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EDMUND KEAN.

To See Him Act Was Like Reading Shakespeare by Lightning.

Before the third century after the birth of Shakespeare had reached its first quarter there was born in England to a stage carpenter and a strolling actress a child destined to grapple with the poet's highest thought and interpret it with a vividness that to this day stands unrivaled. Coleridge's terse comment, that to see him act was reading Shakespeare by lightning, reveals him with the fullness of a volume. Edmund Kean, along with most people early trained to an art, had little, if any, education of the schools. He was when a boy provided with instruction by some benevolent people whom his smartness and beauty attracted, but he rebelled against the tasks of study and went to sea. But life there was too rough for his fine nature. He returned to England, and at the age of 7 began the study of Shakespeare's characters with his uncle Moses. This he continued with an actress named Tidswell, who taught him besides, as well as she knew, the principles of her art.

At that early age he had the credit of originality so surprising as even then to challenge the supremacy of Philip Kemble. At 14 he played Hamlet. King George had him recite at Windsor castle, and it is said this incident led some gentlemen to send him to Eton, but there is no record of it. At 20 he was in a provincial troop, a member of which he married, and for six years thereafter, until his glorious night at Drury Lane, his life was one of hardship, struggle, obscurity, but, thanks to the faith in himself, not hopeless. His London debut was made at 28. He had fought for it hard and long and would then have played it but for the falling reputation of the theater. London debuts in first roles are not easy for provincial actors, and none knows better how hard they are to get than Henry Irving. Kean seems to have been at his full splendor, and made a hit. After that his habits were altogether prejudicial to the refinement of taste or the acquisition of knowledge.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

IS IT A MATTER OF TIME?

What Was Considered Modest and Proper a Hundred Years Ago.

Modesty, as has often been said, may almost be considered a matter of time and place. In the time of George III of England, though the drapery was of the scantiest, it was not considered delicate or refined to uncover the forehead. Some young ladies who had been abroad were considered bold looking because they wore their hair Madonna fashion. Ladies not in the premiere jeunesse very generally wore wigs. The princesses had their heads shaved and wore wigs ready dressed and decorated for the evening to save time for the toilet. Widows almost always shaved their heads. Lady Murray says her mother's beautiful hair was cut off for her deep mourning, and she never wore anything but a wig in after years.

At Windsor castle in those days luncheon was not, as it is now, a general meal. Each lady had a chicken, a plate of fruit and a bottle of king's cup (the peel of a lemon put to soak for some hours in cold water and then sweetened with sugar) brought to her room every day. These were the day for servants' requisites. On all the highest social days a tinsel cross or divers colors was placed on the table of the ladies or sent to their residences and a guinea was understood to be due in return. A bottle of wine every two days and unnecessary wax candles were the requisites of the ladies' maids.

Candles were extinguished as soon as it was to be carried off by servants. Pages were seen marching out before the royal family with a bottle of wine sticking out of each pocket, and the state page called regularly upon each person who attended the drawing rooms, with his book, to receive the accustomed gratuity. The maids in waiting then wore the Windsor uniform, which is at present confined to the gentlemen attendants. It was a blue cloth habit, as long, as worn for riding, but the length of a gown, with buttons having a star surrounded with the motto, "Honi soit qui mal y pense" and a scarlet collar.—New York Herald.

Hat Shooting.

A visitor in Pass Christian, Miss., the other day heard some pistol shots and asked a negro boy what they meant. "Oh," was the reply, "them fellows can be shootin' fo' hats." "Shootin' fo' hats!" exclaimed the visitor, "what on earth do you mean?" "Sure, dere i' nuffin strange 'bout dat. They's doin' a-tryin' day 'nest. When de train is comin', day jes' fires dem shots when she gets good on to de bridge, an' de merq' sticks dere heads out to see what's up, an' de wind jes' takes dere hats off an' drops 'em in de bay. Den dey row around an' picks 'em up. Sometime dey gets a lot of 'em. Other day Josh Johnson got seven." "What does Josh Johnson do besides shoot fo' hats?" was asked. "Oh, he fishes an' does odd jobs an' lives."—New York Tribune.

Footed the Bills.

Francis W. Bird, the Sage of Walpole, once went to see Dr. S. G. Howe and found him with his feet swathed in flannels and extended on a chair. "Howe, what is the matter?" he asked. "I have got the gout," said Howe. "You have got the gout—such a temperance man as you." "Yes, Bird, my ancestors drank wine, and I have to foot the bills."—Boston Transcript.

