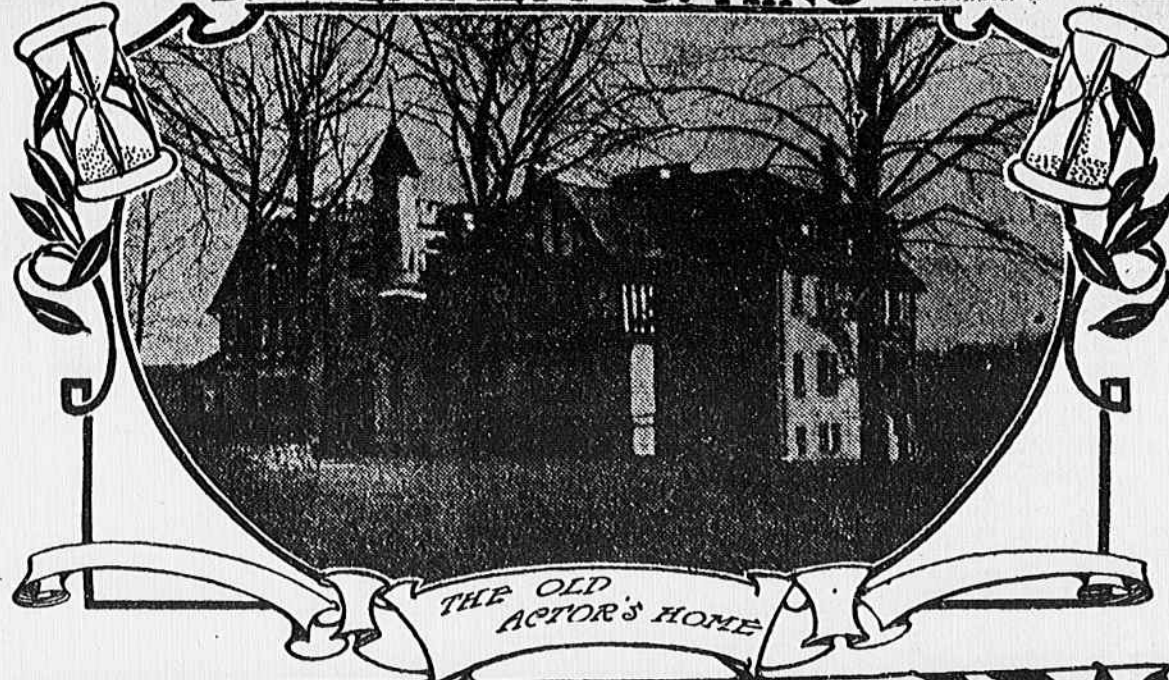


What Becomes of Old Actors

By EMMETT C. KING

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IN the winter of 1882 the theatrical managers of New York and Brooklyn decided that, in order to relieve the many cases of distress reported throughout the theatrical profession, it was necessary to create a permanent fund which would be immediately available for the purpose. This fund was to be known as the "Actors' Fund," but as it was to be raised by the benefit performances of all classes connected with the business of public amusements, it would be devoted, with reservation, to any and all persons who have been connected with said amusements, in any capacity whatsoever.

Benefit performances were given at the principal theaters in New York and Brooklyn on a certain day for the purpose of creating a foundation for the fund. The receipts from the sale of tickets and donations for these performances were \$39,335.80. Among the largest donations were: James Gordon Bennett, \$10,000; John Jacob Astor, \$2,500; Edwin Booth, \$1,000.

The fund was incorporated according to the laws of the state, June 8, 1882, and on July 15th a permanent organization was effected with the



Following officers: President, Lester Wallack; vice-president, A. M. Palmer; secretary, Daniel Frohman; treasurer, Theodore Moss. The board of trustees was: Lester Wallack, Edwin Booth, Joseph Jefferson, M. H. Mailory, Lawrence Barrett, H. C. Miner, W. E. Sinn, A. M. Palmer, Edward Harrigan, William Henderson, John F. Poole, P. T. Barnum, W. J. Florence, William Birch, J. K. Emmett and J. H. Haverly. The counsel for the fund was A. J. Dittenhoefer.

