

AMATEUR ACTING.

It Is Becoming a Popular "Fad" in Society Circles.

SOME POINTS FOR BEGINNERS.

Calumny Lights and Curtains—Don't Turn Your Back to the Spectators—Lots of Fun and Considerable Hard Work—The Elaborate Efforts of the Big City Associations.

Notwithstanding the fact that the wit of the paragraphs and the merriment perhaps hidden, but none the less serious of professional actors are often turned against amateur actors and acting, the fact remains that amateurs really do good work sometimes on their improvised stages. That they often do bad work is not to be wondered at, for few of these have any training worth mentioning, and fewer still sleep at all long enough to benefit by an extensive experience.

Another argument in favor of the amateurs is that there is more fun in the square feet in most of their rehearsals and performances than there is in any other amusement they could find. What could be more conducive to hilarity, for instance, than the efforts of the "leading man" (who is generally very funny) in his efforts to keep from falling over his feet during the first rehearsal. The "leading lady," too, invariably has trouble with her train (what a bothersome mass of silk it is, to be sure) for the first four or five times. The "pretty housemaid" can't help looking downward every minute or so to be sure that her dress quite reaches the tops of her shoes. But the funniest of all is the comedian. That is, he is funny in those parts where the audience is to be. Nothing could equal the delectableness of his appearance at other times.

When at last the rehearsals are ended and the eventful night is at hand, the fun waxes fast and furious. Not that the participants think it is fun then—oh, no, it's a very serious matter then—but when a week, or a month, or a year has passed, they look back upon the night with a kind of pleasurable retrospection which they feel in regard to nothing else.

The stage manager is a very important personage among amateurs as well as among professionals, and it is said by his credit, he seldom fails to appreciate his own position.

If he has a little ingenuity he can add considerably to the merit of the performance. He can make a substitute for the calcium or lime light of the "real stage" by putting a bright reflection behind an ordinary kerosene lamp, and passing before it slides of different colors. Little wooden frames, on which tissue paper of the required tint is pasted, form a very effective substitute for the more expensive material used on the "real stage." By using such a contrivance judiciously, the attractiveness of tableaux and the like is greatly increased.

This light should always be placed in the "cove" at one side of the stage, and the performances, for, if it is located in the rear of the audience, stupendous shadows of the individual heads belonging to said audience are apt to be cast upon the stage and players. Such a circumstance is a most depressing effect. In moonlight scenes a dark blue slide is used. Avoid green slides. They make the people illuminated look like re-venanted ghosts. "Spotlights" should always be well screened. From the point of view of the audience, and some sort of a guard should be provided to keep the dresses of the female performers from touching the flame, should they be in a moment of forgetfulness, or a frenzy of genius venture too near the front of the stage.

A rolling curtain is apt to get stuck half way up or down and leave your admirer in a state of ecstatic contemplation of a row of headless skirts and legs. This is unpleasant, and should be prevented by having hanging curtains—the division in the exact center of the exact center of the exact center.

Do not slide them, but fix a pulley at the upper corners of the stage opening, and run a cord gracefully, and about midway between floor and ceiling on the edge of a each curtain. "Rings" are used and pulled the curtain will rise upward.

MR. COWARD AS BILLY. A downward cord attached to the lower corner of each curtain will draw the swinging ends out of sight in a jiffy.

It is a good rule (although by no means a rigid one) to avoid turning one's back toward the audience. Professional actors seldom do it, sometimes straining a point in order to avoid it.

There are a thousand and one little points to remember if one wants to have the performance go off smoothly, but one careful reading of any of the many "guides" and books that have been written on the subject will generally fix these in the mind.

In the big city amateur acting has become very much of a "fad" in society, and performances are occasionally given before select audiences by the amateurs, with stage fittings and costumes rivaling in perfection those of the professionals. Philadelphia has her Wheatley Dramatic Association (now turned into a purely social organization), from which many first class histrions have graduated. Its performances are artistic and popular.

In New York the amateurs have a home of their own—the Berkley Lyceum—as cozy and completely fitted a little theatre as one would wish to see. Some of the performances in it are worthy of the highest praise. Not long ago the New York Herald published a page article on the amateur actors and actresses of the metropolis, with portraits, and from it the pictures accompanying this are reproduced.

SAMPSON AND SANDOW.

They Are Called the Strongest Men on Earth.

The mighty giant has fallen. Sampson, once the strongest man on earth, has been forced to leave his home to Eugene Sandow, the young Pomeranian Hercules. It happened this way. For some time past Sampson and his pupil Cyclops had been giving nightly exhibitions through the city of London. Sampson of London. Sampson of London.

ferred £100 to any one who could equal Cyclops' feat, and this was really won, Oct. 25, by a young athlete named Eugene Sandow, of Kensington, Pomerania. After the defeat of Cyclops, Sampson offered

him as a representative, as one of the leaders of his party in the house, and as the friend and champion of many worthy interests and measures. For several years he devoted to the latter carriers alone an amount of labor equal to all that performed by the average congressman, and now the grateful letter carriers are to build him a monument.

Of his habits of work Mrs. Cox said a day or two ago: "When I came to look over Mr. Cox's desk, I found no unfinished business. Everything he devoted to the day of his death, excepting three letters which he had promised to write for friends who were seeking places in the New York city government. For these three letters I had addressed the envelopes, as I was in the habit of doing for all his correspondence, but he was too sick to write the inclosures."

