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ABBEVILLE, S. C., THURSDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 12, 1857.

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From the New York Leader.
MY FIRST APPEARANCE ON THE STAGE.
BY YOU.

Every man, or almost every man, has probably at some period of his existence been afflicted with that easily satisfied desire of appearing before the footlights in some tragic or comic character. They have, perhaps, witnessed the tragic Forrest or the imitable Burton, and imagine that these two well-known members of the profession would sink into insignificance and endeavor to hide their diminished heads, could they but view "me" performing the characters which they assume. This egotism seems to have been born in the minds of those youths who are so fortunate (?) as to live in a proximity to a theatre, or as a worthy Brooklyn divine styles it, "a helish hot house, the ways from which lead only to destruction." Let him have his own way, for I shall not weary my readers with a long discussion on the merits or demerits of the playhouse, but will confine my pen to the object for which I took it up, viz: my first appearance as an actor.

I had been a constant attendant at the only place of amusement in the quiet city of B., where I had witnessed tragedy, comedy, farce, pantomime, and so on to the end of the chapter. I became curious of those persons who were permitted to take leading characters, and considered it an honor to be favored with an introduction to no greater personages than the super-meritaries, or to speak in common parlance, the super. The acquaintance was kept up by means of sundry visits to the bar adjacent to the theatre. I also bought a dozen or so tickets of admission on "Ticket night." This secured me a welcome behind the scenes, where I became instructed in the mysteries of the green room, was allowed on particular occasions to shove the scenes, but never would the stage manager cast me for a character.

Perhaps he was aware that my "big brother" might take offence should he do so, and he well knew that said "big brother" was a stouter man than he. Therefore I could never obtain the much wished-for boon of showing the good people of B. that they had a youthful prodigy among them, by displaying my talents on the boards of the theatre, for the reason that they (the talents) were hid for a time under a bushel.

I was destined, however, soon to have a chance of displaying them to good advantage, for shortly afterwards on looking over the advertisements in an evening paper, my eye caught one that hit my taste to a certainty. There was no mistaking it, for these were the words: "THE SPASS ARTIST.—A few more ladies and gentlemen wanted to make up the limited number of members of the B.—Dramatic Academy. Address, post-paid, Box—"

Here was a chance for me to make the city ring with the praises of the promising young actor. I wasted not a moment, for fear that the "limited number" would be taken ere I could gain admittance, but seating myself at my desk, with a hand trembling with agitation, penned my application in the humblest terms imaginable. I also took particular pains to request the office clerk to place it immediately in the box designated by the advertisement. I ever watched him until I saw it safely deposited in its haven, or rather the haven of my hopes. I then slowly sauntered homeward, bowing complacently to my acquaintance as we passed each other, twirling my cane and stroking my beardless chin.

I had no appetite for supper, and merely sipped a little tea and eat a few crumbs of cake, for I had heard that actors eat sparingly of supper. Then proceeding to a book store near by, I purchased all the modern standard drama, and retired to my room to study. My great difficulty was in selecting a character to commit to memory with a view of performing it. I sat last night upon *Richard the Third*, and soon recited to myself: "Now is the winter of our discontent, &c." to my perfect satisfaction. But it soon grew tedious, for Shakspeare was unfathomable to one of my dull comprehension, so I threw the book aside and lay down to dream of crowded houses, delighted audiences and immense applause—"that cursed bell" soon awaking me to the realities of life.

Hurrying on my clothes, swallowing my breakfast and rushing to the post office was the work of but a few moments. There was a letter in the box—yes, 'twas directed to me! With trembling hands I broke the seal and read my admittance as a member to the B. D. A. I thought of immediately resigning my position as runner of the bank, but dame Prudence whispered in my ear, "what if you should fail?" "In the vocabulary of youth there is no such word as fail," but then for fear of contingencies I did hold on to my situation, contenting myself with obtaining a day's leave of absence.

The next meeting was to be held in their rooms at 5 o'clock P. M. How I wished the time to fly, that intervened ere I should behold the fellow members of my new profession. Various and many were the stimulants resorted to on that glorious day, to keep my spirits up for the trying time. "I came at last and I knocked at the door of our rooms at 5 o'clock exactly, for

promptness is my maxim on all occasions, and was particularly so on the present one. A very dirty looking *gens homo* opened it, and eyeing me curiously, remarked:

"You're the new member, ain't ye?"
"Yes," I replied, casting upon him a look of ineffable disdain, "have the members arrived?" for I conceived him to be no greater a personage than the sweep.

