

## OLIVER IS A WISE CROW.

STRANGE TO SAY HE IS ABLE TO TALK LIKE A CHRISTIAN.

This remarkable bird is the wonder of a town in Massachusetts. He is bigger and handsomer than the average crow and has bright ideas.

This story of a crow that can talk, and furthermore seems to know what it is saying is told by the New York Sun. The crow's name is Oliver, and his home is in Westfield, Mass. Three years ago last spring a citizen of the town, a Mr. Arnold, had the fortune to capture a baby crow, and being something of a bird fancier he carried it home and raised it by hand. His attentions to the bird included a good many remarks as well as a liberal supply of grain, meat, and table refuse. The bird took kindly to the food supplies from the first and to the remarks later. He added to his muscles and plumage daily until, if one may believe what is said of him, he attained a spread of wings almost two inches greater and a length of tail three-quarters of an inch more than are recorded by any bird sharp from Linnaeus to Baird. Nor was that all. The feathers were of a color and a lustre wholly unknown to other crows even in the nuptial season.

The results of good and abundant food, as shown in his physical development, are as nothing when compared with what followed his attention to Mr. Arnold called him by name whenever he went to feed him. Naturally Oliver soon learned to come when called. When the bird came Mr. Arnold always said "Hello" to him. The bird at first did not pay attention to the salutation, but eventually it was observed that when Mr. Arnold said "Hello" Oliver cocked his head, and with a knowing eye gazed at his master. Next Oliver seemed to understand that "Hello" was a kindly greeting that merited some sort of reply, and so at the sound he bowed his head low, elevated his wings slightly, and teetered up and down. To the man who knows crows this action of the bird means more than it does to others. It shows first of all that the bird had very properly received a masculine name. The female crows do not bow their heads and teeter up and down under any circumstances. More interesting still was the fact that this bowing and teetering is done among male crows only when they wish to be extremely polite—that is to say, in the nuptial season when they are striving to win mates. For the crow to bow and teeter when addressed was to prove that he understood the word as a salutation.

But pleasing as this was things more remarkable followed. One day at meal time Oliver not only came at the call, but without giving Mr. Arnold a chance even to pucker his mouth for the usual salutation he began to bow and teeter with outstretched wings, and said distinctly and unmistakably:

"Hullo!"

Then he said it again, looking up intelligently the while, and then a third time. Mr. Arnold was so astonished that he forgot to reply to the salutation. It was because Oliver wanted a reply that he repeated the word, as afterward appeared. Having mastered one word, progress to a sentence was rapid. In those days of youth Oliver had an appetite so voracious that he was guilty of the greedy habit of trying to grab food from the dish in which it was brought without waiting for it to be transferred into the proper receptacle. Mr. Arnold, like a good master, desired to teach Oliver better habits at the table, and not only pushed the bird from this food, but also said as he pushed: "No, you don't! no, you don't!"

Now greediness had so firm a grip on young Oliver that he learned the remark before he learned to behave himself properly. He proved it in this way: On a certain occasion his master desired to pick him up from the ground. Oliver was then allowed to run at large with wings unclipped, for he had shown a disposition, from his first introduction to civilized victuals, to remain where cooked meat and boiled potatoes abounded rather than return to the sprouted oats and wriggling entomological specimens on which he had formerly lived. Like everybody else born in Massachusetts, Oliver found the paths of liberty pleasant to walk upon, and when Mr. Arnold strove to catch him Oliver skipped beyond reach and with a curious jerk of his head said:

"No, you don't!" And from that day to this Oliver has not only preserved his liberty by skipping whenever an attempt is made to catch him, but he also says, in what folks believe to be an angry voice, "No, you don't!"

As has often happened in Massachusetts, fortune came to Oliver with fame. A bird that would bow politely when addressed, and say "hello!" became a welcome guest in the yard of the neighbors. Very nice yards, by the way, are to be found everywhere in Westfield, for the people are proud of the beauty of their town. When Oliver came walking with the ploughman's gait peculiar to crows across the lawn the people took the chances of his making a litter and tossed various kinds of food for him, and strove to make much of him. And so it happened that Oliver forsook his old home and became a citizen at large of the town.

