

VENTRILOQUISM.

VOCAL DELUSIONS AND HOW EXPERTS PRODUCE THEM.

Kennedy Gives Away Some Secrets of the Business—The Art Not Easy to Acquire—Must be a Good Mimic.

"Ventriloquism is the art of so modulating the human voice that it seems to come from some other direction than the right one."

That is what Harry Kennedy, the famous ventriloquist and song writer, said to me the other day. It was not the first time he had said it, although he had met solely for the discussion of ventriloquism. While we were talking he excused himself and went to the door, and immediately darted back, apparently frightened by the hoarse bark of a ferocious dog.

"Why don't you have him taken away?" I suggested, nervously.

"I will." Thereupon he went again to the door, and calling a man, told him to chain the dog up. In a minute the dog's bark changed to howls and ended in a pitiful whine down in the pit of the theater near the stage.

"I guess it's right now," continued Mr. Kennedy. "Ventriloquism is simply a vocal delusion." Then followed the more complete definition which introduces this article—an article, by the way, in which Mr. Kennedy tells of his own experience in the art, and gives some suggestions to those who desire to master it.

"Sometimes," went on Mr. Kennedy, "adventitious circumstances make this delusion seem almost a miracle. For instance, they would take out that their senses had not deceived them. For instance, with a party of tourists I once visited a famous cave in Derbyshire, England, which was the mouth of the cavern. A mournful wail seemed to come from the darkness and was echoed a score of times, to the intense horror and fright of my companions. The wail was haunting, and it was not until I saw the cause of the sound that I was the uneasy ghost, but to the circumstances that surrounded the trick made it startlingly realistic.

"In telling you how to become a ventriloquist you will see how difficult it is to acquire the art, and some of your readers may experiment and make more rapid progress than I did. I was not a good mimic of fiction that I ever read was 'Valentine Vox.' That book made me a ventriloquist, as it has undoubtedly started many another boy on the same course. For at least a month or two I tried to imitate my brother up at night trying to throw my voice into the further side of the room or out of the window. I have no doubt that during that time I was the most disagreeable boy to sleep with in all England. I was a large boy for my age. Although I was only 13, I looked fully 15, and was far more than a match for any boy of that age. I had graduated at the public schools, and was in the lowest class at Owers College, in Manchester, my native town.

"In those days we had penny readings in a public hall, and among the entertainers who were engaged for a season was a Professor of ventriloquism. You may perhaps imagine how fascinating this form of performance. He chalked his hands and knuckles, and heeding his fingers toward the palm, he made a very good imitation of an old man's groan by opening his mouth and closing the first and second finger joints, he gave a representation of the 'talking hand' trick. I was delighted. It was simply a vocal delusion, and I was him with questions, which he never failed to answer to my satisfaction. Finally he said: 'Now, young man, I have told you all I intend to. If you can learn the trick of an old man's groan, you may go on to the next step, which is to imitate a woman's voice. Six months later I called on him and repeated his trick, not so well as he did it, but well enough to merit his praise.

"I followed the next step, and to my little money in my pocket to go to see it. I wanted to see the world, and I didn't want to see it as most persons do. I presume if a short search failed to find him, I would have gone out West to fight Indians. I was full of romantic ideas—ideas which have been knocked out of me so long ago that I can hardly realize that I ever had them. I started to walk to Birmingham. On my way I met a professional tramp. A courteous, educated, Irish gentleman, whose fondness for whiskey had sent him drift in the world. I became one of his companions. As we were passing a bit of woods I modulated my voice that a man seemed to be calling to us from the copse. A short search failed to find him, and I repeated the trick again farther on with the same success, and then emboldened by success I repeated it over too often and with too much frequency.

"When the tramp discovered the fraud, his face was a study. The beatific expression that spread over his face was as though he beheld a vision. He looked at me with a look of intense interest. I discovered a plan with millions in it. Our fortune was made, so he said, and a few minutes later he proved it, to his satisfaction. We went to the bank, and I was given a check for \$100,000. We were wrecked at Boulmer Point, on the northeast coast of England, the executive officers were suspended by order of the competent authority, and the vessel was abandoned. I was the only one of the crew who could be saved. We were five weeks, and during that time a fleet of fishing vessels was wrecked at Claster, a fishing town, and I gave a performance for their benefit at Boulmer. It was successful, and I was invited by the relief committee of Ainswick to help their entertainments. It was given under the patronage of several ladies, and I was titled 'Mr. Harry Kennedy, of the steamship Magdella, now wrecked at Boulmer Point.' That was my first big bill.

"I followed the next step for several years more before the first and on the quarter-deck, and during those years I saw almost all of the world worth seeing. Meanwhile, however, I kept on my ventriloquism as a pastime, and many a trick I played on the mates. Once when we were twenty-seven days going from Boston to Montreal with a freight of railroad iron, I made the crew believe there was a ghost in the hold, and we had to hire other help to unload the cargo.