"I'm the only one as has come yet," said he, "but I guess they'll be along shortly, for I told them five P. M., adzactly."
"Oh! you're a member, then?"
"Yes, I'm stage manager and treasurer," remarked he, smilingly.

If he was stage manager, what must the remainder of the association be composed of, thought I to myself—but perhaps he is some aspiring genius, that wishes to rush through the crowd-d avenues of life, and show forth his talents to the world.—Would it not be a generous action in me, to encourage him by my patronage? I inwardly answered, yea!

The members dropped slowly in, one after another, until at 6 o'clock there were eight persons in the room, and such a set! There was a pedlar of obscene publications, a clerk in a Jew clothing store on Commercial street, a retired (for a time) canal boat hand, &c. Nothing discouraged, however, I paid my \$5 initiation fee, and was duly installed a member. I then advocated the separation of the offices of stage manager and treasurer, making the position of secretary and treasurer one and the same. I did this for several reasons, the two most important of which were—I did not like the looks of our quondam treasurer, and I well knew that no one could fill the office of secretary as well as myself; therefore if I gained my point I would be enabled to do all the *bookkeeping* of the cash, should be any thing to be done.

I did gain my point, even against the opposition of the aspiring genius above alluded to, and was elected to the important position of secretary and treasurer of the "B. D. A."

Next in order came the choice of a piece to perform on the opening night. There was considerable difference of opinion in regard to the individual play, each member having a particular one, which he had settled in his own mind as being the only style of performance that would "take." Every ballot came out the same—Richard the Third, "Douglas," "Serious Family," and many others were mentioned. There was no chance of our coming to any agreement in this manner, so we changed our tactics and balloted for Tragedy or Comedy; the former carried the day, and "Othello, the Moor of Venice" was selected as the only Tragedy calculated to exhibit the powers of each individual member of our company.

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rich old man, who resided at the extremity of the camp, quite apart from the had three daughters, the youngest of whom, named Kookju, was as much distinguished for her beauty as for her extraordinary wisdom.
One morning as he was about driving cattle for sale to the Chan's market, he begged his daughters to tell him at presents they wished him to bring on his return. The two eldest asked for trinkets, but the handsome and wise Kookju said that she wanted no present, but at she had a request to make which it would be difficult and even dangerous for him to execute. Upon which the father, who loved her more than the two others, swore that he would do her wish, thought it as at the price of his life. "If it be so," pledged Kookju, "I beg you to do as follows: sell your cattle except the short tailed ox, and ask no other price for it except the Chan's left eye." The old man was startled; however, remembering his oath, and confiding in his daughter's wisdom, he resolved to do as she bade him.

After having sold all the cattle, and being asked the price of the short tailed ox, he said that he would sell it for nothing else than the Chan's left eye. The report of this singular and daring request soon reached the ear of the Chan's courtiers. At first they admonished him not to use such an offensive speech against the sovereign; but when they found that he persevered in his strange demand, they bound him and carried him, as a madman, before the Chan. The old man threw himself at the prince's feet, and confessed that his demand had been made at the request of his daughter, whose motives he was perfectly ignorant of; and the Chan, suspecting that some secret must be hidden under this extraordinary request, dismissed the old man, under the condition that he would bring him that daughter who had made it.

Kookju appeared, and the Chan asked, "Why dost thou instruct thy father to demand my left eye?"
"Because I expected my prince, that after so strange a request, curiosity would urge thee to send for me."
"And wherefore dost thou desire to see me?"
"I wish to tell thee a truth important to thyself and thy people."
"Name it."
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furiously state for a season ticket to the real theatre. But our worthy stage manager marched bravely before them, and in a clear, concise manner narrated our troubles and trials, begging at the same time that they would give us a chance to prove ourselves worthy of their applause. They did applaud, and the amount of silver which was thrown upon the stage paid the gas bill and left us sufficient to purchase a bottle of stimulants.

All things being at last arranged, I took my position at the side scenes in company with Jago, (the stage manager,) and the curtain arose slowly, discovering to the eyes of the audience a street in Venice, or any other city that they might imagine it to be. I stalked boldly on the stage, but my sword which was "a world too long" for my short body, in some manner became entangled with my feet, and previous to proceeding with my part, I was compelled to re-arrange it.