Then a new freak was noticed. Oliver disappeared every day soon after nightfall and was seen no more until daylight. His disappearance having attracted attention some curious people strove to find the bird's roost, but to this day it has never been discovered. Another peculiarity observed as winter came was that Oliver was

going to brave the cold weather. The ordinary crows migrate from Westfield, but with a well-filled stomach under his glossy winter suit Oliver cared not a cent for meteorological reports, no matter whence they came. Moreover, it appeared that Oliver's fortune and education had effected his character remarkably in one of the distinguishing traits of crows. Crows are gregarious. Everybody has seen them in flocks of fifty and a hundred, and some people think they have seen a thousand at once on a pleasant fall day just before migration. But Oliver had developed under good fare and education just as Bostonese develop. He became exclusive. Wild crows might come to town and alight in the abundant shade trees of the street and lawn, but Oliver would have none of them. They might say in the crow language that a cyclonic area had been noted in the North West and that this would be followed by variable winds, a rapidly falling temperature, and occasional snow squalls, but Oliver either listened with a stony glare in his eye or made some remark that was certain to impress upon the savages the fact that a great social gulf lay between him and them, and that he certainly would not cross it. Some citizens will tell the traveller that Oliver also made a reply that his new-found friends of the unfeathered biped race could understand. They say he replied when wild crows cawed, "I don't care." But this is an exaggeration. He did, indeed, learn to say the words at about the time of crow migration, but the soberer relations of the story of Oliver say he was never known to use words to any human beings.

As spring came on, when Oliver would be one year old and the warm days that bring the first of the migrators were at hand, the knowing ones said that there were influences in spring sunshine that would melt the Boston ice that had gathered about Oliver's heart and made him exclusive. It was all very well to live in town and live high and ignore poor relations in the fall; but when spring came even a Bostonese crow would find something attractive in the voice of a lady crow calling from a distant hillside, and while Oliver might not forsake the town he was likely to take an outing. And when on an outing even the most exclusive society young man have been known to flirt with milkmaids. That any attentions Oliver might pay to a lady crow would receive immediate and kindly attention none doubted, for had not Oliver a spread of wings almost two inches greater than any crow the books tell of, and was not his tail three-quarters of an inch longer and the gloss of all his plumage irreproachable and his politeness simply perfection? Certainly Oliver would get married and rear a family of young crows with marvellous intellects, the prophets said. But, alas! for all these speculations. The sunny days when the melting of the snow bared the southern slopes came on apace. The crow family came with them and gathered on the bare slopes to hunt for the early grasshopper and the last fall's larvae. And they sat on leafless tree tops, the males on one limb and the females on another, and the males bowed and spread their wings and teetered. Oliver saw all this and the others saw Oliver. It is guessed that more than one young lady crow ignored the honest lout who spread themselves hoping to win favor, ignored them in order that she might look shyly at the glossy dandy sitting in the maples or straddling across lawns where the wild ones dared not go; but all in vain. Oliver cared not a whit for even the choicest of the wild belles. Nor has he in any of the three years of his life taken a mate or in any way associated with his kind. He is now and is likely to remain the sleekest and best groomed of male crows, and the only wilful bachelor known to the race.

And as a bachelor he has developed at least one characteristic of kindly bachelors among human beings. Oliver loves children. Having reared none of his own, his heart goes out to little ones of another race. He knows the hours when children go to school and when they leave it, and wherever children are gathered together Oliver may be found in the midst of the group. And such romps as the youngsters have with Oliver! Not only does the bird dance and fly and race about the play yards, but he can do almost as many tricks as a versatile actor on a variety stage. From a handy perch he will call attention by a scream, and then after nodding and bowing will yap like a cur, yowl like a cat, and squeal like a pig, and, in short, imitate almost every noise to be learned in the limits of the town, and of the children especially, scarce need be said. And with strangers who scarce need be said. And with strangers who come there he is soon as great a favorite as with home folks, for he distinguishes strangers from old citizens, and pays special attention to them if they give him the least encouragement.

He has developed a couple of tricks that are sometimes as exasperating to his victims as they are amusing to those who know what he has done. Oliver can distinguish lovers from married folks, apparently, for he has been known to follow lovers stealthily, as they sought a quiet retreat, and there most inopportunistly shout his deep "hello." It is not related that any matches have been prevented, but many a young couple have been separated temporarily by the rude fun of the bird. Worse yet, Oliver has the habit in these days, when the thermometer ranges high and the sun rises early, of haunting at daybreak the projecting caps found above second-story windows. From these he peers into the rooms below and shouts his "hello," to the exasperation and sometimes to the great embarrassment of the inmates.

