

MANSFIELD ON AND OFF THE STAGE

Characteristic Incidents in the Famous Actor's Life.

SHYLOCK HIS BOYHOOD ROLE

Striking Prediction of British Bishop Who Saw Him Act at School—Dark Days When He Dined Off Smells—An Enemy's Sincere Compliment—Kindness to a Child.

When the late Richard Mansfield, the greatest exponent of Shakespearean drama in the United States and one of the best known actors on the American stage, was at school in England the boys gave a performance of "The Merchant of Venice," Mansfield acting Shylock. The bishop of Littlefield was a guest that day, and at the conclusion of the play he asked the youthful Shylock to come forward so that he might speak to him, says the New York Globe. Shaking the boy's hand, he said:

"Heaven forbid that I should encourage you to become an actor, but should you, if I mistake not, you will be a great one."

Many years later an interviewer asked the actor what he thought of his act.

"Since Garrick's time there has been no actor but myself," replied the actor promptly.

Where the reporter's sense of humor was it is hard to tell, for he wrote up Mr. Mansfield as a terrible example of theatrical egotism. Evidently he completely missed the twinkle in the actor's eye.

Self possession, which he had learned in adversity, never deserted him. As an example, too, of his humor, if rightly understood, it is told that at the end of one of the acts the manager, then Mr. Palmer, came into Mr. Mansfield's dressing room. "Young man, you are acting superbly," he said.

"That's what I am here for. You must excuse me; I am very busy," and Mansfield proceeded with his makeup, touching up the lines of his face for his third act.

"Can't you see how it is done?" he once said to a "super."

"Yes, sir," replied the man, "but if I could do it like that I would not be working for \$3 a week." "Three dollars a week," said the actor musingly. "Well, if you only get \$3 a week you can do it any way you like."

Following is the actor's own story of his early career told to some friends in New York several years ago:

"I went on the stage because I was poor. I had an excellent education and started life as an artist. I was living in Boston and had many friends, so I sold every picture I painted as soon as it was finished, but soon my list of friends began to decrease, and with every picture I sold I lost a friend until at last I had not a companion left and no market for my wares, and I returned to London."

"You know what the life of a young painter is like. I had to give up my art and go into business, but at the end of a year I made a dismal failure and returned to art. But I made no money and was so poor that I could not pay for my lodgings. Sometimes the landlady would shut me out, and then I would wander through the streets all night and sing ballads. If I got a few pennies I would invest them in hot potatoes, and after thoroughly warming my hands and pockets I would proceed to make a meal and warm my stomach."

A grim smile stole over his face at this thought, and then he added:

"Some people wonder why I am not one of the boys. They do not know that I have been through it all. Before Beerbohm Tree ever thought of going on the stage I stood among the cabbage in the market at 4 o'clock in the morning singing songs. My great chum in those days was young Hepworth Dixon. Sometimes we used to sing together, and often when his father would shut him out he would come to spend the night with me. That was before my landlady locked me out. At that period of my life I often dined on smells. There was a famous brewery on Cheapside, and I used to go there every morning because I thought the smell of hops strengthening. For a second course I would stand in front of a butcher shop, then the baker's."

"Sometimes for days I lived on smells, but once in awhile I was lucky enough to receive an invitation to dine with some of my friends at the Savage club. I was one of the original members, and the only time in my life that I ever got drunk was there. Receiving an invitation to dine, with eager steps I hastened to the club as fast as my weak condition would permit, but my strength gave out, and I arrived just after the last course had been cleared away. The boys were drinking wine, and foolishly I joined them and was soon as 'drunk as a lord.'"

"The first time I was ever on any stage was at a German read, all the way an entertainment something like the theater, only all love was expunged from the two short plays that constituted the performance. To give it a semblance of parlor entertainment there was always piano music between the plays, and so it was that bishops and ministers of the church attended and applauded. Young Hepworth had a great deal of influence in society, and once when one of the performers in a German read was taken ill he obtained the position for me. Faint with

hunger, I approached the piano. I attempted to play, was too weak and fainted dead away, falling forward on the keys. I was dismissed and for some time longer continued to starve.

"Few persons know that my play 'Monsieur' is taken from life—my own. The critics object to my writing plays now, but once I wrote a sketch for a German read and had it returned with the remark that it was excellent, but contained too much love and might offend some of their patrons. So I was out that much writing paper."

"At last, in despair, I called on W. S. Gilbert and asked him to use his influence in my behalf. He took a fancy to me, and when 'Pinafore' was finished I was sent out in the provinces as Sir Joseph Porter, and under D'Oyly Carte's stingy management I played the leading role in the opera for three years at a salary of £3 a week. One day I determined to go to London and try my luck. I had become a great favorite in the provinces, so without a penny more than my fare I boarded the train. The company all came to see me off. I was universally liked then, but things are different now, I don't know why."