The report of the secretary for the first year of the fund's existence showed a disbursement of \$12,349.07. Relief had been given to over four hundred actors in different parts of the Union, and thirty-two had been buried in California, Texas and other parts of the country. Thus the fund had prevented the sick and needy from seeking charity, and had given respectable interment to those who would otherwise have been buried in pauper's graves.

One day in the spring of 1900 Louis Aldrich, an actor, and Al. Hayman, a theatrical manager, sat in the latter's office in the Empire Theater, New York:

"The actors' fund has at last passed resolutions approving my plan to build a home for old actors," said Aldrich. "You know that I have been agitating this scheme for years, with little or no encouragement; nobody believes it feasible, on account of the expense. I believe now, as I always have, that I can make a success of it, if I can only get a substantial sum to start my subscription. You've made a good deal of money out of the theatrical business, Al; give me something tangible for a starter."

"How much will you require, altogether?" Hayman asked.

"It will take about one hundred thousand dollars," was the reply.

"How much do you think I ought to give?"

"Oh, about ten thousand dollars."

"Well," replied Hayman, "I'll give you ten thousand dollars, if the dramatic profession will raise ninety thousand."

"I'm afraid we can't raise that much right away," Aldrich said; "but I believe we could raise fifty thousand now, and the balance later."

"All right," said Hayman, "I'll give you ten thousand, if you'll raise fifty thousand."

"That's a bargain," exclaimed Aldrich. "Give me your check, and if I don't raise the fifty thousand, I'll return it."

The check for ten thousand dollars was given to Aldrich, and he took it to the editor of the New York Herald, who agreed to hold the money and receive further donations. The next day the Herald announced that it had ten thousand dollars as a nucleus for a fund to build a home for actors, and would receive subscriptions. The response was magic. Money poured in by mail, express, telegraph and cable. In twenty days the subscription reached fifty-five thousand dollars, besides the original ten thousand, and the books were closed for the time being.

The matter was allowed to rest until the spring of 1901, when a number of benefit performances were given in New York, Philadelphia and Chicago to raise additional money needed to complete the work so auspiciously begun.

The committee entrusted with the selection of a site for the home purchased "Beechblawn," the twenty-acre estate of Richard Penn Smith at West Brighton, Staten Island. The building was started, and on May 8, 1902, the Actors' Fund home was opened and dedicated with imposing ceremonies. The address of the day was made by Jefferson.

"The dramatic profession owes to the fund much more than it does to any single benefactor for the possession of this beautiful home," he said. "I have thought of the scheme for years. No one else

believed it feasible, but Aldrich never lost faith in his ability to carry it to a successful conclusion.

In this ideal abode are assembled thirty-one former votaries of the sock and buskin. They are the Romeos, Melottes, Rosalinds and Camilles of bygone days. They were the idols of your fathers and your grandfathers;—yes, and some of your great-grandfathers; for none is admitted to the home under fifty-five, and many of the inmates are octogenarians.

On a winter's evening the silver-haired women are accustomed to gather in the parlor or library, and over their sewing or crocheting tell once more of the beauty and charm of Adelaide Nelson, the wonderful characterizations of Lucile Western, and sublime genius of Charlotte Cushman; while downstairs in the billiard or card room the men have gone back to play again with Davenport, McCullough, Warren, Owens, Burton and the peerless Forrest. Jefferson, Barrett and Edwin Booth are spoken of casually; they belong too much to the present.

"Ah! there are no tragedians like Forrest nowadays," one veteran sighs in a voice that suggests the ghost in Hamlet.

"And no comedians like Burton," deploras another.

"No, nor any pantomimists like George Fox; the art died with him," laments a third.

"There were giants in those days," if these veterans are to be believed; and who shall gain say them? None can; and surely none would care to.