The audience roared, which somewhat increased my *unwieldy haste*—I could not utter a word. Jago kindly came to my assistance and I was enabled to mumble over the first few lines of my part. The audience hissed and cries of "londer," "put him out," etc., resounded from all portions of the house. The perspiration stood in large drops upon my brow; taking my hat from my head to wipe this off, my wig, which was somewhat small, clung to it, and hat and wig were in my hand.—Again those hisses fell upon my ear and the perspiration rolled down my vermilion cheeks. My handkerchief being applied, the vermilion and India ink (moustache) were mixed together, forming a combination of colors without a name.

All this time Jago was conducting the dialogue on his own account. I turned to him, amid the jeers of the assemblage before us, as he gave me my cue. Never shall I forget the expression of his countenance when he caught sight of mine. There he stood endeavoring to contain himself from laughing, his face exhibiting alternately every hue of the rainbow, and there stood poor me—my hat and wig in one hand, my discolored handkerchief in the other, and that abominable sword between my lower limbs.

He burst into a loud *guffaw*, and unable to restrain my excited feelings I rushed from the stage into—the arms of my big brother (?) who cuffed me soundly, took me by the ears and led me from the scene of my disgrace. The curtain fell as I was passing the grand entrance, and I imagined that I heard calls for *Roderigo*, but he answered not. This, dear reader, was my first and last appearance on the stage. I lost my situation in the bank, and was by necessity compelled to become a scribbler. You will perceive by the above that *scribbling* is my vocation. The only apology that I can offer for the story is, it is the truth, plain and unvarnished.

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The Chan, incensed and surprised at the daring of this maiden, commanded his court to try her. The court was opened and the president, who was the eldest Lama, proposed that they should try whether her strange proceeding was the effect of malice or wisdom.
Their first step was to send to Kookju a log of wood, cut even on all sides, ordering her to find out which was the root and which the top. Kookju threw it into the water and soon knew the answer, on seeing the root sinking, while the top rose to the surface.
After this they sent her two snakes, in order to determine which was a male and which was a female. The wise maiden laid them on cotton and seeing that one coiled herself up in a ring, whilst the other crept away, she judged the latter was a male and the former a female.
From these trials the court was convinced that Kookju had not offended the Chan from motives of malice, but the inspiration of wisdom granted her from above. But not so the Chan; his vanity was hurt; and he resolved to puzzle her with questions, in order to prove that she was not wise.—He therefore ordered her before him, and asked:
"On sending a number of maidens in the wood to gather apples, which of them will bring home most?"
"She," replied Kookju, "who, instead of climbing up the trees, remains below and picks up those which have fallen off from maturity or the shaking of the branches."
The Chan then led her to a fence, and asked her which would be the readiest way to get over, and Kookju said, "to cross it would be the farthest, going round nearest." The Chan felt vexed at the readiness and propriety of her replies; and having reflected for some time he again inquired:
"Which is the safest means of becoming known to many?"
"By assisting many that are unknown."
"Which is the surest means of leading a virtuous life?"
"To begin every morning with prayer, and conclude every evening with some good action."
"Who is truly wise?"
"He who does not believe himself so."
"Which are the requisites for a good wife?"
"She should be as beautiful as a peacock, gentle as a lamb, prudent as a mouse, just as a faithful mirror, pure as the scales of a fish; she must mourn for her deceased husband like a she camel, and live in her widowhood like a bird which has lost its wings."
The Chan was astonished at the wisdom of the fair Kookju; yet, enraged at having reproached him with injustice, he still wished to destroy her.
After a few days he thought he had found the means for attaining his object.—He sent for her and asked her to determine the true worth of all his treasures; after which he promised to absolve her from malice in questioning his justice, and admit that she intended, as a wise woman, merely to warn him.
The maiden consented, yet under the condition that the Chan would promise implicit obedience to her commands for four days. She requested that she would eat no food during that time. On the last day she placed a dish of meat before him and said, "Confess, O Chan! that all thy treasures are not worth as much as this joint of meat." The Chan was so struck with the truth of her remark that he confessed the truth of it, acknowledged her as wise, married her to his son, and permitted her constantly to remind him to use his left eye.

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