

SIDE LIGHTS ON A BUSY LIFE

Recollections of the Career of the Master Interpreter of Shakespeare.

INTERESTING STORIES OF EDWIN BOOTH

First and Last Appearance on the Stage. His Generous Characteristic and His Home Life—Saved Robert Lincoln from Death.

Innumerable are the stories told illustrating the gentle, generous and affectionate character of Edwin Booth. Of the millions who witnessed his masterly interpretation of Shakespeare's works and revered him as an artist and man, comparatively few knew him in the calm of home life.

First Appearance.

As is well known Edwin's father, Junius Brutus Booth, was averse to his son's going on the stage, but had yielded to the boy's evident bent. His first success was made in the small part of Tresselt, in "Richard III." to his father's Richard. The old man was dressed for the part when the boy came in. Junius had his feet upon the table in his dressing room and began to catechize his son: "Who was Tresselt?"

"A messenger from the battlefield."

"What was his mission?"

"To bear the news of the defeat of the king's army."

"How did he make the journey?"

"On horseback."

"Do you know that you are supposed to have been riding hard and far?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where are your spurs?"

"I haven't any."

"Take mine," holding out one booted leg.

The boy took the spurs and went on for his little scene with King Henry VI. When he returned his father was still sitting negligently in the chair and smoking a cigar.

"Give me my spurs," he said, again holding out his leg, and this was all the comment that Edwin Booth's first performance ever elicited from the career whom he idolized. He looked subsequently, though, that his father had been down at the wing and had watched his first effort with evident interest and satisfaction, and then hastened back to his nonchalant pose in the dressing room.

Plays Star for His Father.

Tradition says that the elder Booth gave his son the first chance to play a star part. He declared positively that he could not go to the theater; that he was too ill.

"But what will they do without you?" asked the boy. "Who can they substitute for the last minute?"

"Go on and play it yourself," curtly replied his father.

Edwin could not believe that his father was in earnest, but the old man insisted. So he dressed for the part in his father's clothes, though they were far too big for him. The excited and trembling youth was fairly pushed on at his first entrance. The burst of applause with which the audience thought to welcome the elder Booth died out when it was found that a tyro had been substituted without an apology. But the young man had so thoroughly absorbed every word, look and tone of his father that he soon earned for himself the interest of the audience.

When Edwin returned to the hotel he was questioned coldly by his father as to what success he had had. Apparently the elder Booth had not stirred from the room, but it is a generally accepted fact that the elder Booth sat in the audience and witnessed the performance.

A Rare Welcome.

The assassination of Lincoln by his brother, John Wilkes Booth, threw a cloud like a pall over Edwin's professional prospects, and many predicted that he would never venture upon the stage again. But on January 3, 1866, at the Winter Garden theater, in New York, he confronted an immense audience assembled to give him such a welcome as few actors ever have enjoyed. The initiatory speeches between the subordinate dramatist personae were heard unheeded. As the moment approached for the scene to be shifted and Hamlet to come on, a profound silence brooded over the audience. The king and queen entered, surrounded by their retinue.

A moment more and the pale face of a graceful figure which every theater-goer knew so well appeared at the back of the stage. A shout, eight times repeated, went from an audience that rose convulsed with convulsed features and streaming eyes and waving hats and handkerchiefs. In the midst of this supreme moment the actor stood mute and motionless, replying finally by a brief, majestic obscitance.

Booth's Courtship.

A pretty story is told of the courtship of Edwin Booth and Mary McVicker. According to the story he and she were playing together in the sweet old love-play of Shakespeare. He was Romeo; she was Juliet. The pretty tale of the old theatre-goers of twenty odd years ago has it that the stage Romeo and the stage Juliet forgot their acting in the love they felt for each other, and made not stage love, but real love during the pretty scene. This story is told further, that during the old story course of the play Edwin Booth was telling pretty Mary McVicker the old, old story, that was just as old even when gentle Willie Shakespeare wrote of Romeo and Juliet. And the same old romance of the gentle Romeo and Juliet, he told you that Romeo and Juliet has never been done in our day as Booth and Mary McVicker did it in those days, nearly twenty-five years ago.

Sentiment and Honor.