"As the train was rolling out an elderly lady, a member of our company, thrust a paper into my hand. It was a five pound note, a small fortune to one of that company. I returned it soon afterward and have often looked for the old lady to give her an engagement. She was a crank. Only cranks do kind deeds in real life."

"I made a success in London and have never known real want since."

When Richard Mansfield traveled he traveled in state. He had a train of his own for the company and production. He enjoyed indulging himself in quizzical whims when speeding across the country, and many a good story is told of the Mansfield tour, says the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

One day Mr. Mansfield's special train of nine cars was whizzing through Kansas, running west from Kansas City. The actor's own private car was, against his usual custom, attached to the extreme rear of the train, so that, like a whiplash, it got the full benefit of all the speed.

Three of the star's Kansas City friends were dining with him in his car. He was on his way to open in Denver, and they had come out a couple of hundred miles from the Kaw to wish him good speed on his western trip. The whole party was at the table, and Mr. Mansfield was lifting a spoonful of soup to his lips when the train plunged round a sudden curve. The effect was somewhat disconcerting, and Mr. Mansfield called his old waiter.

"Jefferson," he said, "I would like to speak to the conductor."

The conductor came back through the train, took off his cap and asked what was wanted.

"How fast is the train running just now?" asked the actor.

"About sixty-eight miles an hour, sir."

"Well, aren't you afraid," purred the tragedian, "that my guests will get indigestion by eating so fast?"

The conductor went forward, and in a few minutes the speed of the train slackened perceptibly.

Mansfield had, like many other men, a host of enemies. One of these enemies paid him a very sincere compliment a few years ago, says the Chicago Record-Herald.

Mr. Mansfield was playing "Beau Brummel" and the enemy, a stage carpenter, perched at him from the wings of a Cleveland theater, scornfully at first, but gradually less scornfully. And as the act progressed the carpenter, though he hated the actor, became more and more absorbed. He stood silent and rigid. He watched every gesture; he observed every intonation of the star. And finally, when the curtain fell, he exclaimed, with flushed cheeks and a little tremor in his voice: "Damn him, that man could act a gridiron."

When Mansfield was playing "Richard III." a little girl in his company acting the part of the Princess of Wales was taken seriously ill, says John R. Rathorn in the Chicago Record-Herald. He at once sent the child to a private hospital, brought her mother to look after her there and continued her salary, besides footing all the bills. As the weeks went on the child grew worse, and it was seen that she could not recover. Her one sorrow was that she had not seen Mr. Mansfield play Beau Brummel. They told him of her wish, and one day when the company was filling an engagement 150 miles away he slipped aboard a train, bundled in a heavy overcoat and a few hours later was at the bedside of the child.

When he took his coat off the doctors and nurses saw that he had his complete Beau Brummel costume on underneath it. Then he began to act some of the principal scenes of the play, the little patient watching him in quiet delight. He slipped back and rejoined his company just in time for the opening of the next night's performance. None of them knew till months later what he had done.

CLYDE FITCH ON MANSFIELD

Real Actor Whose Glory Will Always Remain His Own, Says Playwright. Clyde Fitch, the playwright, when asked for his personal opinion of the late Richard Mansfield, the distinguished actor, said:

"My first feeling upon hearing of the death of Mr. Mansfield is one of personal grief. My thoughts go back to the production of 'Beau Brummel,' which started me on my career.

"Nobody was ever pushing him by the elbow. He was a marked and special case. Mansfield stood absolutely alone. Booth and Jefferson held their places by love as well as by what they had accomplished, but Jefferson did not accomplish what Mansfield did. Mansfield did not have a lovable or affectionate personality. He was intellectual achievement, but he had his own magnetism, which made the few who did love him love him first and last."

"He was a genius. The very things for which he was criticized were the marks of genius. He was a powerful egoist, and that made it difficult for him in the management of his people. I have seen him play every part in a rehearsal to show his people how each part should be played, and yet he almost paralyzed them. But he would have loved to be loved. He was too big a man to stoop to little sycaranthic tricks to win affection.

"He was a real actor, a real artist, and big in both. We cannot compare him with anybody. Although a magnificent character actor, he was too complex to be limited by any such definition, for he was as great a tragic power. His Richard III. was the finest I have ever seen. No mere character actor could have done his Peer Gynt."

"There was no emotion that he could not express. Although finished and subtle in his work, he had a tremendous force which shot through everything he did, giving angles to his acting. I do not say that critically. The angles belonged there. At first he fought everybody—the public, actors, critics, managers and players—not because of any small irritability, but from a big need of friction that in the history of the world has always been necessary to the accomplishment of really great things. No one gets anywhere worth going if the road is too easy. It was that that made him succeed."

"The noble place he made for himself in the theater must stay empty. Surely other actors will accomplish in their way what he did in his, but Richard Mansfield's glory will always remain his own."

WORLD'S ANGLING RECORD.

Dr. R. J. Held Casts Quarter Ounce Bait 131 Feet 6 Inches.