## The Mule's Misfortune.

An old darkey lived in the South who was a great barterer, and it was very hard to best him on a trade. It seems he had sold a mule, guaranteeing him faultless. The purchaser shortly after came back in a great rage and said:

"Look here, you rascal, that mule you sold me is blind in one eye; you assured me he had no faults."

"Dat's right, sah; dat mule hab no faults. If he am blind in one eye dat am his misfortune, not his fault."—Harpers Young People.

## Lot's Wife.

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## QUEER STAGE EFFECTS.

INGENIOUS DEVICES IN WHICH ART RIVALS NATURE.

How Real Water Is Shown in the Drama—Thunder and Lightning by Artificial Means—Production of Snow Storms—Scenes in Which the Actors Swim.

A large proportion of the plays produced in the theaters at the present time, (especially dramas, melodramas and spectacular productions), would be failures if it were not for the stage carpenter. It even requires exceptional ability to be a stage-hand, i. e., one of the men who move the scenery between the acts—"setting the scene," as it is called in technical language. As one of these men said, "if we should drop out and substitutes be brought in to take our places the performance couldn't be given."

One of the most realistic scenes on the stage is a snow-storm. The show is paper, cut by hand (machine-cut paper has been tried but it does not answer), and costs \$13 a barrel. The paper snow is packed in a wooden box about six feet long and two feet wide at the end. The box is covered with an "apron." The box is fastened to an iron bar and, when turned with a crank, the apron drops, allowing a small quantity of the snow to be released. The lime-light thrown upon the scene has the illusory effect of a snow-storm over the whole stage. Sometimes a bag instead of a box is used, the paper being allowed to fall slowly out at one end. A more recent method is to use salt, because it glistens like snow and is easy to clean up. In one play where there is a snow scene and the ground seems covered with snow; there are little heaps of it in the street with ruts made by passing wheels. This illusion is made by using a large canvas carpet, painted a dirty white, and stuffed with cotton batting into billows and small hillocks. The snow hanging on the lamp-posts is cotton batting thickly covered with salt to make it glisten.

The stage moon is a lime light lamp placed in a box called the moon box, the front of which has a circular opening. The moon can be reflected from the wings (or sides) to any part of the stage; or the box can be placed in a frame and moved upward on a grooved ladder. The sun is produced by a similar device.

When forked lightning is wanted an irregular cut is made in a scene behind which a man stands, burning powdered magnesia, in the same manner that photographers pursue in making flashlight photographs. A large sheet of hanging sheet iron, well shaken, will make very respectable thunder. This is an old-fashioned device. Another method is to drop an iron ball into a box where it strikes a sheet of iron and, rolling down an incline, strikes projecting pieces which produce the rumbling.

The sound of rain is made by turning upon a bar a large wooden drum over which the finest silk is drawn. The drum contains small shot or fine pebbles.

Within the last fifteen years there has developed what actors call the "tank drama," or plays in which a tank of water, or a river, is the principal feature. A scene in one of these plays is extremely realistic. It is the river Thames rippling in the sunshine. Suddenly a storm comes up. The rain (real water) pours down, the lightning flashes, the heavy roll of thunder is heard in the distance, people hurry and scurry across the stage, some with umbrellas, some without, boatmen row rapidly along the river, and the whole scene is a startling and truthful representation of a May shower. Gradually the rain ceases, the sky becomes brighter, and the sun beams from behind the clouds.

In the mechanism of this scene the principal feature is a tank. When the play containing this scene was produced at the Academy of Music, in New York city, the tank covered nearly the entire stage. It is a permanent stage effect, the stage floor being removed, and the tank fitted in to take its place. It is made of zinc, is about two feet deep and covered with rubber. It is filled with water and the stage flooring is made into sections and placed over it; when it is time for the tank scene the sections are removed.

A difficult piece of stage mechanism in one play is a Dock Scene. A double stage is built about six feet above the real stage. This is accomplished by having a dozen platforms, which can be folded up when not in use, and, when needed, are shoved on and fastened together. In front of these are representations of piles. From the sides the prows of ships lean over the pier. The tide, which seems to flow out from underneath the pier, is made of three thicknesses of painted gauze. The outside strip is stationary. Behind this and a little higher is a double row made by a continuous ribbon revolving around a cylinder at each end. The cylinders are turned by a crank, thus giving the water a steady movement. A stage-hand at the other end shakes the gauze constantly which gives the appearance of ripples.

