges are ever used illegitimately would be difficult to find out. It is a good deal like arresting a man on suspicion. As a matter of fact, therefore, you will see the United States mails are no more sacred than the mails in Russia or any other country so far as government espionage is concerned." —New York Herald.

Men's Clothes.

"Men are becoming as bad as women for the adoption of strange and uncomfortable fashions in clothing," said a Fifth avenue custom tailor, "and they need dress reform preached to them almost as much as the feminine sex. Take the high collars that are in vogue, and which are worn higher than ever this fall. They almost strangle one and chafe the skin until it is sore. Between the heavy, hot beaver hat and the tight collar, baldness is becoming rampant in our cities. The high, tight collar has as much to do with causing baldness as any other one thing. Then the modern style of fitting the clothes forces us to make them tight and snug all around, and this prevents one from really enjoying life.

"Tight patent leather shoes sweat and pinch the feet until walking is a painful exercise. Every time I see a dude with all of the latest style of modern clothes I pity him, and wonder that he submits to such voluntary torture. I can assure you that if his clothes fit him he is miserable. The old adage that 'if a man's clothes don't fit him he is uncomfortable' has been reversed." —New York Times.

Senator Stanford Wanted to Expel 200. Stories are already beginning to come from Leland Stanford, Jr., university, at Palo Alto. Last week about 200 students let off the brakes of a flat car which was standing near the university, and many of them got aboard and started down grade toward the station. In a short time the car was spinning along at a lively rate, and the lads did not stop it until it had reached Palo Alto. The car was missing the following morning, and a special engine had to be sent from San Jose to haul it back.

Senator Stanford was wrathful when he heard of the incident, and proposed to expel the ringleaders. It was discovered that there were fully 200 boys engaged in the affair, and the senator gave orders that they should all be required to leave. The order would probably have been enforced but for Mrs. Stanford. She interceded for the youngsters, and excused them by saying that it was only a boyish prank. She finally succeeded in inducing Stanford to change his resolution. —Cor. Chicago Inter-Ocean.

Yellow Flowers Bring Ill Luck.

Actors have a queer superstition about yellow flowers, and will not wear them. While at Dr. Todd's booth at the fair grounds Miss Marie Greenwood saw some yellow flowers, and after admiring them asked for them. Mr. Guiberson, her leading man, was present and begged her not to take them, saying they would surely bring her ill luck. A laugh was indulged in at his expense and she took the yellow flowers. In an hour the opera house was in ashes, and Miss Greenwood's ill luck had cost her \$7,500. The flowers got in their work. —Owensboro (Ky.) Register.

A Sea Island Nine Feet Across.

Captain John Richards, of the British ship Cambrian Monarch, reports having passed within half a mile of a pinnacle rock, showing about seven feet above the water, in latitude 29 degs. 2 secs. north, longitude 137 degs. 59 secs. west. No soundings were taken and no discolored water was seen except close to the rock. The sea was smooth, and from the top-sail yard the rock appeared to be about nine feet in diameter at the water's edge, but much larger under the water. Captain Richards says he is sure that it was not a floating object. —Philadelphia Record.

Played Cards During the Service.

There is great excitement at Wingate, Ind., over the arrest of a young man and a young woman for playing "seven up" at a meeting in the Christian church on Sunday evening. Adolphus Ocheltree and Miss Mary Prudy are lovers, and went to church together that evening. Not enjoying the prayers and songs, Adolphus tore the backs off a number of singing books and manufactured a deck of cards on the spot. The young people then played "seven up." They were arrested and fined, both pleading guilty. —Cor. Chicago News.

A man at Quebec, who received a fearful and almost fatal shock by touching an electric light wire, and suffered very keenly afterward, says that he was at once relieved by taking off his shoes and stockings and walking barefoot over the damp earth.

The great railroads running from the northwestern part of our country to the Gulf of Mexico have determined to establish steamship lines to Central and South American ports from New Orleans.

A project has been started in Pueblo, Colo., for the erection of an electric smelting plant to cost \$500,000, for the reduction by electricity of dry and refractory ores.