Members of the Anglers' club of New York did some great bait casting in the semi-monthly competitions of the club at the pool in Central park the other day, says the New York Times. In casting for distance with the quarter ounce bait a new world's record, not only for amateurs, but professionals, was made by Dr. R. Johnson Held, who, from scratch, cast the bait 131 feet 6 inches. H. Freeman, with a handicap, was second, with 120 feet 6 inches. Dr. Held averaged 121 1-10 feet, which is also a new record.

With the half ounce bait, E. Care, one of the big handicap men, had the best cast, 107 feet, with M. H. Smith second.

Novel Railroad Scheme.

Turkey is going to build a railway on postage stamps. Wide awake philatelists will provide the sleepers—and the rails, says the London Express. The scheme says nothing of the ballast. The Turkish government will dispose during September of a collection of government stamps numbering 17,000, 600. The collection contains specimens of current stamps of the realm and also specimens which are valuable from a collector's point of view. There are also a number of eastern Roumelian stamps. The sale will be by tender. Each Turkish embassy and legation is supplied with albums containing specimens of the stamps and also copies of the conditions of sale. The proceeds of the sale will form a nucleus for the building fund of the new railway to be constructed between Damascus and Beirut.

Seeking Fire Fighters for Panama.

A letter has been received from the secretary of the Panama canal commission by Chief Engineer James R. Hopkins of the Somerville (Mass.) fire department, the oldest fire chief in the country, requesting that he recommend men for firemen at Panama, says the Boston Transcript. The men wanted must be between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five, and they are to receive \$100 a month, with free transportation from New York to New Orleans and six weeks' vacation each year. Since the fact became known that the veteran chief was appointed a scout for the Panama fire department he has been besieged with requests from young men, all ambitious to go to the Isthmus.

Irrigation Congress Innovation.

A novel feature of the fifteenth national irrigation congress, which will be held in Sacramento, Cal., will be the singing of the "Irrigation Ode" by the Mormon tabernacle choir, says the New York Tribune. The choir, which is composed of 200 trained voices, is rarely heard outside of the great Mormon tabernacles at Ogden and Salt Lake City. The singers will be taken to the congress by the Utah delegation, and their attendance will be an expression of the enthusiasm of the people of that state for the irrigation movement. An expenditure of \$10,000 is involved.

EVERYTHING HAS TWO SIDES.

A Statesville Lawyer Takes Issue With Views Expressed to Law Applicants by Chief Justice Clark.

(Statesville Landmark.)

The other day Chief Justice Clark made a speech to the applicants for law license in which he took occasion to pay his respects to the study of the common and the civil law. He informed the class that the questions pronounced by the court were calculated to test their knowledge of the law as it exists today, and not what it was 150 years ago in Blackstone's days.

The plain inference from his talk was that a study of the elementary principles of the common law was a waste of time and energy.

The speech soon ed pretty good to laymen, but a lawyer friend who had just read it and who called our attention to it, said: "Judge Clark gave the class bad advice when he depreciated the study of the common law. His illustration about the study of law and medicine was particularly unfortunate. What would you think of a medical examiner, said the judge, who would quiz his class about the doses of Easulapins and that other old dose? (that's the idea, but not the words.) Everybody knows that there's no such thing as science of medicine. The whole thing is a study of the human body, its functions and its ailments—experimental, pure and simple, new discoveries every day. Hence, a medical book of a decade ago is out of date—the newest and latest is always the best."

"The science of the law is just the opposite—it is a science of precedents. All human government is based upon law, and freedom settles slowly down from precedent to precedent. The law of today that is of any account, is of an exceedingly slow growth, the seed may have been planted a thousand years ago at Rynnymede, and if a lawyer doesn't waste some time over the 'black letter books,' he will never be a learned lawyer; he may know that 'thus the law is written,' but he will never know why it is so written and he will never understand its reason and philosophy."

The lawyer also said that Judge Clark had formed an opinion about the great charter, wholly different from that of the balance of the world. "Is it possible," said he, "that all history is mistaken about those brave men who forced the charter of English liberty from King John MacAulay prais'd them because they didn't say 'we, the great Barons' shall do so and so—or shall not suffer this or that—but they said 'nullus liber homo'—no free man shall be despoiled. It is a bold undertaking, and late in the day, even for Judge Clark to tackle magna charta. What did Jefferson mean by uttering in the declaration of independence that 'all men were created free and equal?' Was he alluding to the 100 negro slaves on his plantation, or did he mean white men?"

There was one question our legal friend said he could answer with his eyes shut, viz: Under what circumstances can a plaintiff recover for mental anguish in North Carolina? Answer—"When the Western Union Telegraph Company is the defendant."

"The chief justice is a great man in many respects—he himself has the broad culture derived from the study of 'black letter lore,' and nearly every thing else, and he should have given the class better advice." This is the substance of what the lawyer said. Maybe the lawyer was right.

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