In former times chapels were commonly built on bridges at the entrance of towns and villages, but the custom has long since fallen into disuse, and very few of these structures remain to-day. One of the best existing specimens may be seen at Rotherham. It stands on the bridge crossing the Don and was built in 1483. Leland mentions it in 1850.

THE CATBIRD'S FLIGHT.

Forty Birds to the Rescue—How It Was Finally Set Free.

"Going through the woods one day," said a lover of birds, "I saw a catbird with one of its wings caught on a brier bush. There was a clump of briars here, with a narrow opening at one place between two of the bushes. The catbird had tried to fly through that opening and had made a miscalculation and got one of its wings impaled on a thorn. The other wing was free, and it was flapping that and trying to get clear of the bush.

"Around this bush there must have been at least 40 other birds, of one kind or another, catbirds and brown thrashers and wrens and grass chippies, and so on, that had been attracted by the unfortunate catbird's cries and its efforts to escape, and that appeared to have gathered there to help it. They fluttered about close to the bush, flying round at a great rate and making a lot of noise, but not really doing anything. Some of the smaller birds would fly around very close to the bush or even fly under it, and I imagine some of the bigger birds saying to some of these venturesome little fellows, 'Here, you brown thrasher, you, why don't you get under him there and push on his wing? But the brown thrasher would only go about so close. He wasn't going to get caught. What the birds would have done finally I don't know. I think they would have helped the catbird in some way, but I undertook to help it myself.

"Of course I couldn't go right up to it, for that would have frightened it, and may be made it hurt itself even worse. I had with me a sawed off broom stick that I carried for a walking stick, and I undertook to free the catbird with that. I thrust the stick through the brier bush, all the other 40 birds looking on, and brought the end of it gently against the catbird's wing and pushed the wing off the thorn. But in starting away the catbird got the wing caught again on another thorn. That was bad, and I stood off a minute deliberating about what to do next, the whole flock of birds still fluttering round and the imprisoned catbird now pretty nearly exhausted. It was a time to drop all ceremony, and I simply walked up to the bush and took the catbird off the thorn with my hands.

"Just beyond the brier bushes there was a smooth grassy spot in the woods and I laid the catbird down there, the whole lot of birds that had been hovering about the brier bush following along, more or less near, and hanging around there. Pretty soon the catbird got up and flew to a little tree nearby. It wasn't strong, but it could fly and its wings were all right. When it flew up into the tree, all the other birds flew away. From the tree the catbird sang its thanks to me, and there I left it."—New York Sun.

ORIENTAL EYES.

Their Much Landed Beauty Due to False Modes of Living.

An esteemed correspondent of The Woman's Arena writes, "May not the much lauded largeness and luster of the oriental eye be due to false modes of living and to a low grade of civilization?" In the first place these charms are never found among the working classes or among the tillers of the soil. They belong to the harem and to the harem civilization.

I have examined the women's quarters in Constantinople and Cairo, in Aden and Bombay, in Calcutta and Java, and even in Hongkong and Canton, and in nearly every instance the women's rooms were small and dark. Where there were windows these were mere slits in the wall, which did not allow any direct light to enter.

The doorway was small and the door was solid and nearly always closed. The lamp was usually a taper and sometimes a candle. The room or rooms looked out upon a long hall or corridor, which was also dark and gloomy, and this in turn upon an arched and roofed veranda.

In nearly all of these places a woman's daily life was conducted in shadow and shade, and after sundown she had less light than fell to the lot of the pilgrim fathers 250 years ago.

Under these conditions the human eye develops like that of the cat and dog. It becomes larger and seemingly more lustrous in order to allow the owner to move about in safety and comfort. Transfer this unfortunate woman to the open street, the field or the deck of a steamer, and her eyes are in a torture from the sunlight. Her forehead is contracted by a terrible frown, her eyelids are screwed together and her eyes seem to be just the opposite of what they are described in poetry and romance.

It may be I am all wrong, but of all poetic humbugs, I think that the gallelike orb of the orient is the biggest.

As It Looked to Him. People who have seen cottonwood lumber warp when it came from the saw can appreciate a story Gene Ward tells about the first sawmill erected at Fort Scott. After the first day's sawing the owner of the mill came down from town, where he had been celebrating the "opening" with the boys. He looked over the crooked boards scattered about the yard for a moment and then inquired with drunken gravity: "Boys (hic), has that lumber been measured yet?" "It has not," replied the foreman of the mill.

"Well, when it gets still, take a (hic) corkscrew and measure it."—Kansas City Journal.

The word "he" or its equivalent in sound exists in all languages, and in every one is expressive of disgust. In the Icelandic word "pful" means putridity.

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