

FIGHTING THE TELEPHONE TRUST, By PAUL LATZKE

SUCCESS MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY

1906



THE SUCCESS COMPANY NEW YORK PRICE 10 CENTS



Horace Greeley's Birthplace, near Amherst, N. H.

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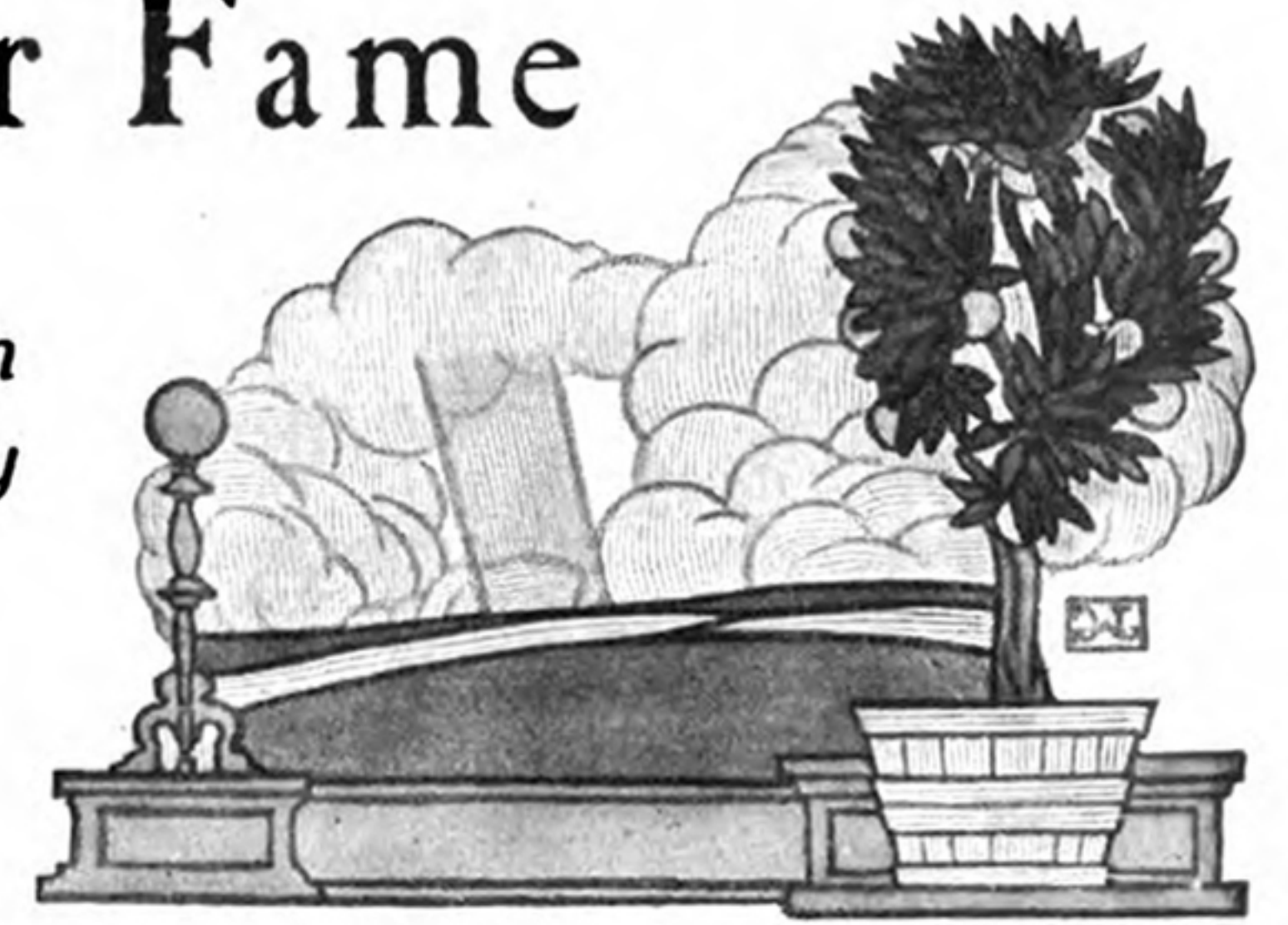
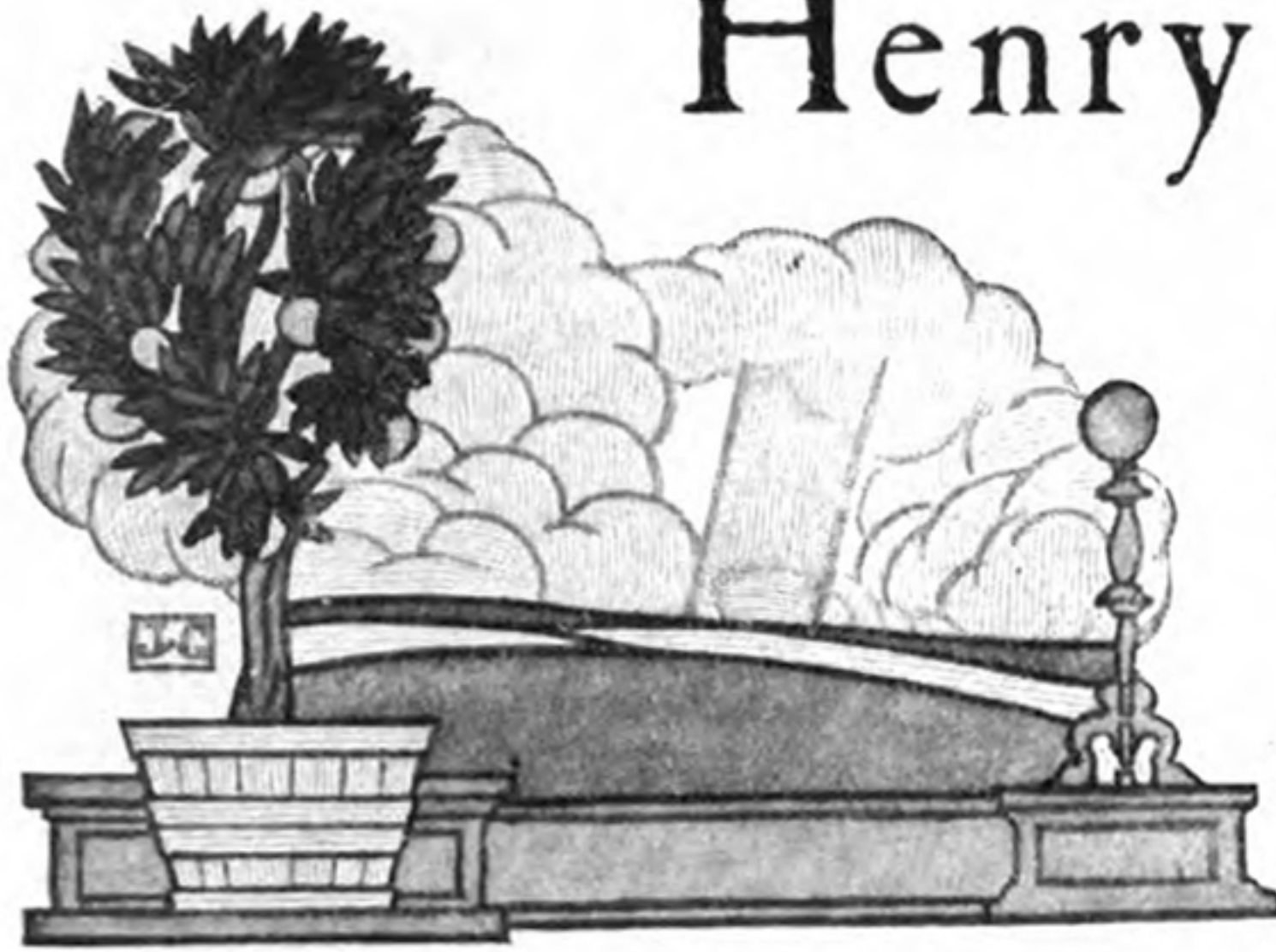
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Henry Irving's Fight for Fame

