

JOKES OF ACTORS.

Pranks on Comrades That Are Played Before the Audience.

Practical jokes right in front of the audience are not unknown among experienced actors. Care has to be taken that the business of the scene is not interfered with, or the stage manager would speedily be camping on the trail of the too enterprising humorist.

"A rather cruel but at the same time very amusing joke was played upon an unpopular member of a Shakespearean repertoire company with which I once toured," said a veteran actor to the writer.

"The unpopular one was playing the ghost in 'Hamlet' on this particular night, and the scene was managed in the old fashioned way—the 'majesty of buried Denmark' rising through a trap instead of coming on from the wings, as modern ghosts do. Two of the company stationed themselves beneath the stage, and as soon as the victim's head went up through the trap they began to belabor his legs well with a couple of stout canes.

"The wince raising the platform on which the victim stood was turned very slowly in order to impart proper solemnity to the ghost's appearance. Picture the efforts of the poor mummer to prevent the anguish he suffered showing on his face, which, of course, was in full view of the audience!"

Worse, far worse, was the fate of some unfortunate actors who in a popular melodrama had to drink a toast in (stage) champagne. In the ordinary way ginger ale does duty on the boards for that exhilarating wine, but on this occasion some "end in human form had filled the bottle with paraffin oil. "We dared not leave the stage till the fall of the drop," said one of those who took part in this unusual festivity to the writer afterward, but how we finished that act not one of us knows."

In a once popular drama the leading actress, who was also the proprietress of the "show," dropped dead (as usual) at the end of the third act one night and lay there in full view of the audience waiting for the fall of the curtain. But the man who controlled the curtain refused to lower it.

"You'll have to stay dead," said he in a low voice, "unless you promise to pay me last month's salary from tonight's receipts. Move your right hand if you agree. I've witnessed here."

The lady could not argue, but she waited a full minute. The mute remained obdurate. Then the actress' right hand moved ever so slightly and—the curtain fell.—London Answers.

Natural Varnishes.

Fluid resins or oil from several different trees are extensively used in the Philippines as varnishes. One of them, called oil of supa, is a pale yellow liquid when fresh, but it becomes dark and viscous after contact with the air. Spread in a thin layer it dries slowly and forms a hard varnish. It is also capable of being burned in a lamp. Another natural varnish is balao, also called oil of apitong. It is white when fresh, but darkens after exposure and makes a very tough varnish. Oil of panso is a third variety, inferior to the others in its drying properties. Chemical analysis has shown that all these wood oils consist entirely of hydrocarbons known as sesquiterpenes.

Some Johnson Definitions.

An exhibition of the relics of Dr. Samuel Johnson in London recalled some of the remarkable definitions that remarkable man inserted in his dictionary. Among them not the least curious was the one given for "network," which was defined as "anything reticulated or decussated at equal distances, with interstices between the intersections." Other amusing definitions are: "Cough—a convulsion of the lungs vellicated by some shar serosity." "Man—not a woman, not a boy, not a beast." "Pension—an allowance made to any one without an equivalent. In England it is generally understood to mean pay to a state hireling for treason to his country."

Mere Sightseers.

"The chief trouble of the miners," says an official of Alaska, "is the lack of variety in their food. One day a young fellow fresh from his lot turned into Seattle and entered a hotel.

"Bring me some pork and beans," was his request. The food was brought. "Now bring me three dozen oysters." The waiter complied. With the two dishes before him the miner proceeded to say: "Well, pork and beans, you have been very friendly to me all my days in Alaska. You have stood by me like good fellows. Now stand by me and see me eat oysters."—Kansas City Star.

ODOR TAINTED AIR.

It Is Not In Itself Poisonous or Even Unhealthful.

According to the American Magazine, "bad" air is not so bad. The point is explained as follows by Dr. Hirschberg of Johns Hopkins university in an article on "Popular Medical Fallacies:"

"Foul air—which has for its accepted meaning air heavy with the gases and odors of decay—is not in itself poisonous or even unhealthful. Unless it contains such a large proportion of foreign gases that it is noticeably lacking in oxygen its chief effect is psychic. Some persons, in brief, cannot abide a stench. It sets their nerves on edge and excites their imaginations, and the result is that they grow pallid and at times seasick.

"Thus indirectly it may weaken them and make them an easy prey to wandering microbes. But of itself it produces little direct harm. Medical students, breathing the unspeakable gases and odors of the dissecting room, manage to eat vast dinners and to grow fat. Tanners, garbage men, workers in fertilizer factories and other persons who are habitually surrounded by hair raising aromas are ordinarily just as healthy as other folk.

"That foul air is usually laden with rather more germs and germ bearing insects than air which seems (to the nose) to be pure is beside the point. Experience shows that pure air often contains as many of these enemies to health as the most foul exudations from a sewer outlet. The Stegomyia fasciata, which carries the germs of yellow fever, would be just as deadly on a mountain top as along the shore of a Louisiana bayou; hence the absurdity of shotgun quarantines and of all the other medicinal manifestations of alarm that appear when yellow jack rages on the gulf coast."