How He Beat the Barber.

A spruce looking young man entered a down town barber shop and, seating himself in the barber's chair, was speedily enjoying the luxury of a hair cut and shave. After his mustache had been curled to the young man's satisfaction, he got out of the chair, put on his hat and coat, and taking from his pocket the barber supposed was a twenty-five cent piece, turned around to the barber and insisted that he should go out and have a drink with him, as he wished in that way to show his appreciation of the artistic manner in which the barber had manipulated him. The barber firmly but courteously declined the invitation, saying he never drank during business hours.

"But," said the young man, "you have given me the best hair cut and shave I have enjoyed in a good while, and I insist upon your going out and having a drink with me for friendship's sake, as I cannot think of leaving without expressing in this manner my esteem for your excellent workmanship."

The barber was a little nettled by this time and replied brusquely: "I told you I never drank with any one during business hours, through friendship or for any other reason. Don't you see the gentleman who is waiting? Next!"

"Well, I call this a downright insult," said the spruce looking young man, "and I shall never patronize you again. There's your money," and throwing the coin over in the corner of the room, he hastily left the shop and disappeared around the corner. The barber, not suspecting anything wrong, finished shaving the next man, and then, going over to the corner for the money, found a cent. —New York Tribune.

Trains Ahead of Time.

A gentleman from the vicinity of the Blarney stone tramped into the depot for the seventh time a day or two ago, and, depositing a careworn satchel on the seat, waltzed up to the ticket office with blood in his eye and anger in his heart. He was so mad that at first he could not express himself except by uttering a Donnybrook "begorra."

"What is it?" queried the ticket agent. "It's the seventh time."

"What's the seventh time?" "The seventh time oive losht me thrain."

"How so?" "That's what ye'll plaze explain, ye dude. I began losht thrain at seven o'clock this mornin and I've been losht in thim iver since."

"Have you a watch?" "None of your business."

"I only asked you, sir, to see if I could explain how you lost your train."

The Irishman pulled out a watch with a fryingpan case and shoved it in a window with a "It's the best chronometer in town."

"That's the reason why you lost your train."

"What dy'e say?" "Why, your watch is seventeen minutes slow."

"Not by a good dale, begorra. Your trains are seventeen minutes too fast," and the man grabbed his watch, bolted for his grip and left the station, shaking his head vigorously. —Albany Argus.

Killed by Kindness.

A lady was walking along the crowded streets of a city when she saw a small green bird flying wearily above the roar and din of traffic. It was so tired it gradually lessened its flight and soon fell at her feet at the curbstone. It was some one's pet canary, escaped from its cage. The lady picked it up tenderly and carried it struggling and exhausted into a drug store, where she inquired if its owners were known. The drug store people did not know, and she borrowed a paper bag into which she carefully placed the bird. Then leaving her name and address she took the bird with her and went on her way.

She walked some distance to call on some friends and when she arrived at the house set the paper bag on a table and did not think of it until greetings were over. Then she called attention to her find, but the little, bright plumaged thing lay dead, she having never once thought of the necessity of giving it air. The closed paper bag had proved air tight, and the bird was literally killed by kindness. —Detroit Free Press.

Americans Abroad.

"One scarcely feels nowadays a stranger in a strange land abroad," says a woman who "goes over" every year. "In western Europe, at least, Americans are everywhere. London, Paris, Rome, Nice, Berlin, Hamburg—all these places swarm with them, as well as the so called less frequented places. At a little town on the Danube, where the boat stopped for a while, I started out to walk. A short distance from the wharf I saw, about to enter a house, a large, fair woman whom I thought looked very foreign, and summoning up my best German, I accosted her as to directions. She stared at me blankly a moment, then shook her head. "Nein, nein," she said, "I no comprehend; out from New York yesterday." —New York Times.

Apes in Borneo.

"My acquaintance with apes has been chiefly made in Borneo," said Professor Henry A. Ward, the famous natural science collector of Rochester. "That great island is the home of the orang, which is the most arboreal of all monkeys. The animals live in trees altogether, rarely, if ever, visiting the ground. It takes two good marksmen to shoot one, because they dodge around the trunks. They do all their fighting aloft, and it is great fun to see them drop the armfuls of fruit they have gathered in contests for its possession. They are plentiful in the lowlands near the coast." —Washington Star.