DRAMATIC EVOLUTION.

CAUSES FOR THE POPULARITY OF LIGHT ENTERTAINMENTS.

How Opera Bouffe and Negro Minstrelsy Affected the Stage—Suggestions for the Future.

Dramatic evolution is a term new to those who find their bread and butter as players, but it is a fact, as much as scientific evolution is, and for similar reasons. But dramatic evolution is a strange thing, and not often comprehended or even observed by the members of the profession or by the public. Nevertheless, it is full of interest and has as many positive and startling phases as scientific or even esoteric evolution.

Few people have stopped to ask themselves how opera bouffe, or comic, farce-comedy and scenic melodrama have come about within the past few years, and how they have assumed their present mammoth proportions.

They have been the natural consequences of a very natural evolution, which can be logically explained and justified.

Everybody has been writing more or less about Dion Boucicault, and praising or belittling him, as was thought best; but I venture to state that very few dramatic writers have considered him as the product, or one of the products, of dramatic evolution, which he undoubtedly was.

Mr. Boucicault was born in the profession as Lee Morton at a time when the English stage was suffering from a diet of dramatic chestnuts and a dearth of fresh fruit for a starving public, and was just about to speak through the bars of a cage emerging into daylight without an engineer, or even firemen competent to keep it going, when Boucicault came upon the scene, and took in the hands of Mr. Boucicault always was masterful in situations and equal to any emergency; so he was not only a dramatic evolution, but a dramatic evolution.

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MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

MATTERS THEATRICAL IN THE GREAT AMERICAN METROPOLIS.

Attractions Now Before the Gothamites—Henry E. Dixey's Visit to Sacramento—Stage Notes.

Rosalind May, the regular New York correspondent of the SUNDAY UNION, writes as follows about theatrical matters in that city:

The Old Homestead is at home again, and the welcome given it on last Monday, the opening night, was the warm greeting of genuine affection. Every seat was taken and advance sales show that a previous success, constantly engaged in portraying the leading characters in the Shakespearean drama, certainly gives Mr. Keene a strong claim to popularity and consideration, and wide recognition by the much more critical American critics secured for him a place in the dramatic history of this country among the most illustrious of our tragic actors. It is years since he made his debut as a tragic actor, in 'Richard III.' He, from the night of his debut, has verified the most sanguine prophecies made by his admirers. He secured a triumph over all his competitors in the role of Hamlet. He has overcome the natural opposition to all new exponents of the classical, and the admirers of his originality and vigor have swelled from hundreds into the thousands in every city in this country. Mr. Keene will need no introduction to the four classes of the American public, and his merit as a great tragic actor is well known here, and it is with fond remembrance old theater-goers look back to the excellent work he did with the 'Merchant of Venice' and 'Richard III.' His opening performance on Monday evening will be Bulwer's great play, 'The Elixir of Life,' which has the character in which is conceded to be one of the greatest of his time.

STAGE NOTES.

'Old Jed Preddy' is booming in the West.

'The Henrietta' is again coming money for Stuart Robinson this season.

Frederic Bryton is in New York busily rehearsing his new play, 'Jim.'

It is said that Joseph Jefferson proposes building a theater in New York.

McKee Rankin's five-act play, 'The Runaway Wife,' has made a big hit on the coast.

Nat Goodwin will do Leander Richardson's 'The Nominee,' at Chicago the 20th of October.

Margaret Mather's husband, Emil Harbort, is ministerial director of Harbort & Co., of New York.

'A Trip to Chinalona' made an unquestionable hit at the San Francisco Bush Street Theater on Monday.

The Directors of the Philadelphia Academy of Music have refused to rent the house to Col. Ingersoll for a lecture.

J. Barton Key has joined the Charles E. Locke forces, and people about town say that J. Charles Davis is under Locke and Key.

'Castles in the Air,' with De Wolf Hopper, opened to a big house and great enthusiasm at the Chestnut Street Opera House, Philadelphia.

Rosina Vokes presented her new play, 'The Silver Shield,' by Sydney Grundy, at the Chestnut Street Opera House, October 4th. The piece made a hit.

Hoyt & Thomas are having great luck with their plays this season. The new ones have all 'caught on' and the old ones are being revived with more success than they ever did.

Mr. George Drew Barrymore is advised by his physician not to return to her place in the cast of the 'Senator' for some time, as she has not yet recovered from her illness.

Miss Isabel Morris (sister of Felix Morris, Rosina Vokes' comedian) will star later in the season in a comedy called 'A Whirl,' under the management of J. F. Barry.

The management of the 'Out of Sight' company will make a feature of the statue scene from the 'Clemenceau Case.' There is something inconsistent between 'Out of Sight' and the regular school.