Two married couples grace the home, refuting the often heard remark, "There are no happy marriages in the profession." They are Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Chester and Mr. and Mrs. George Morton. Mr. and Mrs. Chester have been married forty-seven years, and have seldom been separated during their long connection with the stage. Mr. and Mrs. Morton have been married a somewhat shorter time than the Chesters.

The oft-repeated question, "Are they happy?" is well answered in the following incident. An old friend of one of the couples mentioned extended an invitation to them to visit him and his family at their country home. The pair replied, thanking him for his invitation and apologizing for not accepting, but stating that they were so happy in their new home that they could not bear the thought of leaving it, even for a short time.

One of the most interesting figures in this unique household is Harry Langdon—"Handsome Harry" they called him in the days when he played dashing parts opposite Adelaide Nelson, Charlotte Cushman and Eliza Logan. Though well into his eightieth year, Mr. Langdon was reading a book without glasses when I was introduced to him.

"No, I have never felt the need of glasses," he said in answer to my question regarding it. "I may have to get some later, but now I read by either daylight or artificial light without any inconvenience."

"Tell me something about Forrest, Mr. Langdon," I asked him; "some anecdotes; if you can think of any."

"There are so many," he replied, "that it is hard to think where to begin. One that has been told often, and sometimes attributed to other people, really occurred while I was present. A young actor was rehearsing a part, but did not seem to grasp the proper meaning of the lines. Forrest finally lost his patience, and after rehearsing the scene for the young man with all his tragic power, turned to him and exclaimed: 'There, that's the way it ought to be done—why don't you do it like that?'"

"If I could do it like that, Mr. Forrest," the

actor replied, "I wouldn't be working for six dollars a week."

"Forrest was a bad sailor, and once, when we were making a water trip between two coast towns, the sea became choppy and the governor had to go below, where he suffered all the misery of seasickness. Finally he sent for the captain to come to his state-room."

"How much is this old tub of yours worth?" he groaned as the skipper appeared.

"I don't know exactly, Mr. Forrest," was the reply; "why do you ask?"

"Because I want to buy it and chain it up to a rock where it can't move," roared Forrest.

"E. L. Davenport was one of the greatest actors this country ever produced," continued Mr. Langdon. "For versatility he has never had an equal; he could do a song and dance with as much grace as any specialist in that line, and turn round and play Hamlet and Brutus with almost any of them. Davenport was a great gayer; his nature was sunny and he loved fun. Lawrence Barrett was the antithesis of Davenport; dignity and austerity were his most marked characteristics. Davenport was playing Brutus to Barrett's Cassius on one occasion. In the first act of the play Brutus says to Cassius:

"Till then, my noble friend, chew upon this." At this point Brutus and Cassius clasp hands. As their hands met, Cassius felt something soft and mushy being squeezed into his hand by the noble Brutus. A slimy substance oozed through his fingers and dropped off on the floor; it was a ripe tomato, which Brutus had given Cassius to 'chew upon.' Barrett could not resist the ridiculousness of the situation, and had to turn his back to the audience to hide his laughter."

Elle Germon—dashing, laughing, laughter-making Elle Germon, of the Wallack Stock Company, and many other metropolitan companies—is a recent guest of the home.

"They say I'm too short for grandes dames," said Miss Germon; "and of course I know my time has passed for soubrettes, although I feel as young as I did at thirty, and would like to work, but they won't let me; so here I am, and it's a mighty fine place to be, under the circumstances. I'm only sixty (she doesn't look more than forty-five) and I come of a long-lived family. My mother, who died only a few weeks ago, was eighty-seven, and my aunt, Mrs. Elizabeth Saunders, is still living in San Francisco, at the age of ninety-one. She is probably the oldest player, male or female, alive."

One of the lively boys of the home is Charles Gonzales, who is a youngster of seventy-six. Mr. Gonzales has a Spanish father and an Irish mother, so he says he doesn't know whether he is an Irish Spaniard or a Spanish Irishman. Mr. Gonzales amuses himself with palette and brush, and his room contains many water colors done by his hand. Besides this, he is manager of the "Home Quartette," and with Mesdames Morton, Brennan and Campbell contributes musical evenings for the pleasure of the other guests.