An Advantage in Location.

"The privileges you enjoy, my son, from being an American," said the proud father, "are simply inestimable. You may some day become president of the United States, while in England no little boy, however brilliant or good, can ever become queen." —Harper's Bazar.

THERE ARE.

Beautiful words never spoken, Whispers of cheer that melt save Hearts drifting, weary and broken, Down to the night of the grave. Silence more deadly than passion, Glances that slander can send, Frowns in the world's devilish fashion, To murder the heart of a friend.

Locks, spotless virtue impeaching, Souls lying crushed on the plain, With tear frozen eyelids beseeching The touch of love's sunlight again. Burdens to bear for the weaker, Jewels to dig from God's mine, And gems, fairer still, to the seeker In the angels' tiara that shine.

Within us the soul's silent treasure Waiting the kiss of the light; Sweet scented blossoms of pleasure Our fingers may cull from the night. Fruit shining ripe on toll's mountains, Pearls that sleep under life's sea: Music in God's laughing fountains Undream'd of by you or by me.

Larks singing down in love's meadow, Thrushes that pipe by the hill; Out of time's darkness and shadow, Whispers that comfort and thrill. Voices with ever singing, Melody soft'en'd by tears. The phoenix of hope at last springing Serene from the ashes of years. —J. R. Parke in Detroit Free Press.

Quieting Superstition. When Edward III fell and made his nose bleed on the seashore at La Hague a cry of consternation was raised, which he quieted with the remark, "This is a good token for me, for the land desirith to have me;" at which answer, says Froissart, "his men were quite joyfn." —All the Year Round.

All in His Favor. "Do you ever expect to succeed in business, writing such an illegible hand as you do?" "Certainly. My contracts are always in my handwriting and they can never be read except as I want 'em to go." —New York Epoch.

Old People.

J. V. S. is the only Sarsaparilla that old or feeble people should take, as the mineral potash which is in every other Sarsaparilla is at weak know of, is under certain conditions known to be enacting. J. V. S. on the contrary is purely vegetable and stimulates digestion and creates new blood, the very thing for old, delicate or broken down people. It builds them up and prolongs their lives. A case in point:

Mrs. Belden an estimable and elderly lady of 510 Mason St., S. P. was for months declining so rapidly as to seriously alarm her family. It got so bad that she was finally afflicted with fainting spells. She writes: "While in that dangerous condition I saw the testimonials concerning J. V. S. and sent for a bottle. That marked the turning point. I regained my lost flesh and strength and have not felt so well in years." That was two years ago and Mrs. Belden is well and hearty to-day, and still taking J. V. S.

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A Revelation.

Few people know that the bright bluish-green color of the ordinary tea exposed in the windows is not the natural color. Unpleasant as the fact may be, it is nevertheless artificial; mineral coloring matter being used for this purpose. The effect is twofold. It not only makes the tea a bright, shiny green, but also permits the use of "off-color" and worthless teas, which, once under the green cloak, are readily worked off as a good quality of tea.

An eminent authority writes on this subject: "The manipulation of poor teas, to give them a finer appearance, is carried on extensively. Green teas, being in this country especially popular, are produced to meet the demand by coloring them with black dyes by glazing or facing with Prussian blue, titanium, gypsum, and indigo. This method is so general that very little genuine uncolored green tea is offered for sale."

It was the knowledge of this condition of affairs that prompted the placing of Beech's Tea before the public. It is absolutely pure and without color. Did you ever see any genuine uncolored Japan tea? Ask your grocer to open a package of Beech's, and you will see it, and probably for the very first time. It will be found in color to be just between the artificial green teas that you have been accustomed to and the black teas.

It draws a delightful canary color, and is so fragrant that it will be a revelation to tea-drinkers. Its purity makes it also more economical than the artificial teas, for less of it is required per cup. Sold only in pound packages bearing this trade-mark:

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