Mrs. Cox added: "Few people know what a hard worker Mr. Cox was, and how much he was able to accomplish. I once asked him to sit down and make me a memorandum of the important legislation in which he had borne a part, simply by way of record of his life work. He replied: 'No, I cannot do that. The present is too lively and the future too tremendous to bother with the past.'"

Secretary Blaine was one of the guests at the dedication of the new Catholic university in the outskirts of the city. Among the newspaper correspondents present was a young woman society reporter who has not been long in the business, though she is as bright as a new silver dollar. Fearing that she might not be able to get anything to eat till her return home at night, she put up in a very small and very neat parcel a slice of bread and meat, with one piece of cheese and two pickles for relishes. To her surprise and delight she was invited to the dinner given the notable guests, and charged to occupy a seat directly opposite Secretary Blaine. But what to do with that luncheon! The absurdity of carrying a bread and meat lunch to a banquet so impressed the young woman that she laughed immoderately, and finally, becoming desperate, she tossed the now obnoxious parcel under the table at her feet. As the dinner was concluded and the guests were rising, the secretary of state happened round to the young woman's side. Smilingly he held out to her a fragment of her own bread and meat and pickle, saying, with a mischievous twinkle in his eye: "Better put this in your pocket to eat on the way home if you get hungry. I have tried the bread, and it is very, very good. Who made it?"

WALTER WELLMAN.

PARLOR ENTERTAINMENTS.

HERE IS A GOOD ONE CALLED "THE OLD MAIDS FROM ALASKA."

It Was Given in a Big City and It Netted the Projector Some \$300 for a Charity, but It Can Be Replaced Anywhere and on a Smaller or Larger Scale.

HE entertainment here first described was arranged and carried out successfully, in aid of a charity, by a young girl not 19, at which she netted nearly \$300, and all her performers were children with two exceptions. There was a little miscellaneous music, violin, whistling, etc., preceding a very clever sketch, which she wrote herself, calling it "The Old Maids from Alaska." During the performance the young children, dressed as old maids, went through an umbrella drill, and each recited, danced, sang or did something in a specialty way, one making a speech in deaf and dumb alphabet.

This idea could be carried out anywhere. The head one is the chief of the society of these old maids, and she has a long roll of paper which she reads off, which can be made to contain many local hits. This serves to introduce each one in her specialty, while appearing to tell why they have all decided to forever ally matrimony. Their dress is black paper caubric, with white Bishop sleeves, and they wear black Bishop caps. It requires a chair and an umbrella for each. There can be dental drill also added to this, and any other taking business, and it was a genuine success. Dumb bell drills and broomstick drills, as well as Mrs. Jarley's waxworks, "singing skewers" and spelling bees all afford a good quota of entertainment; but they are not very novel, and should be judiciously mixed with other things. A doll's parade is a very queer affair, and requires children of about 10 to 12, and they are to move about as if worked with springs and wooden joints.

There are two or three operettas which give a chance to bring in perhaps a hundred children in marches and ballets, and these are long enough to occupy an entire evening, but cannot well be undertaken except in places like Newport or Saratoga in the summer, or some very large house in the city in winter, or in school entertainments.

A very pretty and almost impromptu entertainment can be gotten up—always

ANDROMEDA AND PERSEUS. She shook up and down and twisted about a handful of bright tags and paper flowers before one end, while bright little eyes peeped in the other.

When flowers and children are abundant a most beautiful little operetta or spectacle can be gotten up, by giving each little girl the name of a flower, and a tiny bow of them, and having the boys for gardeners, birds and butterflies.

It is easy for mothers to enlarge upon the idea and to dress their children accordingly, and most attractive little matches, counter, marches, dances and flutters can be developed and children easily learn to sing in concert. Bits of suitable rhyme can be set to old songs and sung in chorus by the little tots, and it always sounds new and pretty.

The great difficulty in any of these affairs is that it is not easy to reconcile any of the performers to take a second or subordinate part, and everybody wants to have something to say as to management. There should be but one manager, and that the one who first plans the affair, though that person may afterwards relegate a certain part to some one else to attend to; and the manager should bear in mind that small children are powerful auxiliaries to success, but they must be kept in good humor, not be hungry or sleepy, and whatever they do should be in the earlier part of a programme to obtain the best results.

The programme should be made out and not changed at the caprice of any one; and if singers or other performers fall to appear, if there is no one there to carry out the breach with something unexpected, quietly drop that selection out with a word of apology. Above all, there should be no quarreling, no nervousness on the manager's part, and let every one do their best. The more original they are the better. Hu-

THE THREE GRACES. With her eyes beautiful eyes lost forever to her and the musical public, who admired her, Elzka Gerstor now lives secluded from the world in a castle situated on the summit of a mountain near the city of Joseph.

LUCKY BALDWIN. The receipts of Paris Theatres for the month of August were 2,435,184 francs, an increase of 600,000 francs over the same month during the exposition of 1878. A large share of the gain is credited to the great business done by Buffalo Bill.

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For the racing season of 1889 was a great success. The purses never were so liberal. Recapitulation of the Season's Work Upon the Eastern Track—Between a Million and a Million and a Quarter in Stakes. The Most Successful Horses.

The racing season of 1889 has been a great success. The purses have been more liberal, and the struggle between the thoroughbreds of the different racing organizations has surpassed those of former years. Some of the performances of the many brilliant equine stars have been, to say the least, sensational and extraordinary.

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