Minnie Seligman is said by the Boston newspapers to be 'the coming emotional actress for whom the American stage has long waited.' The article ends with: 'She is a woman who dances the Kangaroo dance, and all New York is speaking about it.'

Edith Howard has written a part for herself in the second and third acts of 'Dr. Brill,' which will be interpolated in the performance. Miss Kenward is the young woman who dances the Kangaroo dance, and all New York is speaking about it.

Miss Helen Russell, who will be a member of the Broadway Theater November 1st, was for some time a member of Lester Ward's famous stock company. She is a very beautiful woman, one of the most tasteful actresses on the stage, and abroad an exceedingly able artist.

The Spanish dancers, Carmencita and Oscar, are running such a close race for the greatest popularity. Carmencita gives the untutored dance of the country folk, and Otera the well-studied movements of the regular school. Carmencita is of the people, Otera of the aristocracy; both are fetching, but our own little Amelia Glover is as clever as either of them, and she is not so long for the newest fad, managers are on the lookout for novelties in that line, one having been sent to Venezuela and another to Cuba, and the people are likely to do pretty well, as it is guaranteed by suggestive dances to knock out Carmencita or Otera.

The Pin and the Needle.

A pin and needle being neighbors in a work-basket, and both being idle, began to quarrel, as the people are likely to do.

'I should like to know,' said the pin, 'what you are fit for, and how you expect to get through the world without a head.'

'What is the use of your head,' replied the needle, sharply, 'if you have no eyes?'

'The use of the use of your eye if there is always something in it,' retorted the pin, bluntly.

'I am more active and can get through more work than you can,' said the needle.

'While they were thus bickering a little farther on, and trying to sew something hard, soon broke the needle at the eye and threw it under the grate. She then tied the thread round the neck of the pin, and trying to pull it through her work the head came off, when she threw it into the ashes, where the needle was already.

'Well, here we are together again,' said the needle.

'We have nothing to quarrel about now,' said the pin. 'It seems misfortune has brought us to our senses.'

Russian calculations of the population of China place it at 382,000,000 and the annual increase at 4,000,000.

Oysters live to the age of from twelve to fifteen years.

'When I collaborated with Mr. Gill in

ART AND THINGS ARTISTIC.

The Sacramento School of Design now has its largest winter classes since its founding.

It is proposed to erect a monument to Miss Emma Willard in Troy. Her hobby was the higher education of women.

Mrs. Perugini, Charles Dickens' second daughter, has died in London. She was also a successful painter of children's portraits.

New York's famous institution, Cooper Union, for the advancement of science and art, has had a dozen other nice schools, and 2,500 young men and women. On the waiting lists are more than 1,000 names.

Lady Randolph Churchill, generally well known as a woman of good, strong sense and a clear head, is a painter, musician and artist and she declares her ability to earn a handsome living for herself, if there were no one else, by teaching either of these accomplishments.

At the Casino, preparations are being made for a production next week of 'Poor Jonathan,' which will replace 'Mme. Angot,' and like the latter, will be a comedy of the highest order.

'The Eden Musee' is thronged by sight-seers, who watch the dancing and singing of the English variety, between whom and Carmencita there is a most spirited rivalry, and one which is beginning to influence dancing in fashionable society and in the minds of the masses.

'ADONIS' DIXEY'S VISIT.

Henry E. Dixey and his company were in Sacramento during the week. This is not his first visit here. He was the Robin's Crusoe in 'The Surprise Party' when he was in Sacramento.

The famous organization, play after play, has been in Sacramento, and he has spent the past six weeks on the coast, and that well-known comedian is pleased with his experiences going without saying.

'I am the most pleased with my reception. I find that the people here are very broad-gauge in their ideas, very intelligent, and splendid patrons of good shows. Fortunately the expenses to cover the Pacific coast circuit are sufficiently large to keep poor attractions off the road. With the growth of communities come theaters, and the theater is the extreme West that I have visited in the past few years, and I am admirably supplied in that direction.'

'What about the growth of the dramatic art, Mr. Dixey?' asked one of the party.

'If you mean in the manner of stage appliances, I can say they have been marvelous. They have been wonderful during the past decade. Everywhere, and in every complete perfect stage situations is now at hand, and I can hardly suggest where further improvements could be made. The electric light has been an important factor in the complete perfect stage situations, and many great stage effects are produced. If Shakespeare himself could see my production in two hours and a half of the famous play he put in the world, he would be in 'As You Like It,' he would stand in silent admiration of the wonderful progress made in scenic and stage appliances. Everywhere, and in every complete perfect stage situations is now at hand, and I can hardly suggest where further improvements could be made. The electric light has been an important factor in the complete perfect stage situations, and many great stage effects are produced. 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