Since the home was opened there have been admitted altogether eighty-one guests.

Of this number thirty have died, and twenty have returned to their families or friends, but are still provided for by the fund. The fund does not demand that one should go to the home in order to receive assistance; it is purely a matter of choice, and aid is given the needy outside the home, as well as within. There are at present over seventy persons outside the home who are being cared for by the fund. Strange to say, the home has never been filled to its capacity, the thirty-one inmates now there being the largest number it has ever contained. There are accommodations for nineteen more, with no further applications.

Backache

Is only one of many symptoms which some women endure through weakness or displacement of the womanly organs. Mrs. Lizzie White of Memphis, Tenn., wrote Dr. R. V. Pierce, as follows:

"At times I was hardly able to be on my feet. I believe I had every pain and ache a woman could have. Had a very bad case. Internal organs were very much diseased and my back was very weak. I suffered a great deal with nervous headaches, in fact, I suffered all over. This was my condition when I wrote to you for advice. After taking your 'Favorite Prescription' for about three months can say that my health was never better."

Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription

Is a positive cure for weakness and disease of the feminine organism. It allays inflammation, heals ulceration and soothes pain. Tones and builds up the nerves. Do not permit a dishonest dealer to substitute for this medicine which has a record of 40 years of cures. "No, thank you, I want what I ask for."

Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets induce mild natural bowel movement once a day.

Loyalty.

"So lightning struck Speeder's automobile?"

"Well, Speeder claims it was his automobile that struck the lightning."—Puck.

New Disappointment.

First Summer Girl—So you thought a man was coming?

Second Summer Girl—Yes; but as we got a closer view we saw it was only a bird.—Puck.

CHILLS AND FEVER AND AGUE

Rapidly disappear on using Elixir Babek, a preventative for all Malarial Diseases.

"I recommend 'Elixir Babek' to all sufferers of Malaria and Chills. Have suffered for several years, have tried everything, but failed, until I came across your wonderful medicine. Can truly say it has cured me."—George Inscope, Company G, 4th Battalion, Elixir Babek 50 cents, all druggists or Kloczowski & Co., Washington D. C.

When the Minister Scored.

In a contribution to the Christian Register, Thomas R. Slicer tells this: "Some men the other night, in conversation with me, knowing I was a minister—and it is the spirit of this time to put it up to a minister in terms at least of gentle satire—said: 'We have been discussing conscience,' and one of them said, I have given a definition of conscience; it is the vermicular appendix of the soul,' and they laughed. And I said, 'That is a good definition in your case; you never know you have it until it hurts you.' Then they did not laugh."

Easy to Arrange.

"Do you know what a fortunate little boy you are?" rather patronizingly inquired a young lady of the liddle whose mother is her dearest comrade.

"Here, I invited mamma to go away for a lovely time with me, but she wouldn't because it wasn't a place where we could take children, and she thought she'd rather be at home with you. But I don't blame her," as the wide eyes grew wistful, "for I think I'd rather stay at home also, if I had a nice little boy like you!"

"Why don't you get one?" queried the child, briskly. "I'll tell Dr. Johnson to bring you the next one he finds, if you like!"

GRABBED HIM.

She—Old Brown said if he were twenty-five years younger he would marry me.

He—Twenty-five years younger? Why, that's just my age.

She—Oh, Charlie, this is so sudden!

A LADY LECTURER

Feeds Nerves and Brains Scientifically.

A lady lecturer writes from Philadelphia concerning the use of right food and how she is enabled to withstand the strain and wear and tear of her arduous occupation. She says:

"Through improper food, imperfectly digested, my health was completely wrecked, and I attribute my recovery entirely to the regular use of Grape-Nuts food. It has, I assure you, proven an inestimable boon to me."