No man was more generous to those who played with him than Edwin Booth says the New York Evening Sun. He claimed nothing consciously for himself in that distribution of place and importance behind the footlights that his part did not demand. At the height of his writing career he was playing an engagement with a western star, and he relinquished his own repertory that he might include hers. Together, they played such plays as "The Stranger" and "Claude Melnotte." No greater test of Booth's amiability could be offered than that of Claude Melnotte. He detested the part. He had a chronic inability to remember the long speech in which Claude Melnotte describes his palace on Lake Como.

Booth's Last Appearance.

The record of Booth's last performance was made by William Winter in the New York Tribune of April 5, 1891, in the following words: Edwin Booth ended his season yesterday afternoon at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, giving a performance of "Hamlet," and this was followed with deep interest and respect with affectionate admiration by a multitude of ladies who could be crowded into that great theater.

Every scene was observed with a vigilance which is keener than that of critical taste—the vigilance of the heart.

How much and how truly Edwin Booth is respected and loved might readily be seen in the faces of that eager throng.

Mr. Booth played the part with that mood of poetic exaltation, sensitive melancholy and exquisite refinement for which his acting of the part has always been distinguished, and also in that tone of settled spiritual pain—that atmosphere of profound, inexorable grief, which is inseparable from a right embodiment of Shakespeare's conception. Poetry in the art of acting cannot be carried further than it is by Edwin Booth; and as he now passes into his chosen retirement, whether it be long or short, we can but feel that there will be a darkness upon many fields of the Shakespeare drama until his gentle, gracious figure comes once more upon the scene, and his voice of eloquence and of beauty speaks to us again.

After the last curtain the applause was wildly enthusiastic and continued for a long time. The audience rose, and there was loud cheering, and Mr. Booth was recalled again and again. In response to the last of those calls—the sympathy and sincerity of which could not be doubted—the tragedian came forward and spoke as follows:

"Ladies and Gentlemen: I scarcely know what to say, and, indeed, I can only make my usual speech—of thanks and gratitude. I thank you for your great kindness. It will never be forgotten. I hope that this is not the last time I shall have the honor of appearing before you. When I come again I hope I shall be able to give greater attention than I have ever given to whatever part I may play. I hope that my health and strength may be improved, so that I can serve you better, and I shall always try to deserve the favor you have shown."

Mr. Booth withdrew amid copious plaudits, and the audience slowly dispersed.

The words of Horatio, so often applied to Edwin Booth as Hamlet, apply to the man himself today.

"Now, 'twas a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince; And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!"

The Correct Answer.

A Detroit Free Press man some time ago concluded he would go for an office in Washington, and the first thing he knew he was confronted by a civil service examination. He went through the form, handed in his paper and the next day the examiner called him up.

"You have omitted an answer to one question," he said.

"Which one is that?"

"This: 'What railroad would you take going from Detroit to Washington?'"

"Can you answer it or do you want to let it go?"

"Oh, I can answer it," said the applicant with confidence.

"Well, tell me and I'll write it in for you."

"The one that would give me a pass," responded the frank young man, and the examiner congratulated him.

A Sailor in Court.

A sailor was a witness and the cross-examining lawyer asked:

"Do you know the plaintiff or defendant?"

"Witness—Now, what's that?"

"Lawyer—You don't know the meaning of plaintiff and defendant?"

"Now."

"And yet you would give testimony against the plaintiff? The witness is incompetent from ignorance, your honor."

"'A vast heaven,' shipmate. Stand athwart ships and let me ask you a question."

"Go ahead."

"What is afloat of the binnacle?"

"What has that to do with the case? I don't know."

"A pretty lawyer, ye be. Any bloody landlubber ought to know that the compass is afloat of the binnacle."

BOOKS AND PERIODICALS.

Among the magazines especially devoted to the entertainment of the young is "The Youth's Journal," and the June number is especially interesting. It contains a number of the best of stories and poems. "The Youth's Journal," Pittsburg, Pa.

The Esoteric, which devotes itself to the promulgation of the doctrines of "higher occultism" or spiritualism, has just published its sixth volume with the June number. The magazine is ably edited in its peculiar form of crankiness, and the drawers of the occult have time to follow its lead, and do no harm in the world. Esoteric Publishing company, Appleton, Cal.

Mr. Ford, who has just been issued from Carthage college for \$120.00, Carthage, Ill.