When a man is seen struggling in the water, or a dead body is being washed to and fro, the actor playing the part lies on a small car, or sofa, placed on the stage back of the water and pulled to and fro by means of a rope fastened at each end of the car.

For a swimming act the car is swung on a pivot in the middle so that the slightest movement will set it going. It is said that an actor who was playing in one of these tank dramas in the West was suddenly discharged. He was very much surprised. "Can't I play the part?" he asked the manager. "Oh, your acting is all right," the manager replied, "but the trouble is you can't swim. We want a swimmer in this role." When an actor has to dive into the river and disappear he has

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previously put on a rubber suit, and he plunges into a hole in the tank called the pocket, which is to the tank what the ordinary trap-door in the stage is to the stage. It is about five feet deep, the bottom and sides being lined with zinc and carpeted with rubber. The lime-light is so arranged as to show this pocket very plainly to the actor so that he can fall overboard or dive in this deeper water without injuring himself.

The use of real water in plays is not, however, an entirely new feature in stage mechanism. In 1860 water was used at the Bowery theater in the melo-drama called "The Catastrophe of the Ganges." The catastrophe came from a faucet and trickled wildly along a painted wooden box, and emptied itself into a basin on the stage. At another theater the waterfall was placed in a glass case up among the painted crags where a red light was thrown upon it. Just as long ago a book of real water was seen rippling in the sunlight. A fat boy sitting on a rustic bridge used to fall into this real brook to the great delight of the audience. Later on, in another brook scene, the actor fished up a live frog.

Lime-light, gauze netting, tinsel, and linen, are the secrets of stage water. At one theater not long ago, there was shown a river gliding, for some distance, at a level along a mountain, then dashing down the rocks and flowing away in the distance. This effect was produced by setting gauze netting in the scenery and painting to represent water. Silver tinsel struck here and there in the netting gave a sparkling appearance. Thin linen sheets, placed on rollers, were moved like a panorama behind the netting, while the powerful lime-light made the illusion of real water complete.

A rain storm, a regular downpour of water comes from a perforated iron pipe, hung in the upper part of the scenery. This pipe runs across the stage from side to side, being held in position by ropes. The pipe is connected with the fire-plug in use at the theater, and the water can be made to descend gently or with great force, as the faucet of the fire-plug is turned on or off.

A saw-mill scene is another remarkable illustration of stage realism. There is the representation of a real mill, with a real buzz saw which cuts real wood. In fact there are three saws in motion but only one of them has anything to do with the play. The saw is operated by a 12-horse-power engine placed behind the scenes and the engine is supplied with steam from a boiler in the cellar of the theater. The villain, after fighting with the hero of the play, places him on the mill carriage, which moves along the logs, and sets the machinery in motion. The heroine, bursting open the mill door, appears upon the scene in time to push the hero off the carriage when he is within six inches of the glistening steel. To prevent an accident to the actor the stage carpenter so places and bolts a large piece of steel as to prevent the carriage moving beyond the point when the heroine is to come in and rescue the hero. The whole episode is quite blood-curdling, and the mechanical part of the scene is well contrived, such theatrical representations must appeal to a low order of intellect.

Some of the greatest spectacular plays ever produced have been put on the stage in this country within the past twenty years, and in many of their features, have shown the ingenuity of the stage carpenters. From six to twelve hundred persons have been engaged in these representations. The scenes in ordinary theaters are seldom over fifty feet in width; in these large spectacles the scenes average from 300 to 455 feet in width, and the space required for the performers range from 250 to 425 feet. An elaborate scene in a theatre will require about 450 square yards of canvas; the scenes in the play of "Nero," produced three or four years ago, required 3,500 square yards of canvas and as many as 30 artists were simultaneously employed for one month in painting a single scene. At the spectacles produced at Staten Island some

years ago, the scenes were found to be of such colossal size that it was some time before a plan could be devised to move them conveniently and with sufficient rapidity for the action of the play. It was finally found advisable to them upon endless circular railway tracks, the first time such a plan had ever been tried, and it proved to be successful. The Roman monarch's palace, a structure 300 feet wide by 60 feet high, in which were nearly 400 actors who were taking part in the royal revels, was moved a distance of 300 feet in the presence of the audience.