"Almost immediately after beginning the use of Grape-Nuts I found a gratifying change in my condition. The terrible weakness that formerly prostrated me after a few hours of work, was perceptibly lessened and is now only a memory—it never returns."

"Ten days after beginning on Grape-Nuts I experienced a wonderful increase in mental vigor and physical energy, and continued use has entirely freed me from the miserable insomnia and nervousness from which I used to suffer so much."

"I find Grape-Nuts very palatable and would not be without the crisp, delicious food for even a day on any consideration. Indeed, I always carry it with me on my lecture tours."

Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pligs. "There's a reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

BARGAIN OF M. D. AND D. D.

Mutual Obligations Entered into That Surely Should Have Been Satisfactory.

Newell Dwight Hillis, the now famous New York preacher and author, some years ago took charge of the First Presbyterian church of Evanston, Ill. Shortly after going there he required the services of a physician, and on the advice of one of his parishioners called in a doctor noted for his ability properly to emphasize a good story, but who attended church very rarely. He proved very satisfactory to the young preacher, but for some reason could not be induced to render a bill. Finally Doctor Hillis, becoming alarmed at the inroads the bill might make in his modest stipend, went to the physician and said: "See here, doctor, I must know how much I owe you."

After some urging, the physician replied: "Well, I'll tell you what I'll do with you, Hillis. They say you're a pretty good preacher, and you seem to think I am a fair doctor, so I'll make this bargain with you. I'll do all I can to keep you out of heaven if you do all you can to keep me out of hell, and it won't cost either of us a cent. It is a go?"—Cosmopolitan Magazine.

"WHY SHOULD I USE CUTICURA SOAP?"

"There is nothing the matter with my skin, and I thought Cuticura Soap was only for skin troubles." True, it is for skin troubles, but its great mission is to prevent skin troubles. For more than a generation its delicate emollient and prophylactic properties have rendered it the standard for this purpose, while its extreme purity and refreshing fragrance give to it all the advantages of the best of toilet soaps. It is also invaluable in keeping the hands soft and white, the hair lustrous and glossy, and the scalp free from dandruff and irritation.

While its first cost is a few cents more than that of ordinary toilet soaps, it is prepared with such care and of such materials, that it wears to a wafer, often outlasting several cakes of other soap, and making its use, in practice, most economical. Cuticura Soap is sold by druggists and dealers everywhere, but the truth of these claims may be demonstrated without cost by sending to "Cuticura," Dept. 23 L, Boston, for a liberal sample cake, together with a thirty-two page book on the skin and hair.

A Distinction.

"Mrs. Flubbit appears to be somewhat cold and distant since Mr. Flubbit acquired wealth."

"Yes. While she isn't quite so frigid as the show girls in musical comedies, still, she is unbearably haughty."

Where It Points.

"For whom is she wearing black—her late husband?"

"No, for her next. She knows she looks well in it."—Judge.

TO DRIVE OUT MALARIA AND BUILD UP THE SYSTEM

Take the Old Standard GROVES TABLET CHILL TONIC. You know what you are taking. The formula is plainly printed on every bottle, showing it is simply Quinine and Iron in a tasteless form, and the most effective form. For grown people and children, 50 cents.

Slang to Define Slang.

"He's in bad."

"Yes; he's all in."

FOR HEADACHE—Sticks! CAPUDINE

Whether from Colds, Heat, Stomach or Nervous Troubles, Capudine will relieve you. It's liquid—pleasant to take—acts immediately. Try it. 10c., 25c., and 50c. at drug stores.

He who knows most grieves for wasted time.—Dante.

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup for Children's teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic, 25c. a bottle.

Sincerity is the saving merit now and always.—Carlyle.

The Wretchedness of Constipation

Can quickly be overcome by CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.

Purely vegetable—act surely and gently on the liver. Cure Biliousness, Headache, Dizziness, and Indigestion. They do their duty. SMALL PILL, SMALL DOSE, SMALL PRICE. Genuine must bear Signature.

Wentworth