It is a question worthy of some consideration as to the best method of reproducing and preserving such features of the world's fair exhibitions and exhibits as are best worth preserving. To gather, shelter and properly display such features, the results of the achievements of civilization, at a cost of \$50,000,000 or \$60,000,000, only in a brief period, when the buildings are taken down and the exhibits are lost, is to have preserved no proper representation or description of the brilliant though fleeting spectacle, would be a serious mistake. Various methods have been proposed, but one way in which this can be done, and that in the form of a book, print and pictures about equal parts, is neither so large as to be cumbersome, yet large enough to do the subject full justice. Such is the plan of The Book of the Fair, to be issued in twenty-five parts of forty imperial folio pages each, by the Bancroft company, Auditorium building, Chicago. The most thorough and elaborate preparation of these subjects is to produce what should be in the highest sense a work of art and of utility, a book which should be at once beautiful and useful. The best method proposed is to have the best artist selected to illustrate the text, which is by Hubert Howe Bancroft. We have here, then, the history and description of the great exhibition, in a form of known character and repute, aided and adorned by the most beautiful pictures that can be produced. It is safe to say that in no other form could the great exposition be so well presented and preserved.

Phillip Brooks' memorial sermon delivered by his brother, Rev. Arthur Brooks, D.D., New York City, has just been issued in book form in Harper's Black and White series. Harper & Bro., New York.

No. 2 of Western Athletics comes with a frontispiece, reproduced blue print of the Denver Athletic club, bicycle division. This new journal of amateur sports, though small, is well printed and full of interest. Denver, Colo.

The American Economist of May 27 is advertising the fact that the soap used by the House of Parliament is made in Chicago and not in Canada, and the reason given is that soap made in this than to use Canadian soap. New York.

James Schouler in his new life of Thomas Jefferson says he has tried to incorporate a great many facts into his history of the American that hitherto had not been known to the general public. The chapters in relation to the writing of the Declaration of Independence are especially interesting. The book will certainly deserve an honored place in the series, "Makers of America." The author dwells particularly on the sympathetic side of Mr. Jefferson's character and makes one acquainted with his fanciful pet theories of life. Dodd, Mead & Co., New York.

The current Literary Digest has a condensation of Hedwig Bender's paper on George Eliot, in which such glowing tribute is paid to this poor among women writers. Astor Place, New York.

J. M. Barrie's last book, "Two of Them," starts with a pretty little love story as the first of them, and the rest of the book is the remaining sketches included in the volume is "My Husband's Book" and Mr. Barrie's admirers will have no fault to find with any of them, as his style is so simple and makes most anything readable. Lovell, Coryell & Co., East Sixteenth street, New York.

In Harper's Black and White series we

find a fine biography of George William Curtis in the shape of an address delivered by J. W. Chadwick before the Institute of Arts and Sciences, at the University of Chicago.

The Review of Reviews for June thinks that the hard times and financial depression of the country are caused by the professional politicians, and that the kind of legislation which the country would have a better effect than such prolonged uncertainty. Each department in this principle of publications is replete with information as usual. New York, N. Y.

Number 23 of "The World's Fair" is now ready for circulation. Every part of the great exposition will be fully illustrated in this publication. McVicker's theater building, New York, N. Y.

Continental Union, a pamphlet presenting strong arguments in favor of the annexation of Canada to the United States, is received. The book is published by the Continental Union Association at Ontario and will be sent free on application to any one desiring to read it. Room 54, Canada Life building, New York, N. Y.

The Keynote has been purchased by E. Lyman Bill, editor and publisher of the Music Trade Review, and will be presented in an enlarged and improved form, with departments devoted to drama, literature and aesthetics. It is to be essentially a home journal, 3 East Fourteenth street, New York City.

The World for the week has had good editorial matter on the subject of charges at the Chicago hotels during the World's fair. The report that these charges are being denied and the fact that the hotel World, Chicago, southeast corner Van Buren street and Pacific avenue.

Astronomy and Astrophysics for June is on hand with a full quota of scientific articles of value to its many readers. One by H. A. Howe on "Experiments in Electric Lighting" is especially interesting. The magazine is too well known to need anything but brief mention. Carlton College, Northfield, Minn.

The Book Buyer for June has a portrait and biographical sketch of John Ruskin. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

According to the Fur Trade Review, just received, the correct thing this winter in seal skin will be a rather long cape with a fur collar and pleated skirt, which will give a very broad effect to that portion of the body. Fur Trade Review, 695 Broadway, New York.

