

UNSOUGHT PRAISE.

The recent railroad blockade recalls a story that a distinguished Maine gentleman tells against himself. Some years ago he was making a journey down East, when his train became snowbound. It was then evening and there was no hope of progress until daylight. But near at hand was a little village which boasted of a public hall. It was suggested that the passengers adjourn to the hall and listen to an address by their distinguished fellow-traveler.

He finally consented to do his part; the hall was warmed and lighted, and the lecture took place.

The next day the gentleman was approached by a sturdy young yeoman, who said:

You're the man who made the speech last night, ain't you?"

The identity having been established, he went on:

I want to thank you for it. I don't know when I've enjoyed myself more than I did while you were talking.

The orator experienced the genial glow which unconventional and unsought praise is wont to inspire, and he cordially took the honest fellow's hand.

Yes, the young man continued, it was a good thing. You see, my girl is on the train, and while you were lecturing she and I had the car all alone to ourselves.—Boston Record.

NOT A DUMMY.

Every old Sacramentan will remember the French millinery firm of Mme. Llanos & Co., and most of them—the ladies, especially—can recall with equal distinctness the smiling and imperturbable clerk of the fancy department of the madame's establishment, Charley Dexter. A young fellow from some backwoods region of Michigan, having come to 'Californy' to seek his fortune, called at Mme. Llanos to see his old schoolmate, Charley Dexter. In those days it was the style in shops devoted to the sale of Ladies' apparel to have a number of waxened-faced lady figures all temptingly arrayed for the display of the latest novelties. It was a dull summer afternoon when Bill dropped in on his old acquaintance and found that young gentleman listlessly loitering over the counter, happily disengaged. In the course of a reminiscent conversation the country youth used some expression that apparently jarred on Charley's fastidious ear, for he ejaculated hurriedly: "Sh!" at the same time nodding mysteriously toward some object over Bill's shoulder. The latter turned, and to his shocked amazement beheld a stately and fashionably dressed lady, who must have overheard his unlucky speech. Abashed and confused, he hurriedly whispered:

Great Scott! Charley, what shall I do?

Do? Why apologize at once! was the peremptory response.

Clearing his throat, and with a tremendous effort, the awkward and blushing offender began:

"Madam, I beg—"

Here Charley deftly swung the figure around, and poor Bill saw that the joke was on him. Peace and conversation were soon renewed, and, unperceived by either, a lady quietly entered and began examining some articles at the opposite counter. Just as the unconscious visitor had clinched some statement with another lapse into profanity, the horrified Charley glanced up and caught sight of the new-comer opposite. His "Sh!" and accompanying pantomime were genuine this time; but the truculent Bill was not to be sold twice by the same trick. Lifting his dust-covered 'oggy' dealt a practical, bucolic kick at the same time shouting:

Can't play any more of your—wooden women on me!

Fancy can but feebly picture his horror when a lovely being fixed one terrified glance on the supposed madman, and then with a wild shriek fled into the inner sanctuary to seek protection among the pretty milliner girls and their presiding goddess. It was a question of who was the most scared for the unhappy Bill shot through the front door with equal celerity and a settled sorrow at his heart that nothing but the jokers could assuage the while Charley dropped under the counter, and rolled there in an agony of mingled mirth and remorse over an accident of which he was the innocent yet guilty cause.—San Francisco.

PANTOMIME SONGS.

"ARTISTS" MAKING READY FOR THE HOLIDAYS IN LONDON.

Good Songs in Abundance and at Low Figures—Successes in the Music Halls. Wide Differences in the Public Taste. Political Verses.

The pantomime "artists" are already giving to the songs they mean to sing that attention which outsiders might fancy is only bestowed on their dresses. As a matter of fact, the dresses, and even the dances, have now become subjects of secondary consideration. The chief engagements for the coming season are "signed" by this time; where there is an important vacancy it is owing to some person engaged having "disappointed." Many lessons engage their complete pantomime company early in the summer, and their stars the Christmas before. It is common for the manager to make a round of the principal provincial theatres during one pantomime season in hope of getting a "good thing" for the next. As a rule, the comedian who has the most "fetching" topical songs is most worth looking after; this holding even when the player is a lady. One song that takes the popular ear brings more money to the manager than a 250 transformation scene, and it is not so much the song that takes as the way it is sung, the singer who "scores" in one pantomime will probably repeat his success in another.