French Art Running Riot.

Clever dealers in artifice—that is what the majority of painters in Paris have become. For one man whose work is "of the centre" you have scores, hundreds, who are facile and sometimes even accomplished, but in the grain of their work incurably factitious. They have made no better use of the freedom from formula, won by Manet and the others, than to put more formulae, usually very hollow ones, in the foreground. Little groups are formed, each one devoted to the unfolding of a trick which some new man has made temporarily popular. They wax and wane, and you wonder why they ever flourish at all. A sensation is made at the salon not by an honest piece of painting with an original accent, but by some prismatic audacity having no relation to nature, by some purely arbitrary scheme of chiaroscuro or, as in one case that I have in mind, by a return to the "brown sauce" of the old masters.—Royal Cortissoz in Atlantic.

An Ideal Citizen.

The ideal citizen is the man who believes that all men are brothers and the nation is merely an extension of his family, to be loved, respected and cared for accordingly. Such a man attends personally to all civic duties with which he deems himself charged. Those which are within his own control he would no more trust to his inferiors than he would leave the education of his children to kitchen servants. The public demands upon his time, thought and money come upon him suddenly, and often they find him ill prepared, but he nerves himself to the inevitable, knowing that in the village, state and nation any mistake or neglect upon his part must impose a penalty sooner or later upon those whom he loves.—John Habberton.

Punctilious.

A Washington woman prominent in the official set of the national capital tells of a function to which she had invited an attache of one of the legations famous for his extreme politeness. The invitation was formally accepted, but on the morning of the appointed day she received a note, written by the diplomat's valet and couched in the following terms:

"Senor Blank regrets much that he will not be able to attend Mrs. So-and-so's reception on the evening of the 22d inst., as he is dead."—Harper's Weekly.

Not in the Curriculum.

Mr. Jecklyns had just received from his youngest son, who was in his first year at college, a telegram to this effect: "Dear Father—I am about to take up a new study. Please send me \$25 to pay for the outfit."

He answered it at once in this wise: "Dear John—What is the study?"

To the query came this rejoinder: "Dear Father—It is golf."

MEERSCHAUM PIPES.

Americans, It Seems, Do Not Make or Keep Them Right.

"You don't see the best meerschaum pipes in this country," said a German pipe dealer who learned his trade in Vienna.

"Why? Because the Americans are in too big a hurry—haven't time to take care of a meerschaum, haven't even time to learn how. When the American is through smoking he knocks his pipe on the heel of his shoe to remove the ashes, shoves it in the most handy pocket and is on the run.

"Now, in the old country a man takes his pipe seriously, very seriously. He expects his meerschaum to last him a lifetime and then be in good repair to hand down to his heir. The pipe is passed from generation to generation, and it is always handled as carefully as a newborn babe. The smoker never touches the bowl while it is warm. That would spoil the fine, glossy color. When the German has completed his serious and meditative smoke his pipe is laid very carefully away where it will cool properly and without danger of scratching. He does not ram it into his pocket with other miscellaneous articles, as the rushing American does. He takes his time and gives it his care and attention.

"The best meerschaum pipes in the old country are made of soft meerschaum and are hand carved. Then they are boiled in beeswax. The soft meerschaum absorbs the wax. The fine color is produced by the wax and the nicotine combining. When the pipe is smoked the wax softens from the heat. That is why the pipe should not be touched while warm. Touching mars the gloss.

"The American manufacturer does not carve or polish them by hand. The work is done by machines. The soft meerschaum, if treated that way, would break, so hard meerschaum, a low grade, is used. The hard clay will not absorb beeswax, so it is boiled in glycerin. The most beautiful colors cannot be produced with glycerin."—Kansas City Times.

A Poet Physician.

Hearing of Dr. Goldsmith's great humanity, a poor woman, who believed him to be a physician, once wrote to him begging him to prescribe for her husband, who had lost his appetite and was altogether in a very sad state. The kind hearted poet immediately went to see her and after some talk with the man found him almost overwhelmed with sickness and poverty.

"You shall hear from me in an hour," said the doctor on leaving, "and I shall send you some pills which I am sure will do you good." Before the time was up Goldsmith's servant brought the poor woman a small box, which on being opened was found to contain 10 guineas, with the following directions:

"To be used as necessities require. Be patient and of good heart."

No Reward Offered.

"Have you lost anything, madam?" asked the polite floorwalker of the square jawed, austere looking shopper who stood before the "Lost and Found" window of the large department store.

"Yes, sir," she replied; "I've lost 114 pounds of husband in a light brown suit, with black derby hat, small tuft of hair on its chin and a frightened look. I lost it in a crush at the fancy goods counter. It's probably wandering through the building in search of me, and I thought perhaps you could find it easier than I can. I want it on account of a bundle it is carrying under its arm."—Woman's Home Journal.

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