"Town Topics" sends out a little volume of tales, poetry and alleged jokes under the suggestive title of "Six Months in Hades." It will not only be a good read, but a good one to read to the shoulder, which will give a very broad effect to that portion of the body. Fur Trade Review, 695 Broadway, New York.

The Manitowish Journal issues this week its eighth edition of 25,000 copies, beautifully illustrated, in celebration of its eighth birthday. The number is devoted entirely to the beauties and advantages of Manitowish and is distributed at the World's fair. Journal, Manitowish, Colo.

Meehan's Monthly for June contains an exquisitely colored plate showing how "Peter's Farm" grows. This publication is a great delight to lovers of flowers, especially of wild flowers. Thomas Meehan's Sons, Germantown, Pa.

The Mother's Nursery Guide for June is of unusual interest to mothers of very young children, containing an able article on the diseases of the little ones, and showing that if children are protected during certain years they are less susceptible to contagions and not likely to have them at all, in contradistinction to the generally accepted theory that it is dangerous to run the risk of adults being exposed and that it is much safer to have it over while the children are young. Babyhood Publishing Co., New York.

"Our Little Ones," with pretty engravings and nice coarse print which so delight the children is here bright and early for June. The frontispiece is called "Children's Corner" and is by Mrs. W. L. Russell Publishing Co., Sumner St. Boston.

The Yale & Towne Co. have just issued a new catalogue, Stamford, Conn.

We present in receipt of a copy of Frank I. Herriott's paper, "Sir William Temple on the Origin and Nature of Government," delivered before the American Academy of Political Science, Philadelphia, in 1887. The "Bearings" for the week telling all about bicycles is received. Chicago.

The mountain in Franconia, Vermont, is the subject of a book by Charles F. Johnson, a beautiful in conception and past criticism in execution. The illustrations are in the highest degree artistic. 10 Central street, Boston.

Book News is here for the months of vacations, and all the new books receive proper attention. The portrait of Hiram Howard is included in the number. The sketch of the great Shakespearean student, D. Appleton company, Bond street, New York.

The Political Science Quarterly for June opens up with a review of the late international monetary conference, by President E. Benjamin Andrews of the faculty of political science of the University of Chicago. The importance and importance of international action to strengthen the financial status of the world is made apparent and a statement of the proposals submitted at the conference is of great interest. Ginn & Co., New York.

Andrew Carnegie gives us a look ahead in the time when the great American Review in which he proposes the American Review of Great Britain and the United States. His glowing picture is a "fairly tale" of the great things that our country has achieved perfect industrial, as in the present economic conditions they stand in antithetical relations to the present state of affairs. The review is an attempt to demonstrate "the present competence of the many is taken from the few." The reviewer is not a man who is rewarded is the full sum and substance on which he bases his quixotic comment of the subject as far as it goes, but stops short at the end of the review. The notes and comments in this issue are of more than ordinary interest.

The "We folk" all over the country will be interested in Elizabeth Harrison's story of Christopher Columbus, just issued in pamphlet form by the Kindergarten college, Chicago.

The second volume of "A History of the English People," by J. R. Green, gives us the story of English life, beginning with the latter part of the fourteenth century. It follows up the varied movements of crown and party, aristocracy, Parliament and also the powers across the channel—all of which were forces more or less in continuous clash, either engaged in open war or secret plot or counterplot, through the fourteenth century were being ground and squeezed and ground, now depressed under tyranny and then again stimulated by success in resistance until, under the influence of the re-emergent sturdy, independent spirit that marks their later character, centering its plot and march of ideas in the story of the people take their course through the intellectual dawn when feudalism declining merged into a hunger for popular rights and the rise of the national government, which followed the preaching of John Ball and culminated in the unsuccessful revolt led by Wat Tyler. It takes us through the cruel and bloody struggle for religious liberty followed by a prolonged struggle for religious liberty repressed by Woolsey, but finally triumphant through the mere incident of the Reformation, and the rise of the parliament authority when Henry sought a divorce from Catherine, terminating in the assumption of religious authority by the crown. Thus it takes us through the dangerous period of the reformation conducted with such masterly shrewdness by Elizabeth. Of particular interest are the closing chapters touching the intellectual development of English literature when the intense mental energies before spent in wars and in the march of ideas in the story of the people take their course through the intellectual dawn when feudalism declining merged into a hunger for popular rights and the rise of the national government, which followed the preaching of John Ball and culminated in the unsuccessful revolt led by Wat Tyler. 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