As a profession the writing of pantomime songs would not pay. The competition is so keen that popular singers need not give an order for a new song; they may go to bed any night in confidence that a song from some of the 250 transformations sent them in the morning. Thus the singer is pretty certain to get something that will suit him sooner or later; and, of course, songs sent for approval are very cheap. Full rights can easily be got for a guinea, or even for less.

On the other hand, there are well known "shops" for the supply of the article, and the singer is measured for it, so to speak. The poet has to write to his customer's voice, to be "patriotic," or "topical," or "sentimental," according to instructions. In most cases he is both writer and composer, but songs sent on "approval" are generally without music. Five pounds is a good price for a song, even when it is ordered of a well-known writer; but once produced a popular pantomime song and the music halls will find you plenty of employment. The most successful pantomime song of recent years is a music hall ditty, in which the principal boy says to the principal girl: "Ducky darling, ducky darling, I love you." That song overran the pantomimes all over the country for a year. It is dead enough now, but the composer made a name by it, and will doubtless profit thereby for the next decade. A well-known dramatist has had some great successes with pantomime songs, such as "Wat, wat, wat," which was first heard in the music halls.

The common impression is that the writer of the pantomime writes the songs as well, or at least arranges with the manager what songs are to be introduced at certain points. He has nothing to do with it. The leading performers are entitled to introduce their own songs and dances, and that is why two songs very like each other are often sung in the same pantomime. If the local town council has been having a squabble the fact of the low comedian's introducing it into his song does not prevent the principal boy's introducing it into his. It has been said that the actor who makes himself a name in one pantomime can generally keep up his reputation. There are, nevertheless, comedians of one song, as managers occasionally learn to their cost. The comedian's attachment to a song that has made him popular during the pantomime season is often remarkable. His hope is to be allowed to sing it, with new words, perhaps, in next year's pantomime, and the manager's remembrance that "it is old" has no effect. It may be old, but "it goes down."

A comic singer whose accident makes the sole proprietor of a popular song likes to keep it to himself. He is, as a rule, a music hall singer except at pantomime time, and when his song becomes talked about it is to his advantage that it should be coupled with his name. However, the imitations that at once spring up are so like that this exclusiveness does not always pay, and so he may dispose of his rights to one or sixty or fifty other singers, and thus the same song is sung in the same way in twenty pantomimes. It does not, however, take equally well in each, and the fault is not necessarily the singer's. Just as a song may be recommended two or three times on one night and fall quite flat the next in the same theatre, so the public taste in one town differs from the public taste in another. Players who have been long on the "road" know, or at least plume themselves on knowing, how to adapt themselves to the tastes of different places.

A comedian now on tour with a burlesque company does a recitative song that takes immensely in some towns, while in others it is so little appreciated as to make him feel abashed. It contains the information that when he sang that song in California the audience flung sovereigns at him. He repeats this in so pointed a way that his hearers can hardly fail to see what he means. Sometimes they rise to his meaning at once, and pitand gallery pelt him with pence. Unless they do this there is no point in the lines that follow. When the audience is slow to assist him with his "business," coins are flung from the wings just to give them a start, but the hint is not always taken. Political songs succeed and fail in the same way. Some audiences are so taken by them that they insist on having them over again from beginning to end. Other audiences resent the introduction of politics with hisses and shouts of "No politics!" On the whole, the safest hit in a pantomime is the topical song that is all about the election of the board of guardians, or the town band, or the disappearance of the grocer round the corner, or the way in which the theatre is lit. That appeals to gallery and dress circle alike (stalls are not common in the provinces) and as soon as the comedian arrives in the town for rehearsals he sets to work to acquire the local gossip.—St. James Gazette.

Untrustworthiness of History. In a recent paper on Lord Timothy Dexter, Mr. William Cleaves Todd, of Newburyport, disposes of the tales of Dexter's sending warning guns and English Bibles to the West Indies. In illustration of the untrustworthiness of history, Mr. Todd cites Professor J. D. Butler, of Madison, Wis., whose grandfather, an eye witness, often told him, in regard to Ethan Allen's "in the name of the great Jehovah and the Continental Congress," that what the surprised commander at Ticonderoga actually heard was: "Come out of here, you old—old rat." This matches Taylor's reply to Santa Anna: "Gen. Taylor surrenders," translated by a skillful aide-de-camp from the vernacular: "Tell him to go to—L."—The Argonaut.

A writer in The Birmingham Age says the negroes in the state of Alabama will be gravitated from the farm to the factories.

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