Electricity has been used very successfully in modern stage realism. In the opera of "Orpheus and Eurydice" the infernal regions were pictured with such effect as to compel one critic to remark that they were "the best infernal regions ever seen on earth." What appeared to be smoke ascending from the bottomless pit, whither Orpheus goes in search of Eurydice, was caused by a large lamp, like a stereopticon operated with the electric light. The light passed through slides of colored glass and was made to appear like ascending clouds by the skilful mingling of different hues and the manipulation of the slides. In the play of "The County Fair" there is a great horse race scene which is worked by electricity. There are real horses and jockeys and there is all the excitement of a genuine horse-race; but the whole effect is brought about by mechanical means. The horses run on small platforms which are placed over steel rollers. The platforms themselves do not move until the man who operates the scene touches a button, when the platform, with the horse on it, is moved further along the stage. In this way one horse is allowed to gain on the other, and the audience is kept in a great state of excitement. The scenery at the back is set in motion by another electric motor, while the fence in front of the horses runs on wheels, and the combined effect is a perfect picture of a great race.

The kiln in "The Middleman" seemed to be a real, live coal fire, for the actor would replenish the same every now and then as it seemed to get low. As a matter of fact the furnace was made of wood, lined with sheet iron. Over wire-netting sheets of red and orange gelatin were placed, and over a second wire-netting lumps of broken colored glass were scattered. When a row of incandescent lamps inside the net were turned on there was the appearance of a real fire, which could be made dim or bright by regulating the strength of the electric current.—Geo. J. Manson in N. Y. Voice.

## Was Sure of Him.

When Rudyard Kipling was 12 he went on a sea voyage with his father. The elder Kipling became every sea-sick and went below, leaving the youngster to himself. Presently there was a great commotion overhead, and one of the ship's officers rushed down and banged at Mr. Kipling's door. "Mr. Kipling," he called out, "your boy has crawled out on the yard-arm, and if he lets go he'll drown." "Yes," said Mr. Kipling, glad to know that nothing serious was the matter, "but he won't let go."

## Easy to Forget.

Fortune Teller—You may in time make a good income, but you will never be rich. Young Man—Why not? Fortune Teller—You are not saving—you are wasteful. Young Man—My, my—I'm afraid that is true! You have a wonderful gift! How did you know I was wasteful? Fortune Teller—You have just wasted 5 shillings getting your fortune told.

## Declined to Fight.

Professor Blackie had a large share of pugnacity in his composition, and a curious instance of it is given in this same account by himself. "As a boy," he said, "I was always antagonistic to school fights; pugilism had no fascination for me. I well remember a lad, over some small squabble, say-

ing to me, 'Will you fight me?' 'No,' I replied, 'but I will knock you down,' and immediately did it, amid great applause.

## BURIAL OF A TRAPPIST.

Solemn Offices and Simple Committing of the Body to the Earth.

The burial of a Trappist is a peculiar and solemn ceremony says an Exchange. Immediately after a monk is dead the body, dressed in the monastic robe, is stretched on a simple board, the head covered with the cowl, and then taken to the monastery chapel. There the body remains until the day of interment, four yellow wax candles burning all the time, and all the monks in turn reciting the prayers of the liturgy, night and day. On the day of burial the prayers for the dead or a requiem mass are chanted, after which all the monks form in procession to follow their brother to his last resting place. During the funeral procession, psalms are chanted in the mournful tone peculiar to the Trappist order. When the cemetery is reached more prayers are recited and then the body is slowly lowered into the grave, not in a coffin, but simply dressed in the monastic robe worn during life. A monk then goes down into the grave to cover his dead brother's face with the cowl after which the officiating priest slowly throws a shovelful of earth over the body. Two other monks do the same, and then the grave is filled up in the ordinary way. After the burial, the procession returns to the chapel in the same order.

The Trappist cemetery is always placed in the interior yard of the monastery, so that the dead must always be in view of the living, and as soon as one monk is buried, another grave next to the one just filled is at once partially dug up, that each may see the place where he may possibly be laid before long.

## On Board a Yacht.

Young Lady—Do you recognize them, dear? They are waving their hands to us, are they not, and passing a spyglass? Older Young Lady—Perhaps they are waving their hands, and they may be passing something around, but I do not think it is a spyglass.



Charles H. Hutchings.

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