*He Overcame Many Obstacles, but when
He Won Art Meant More than Money*

By BRAM STOKER

*Personal Representative of
Henry Irving Since 1878*



IN the endowment of Henry Irving for his life-work was one supremely dominant quality which, in any age, at any place, is absolutely necessary to worthy success,—tenacity of purpose. That he had great gifts in the way of histrionic ability, of thoughtfulness, of reasoning powers and all those forces which naturally lead from causes to effects,—of literary grace, of sympathy, and of understanding of character,—has been well proved by his work of forty-nine years upon the stage; and, inferentially, by the labor of those antecedent years which helped to fit him for his later work,—for, be it always remembered, it is in youth that the real battle of success is fought, when many roads seem to lie open; when the blood is red and pleasure woos with claimant voice,—howsoever sweet it may be. But all those later-mentioned personal gifts fix only the direction of force; they do not and can not supply it. It is dogged tenacity of purpose which, in the end, prevails; which urges and forces into action the various powers and gifts which go to make up one's individual equipment. It is this quality which sustains the shrinking heart, which forces the trembling nerves, which restores the wearied brain and muscle, which conquers sleep, and which makes halcyon pleasures seem rather the sport of the butterfly than the worthy pursuit of manhood.

He Showed a Wonderful Talent for Impersonation when a Very Young Boy

Even in his boyhood Irving showed a taste for acting which gave him preëminence amongst the young cousins with whom he was brought up in Cornwall. When, as a boy of thirteen, he began the life of a London city clerk, his taste had ripened and his mind became fixed upon the stage as his objective. He did not neglect the business which he had undertaken,—through all his life no one ever knew Henry Irving to do that; but all his leisure was given to the study and practice of his chosen art. He was not content with imagining; he was always on the search for character impersonation. An old school friend of his, Charles Dyll, afterwards director of the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, writing of him thirty years afterwards, told a story of how, when, in his early days in Manchester, he had been given a part in one of John Brougham's comedies,—that of a youth who wished to appear a man, but was unable to repress his boyish ways and habits,—he invited a young son of an actor comrade to his rooms and later on "took him off" to the life in his part. I have seen him, myself, on a voyage to Calais, "study" an eccentric individual all the rough journey—and it was rough,—from Dover. Any one who saw him play *Digby Grant*, in Albery's comedy, "Two Roses," could never forget the perfection of his bearing, appearance, and manner of dress in the part of a man, schooled in poverty and poverty's littlenesses, who had suddenly come into the possession of wealth. Years afterwards I met the prototype,—the late Chevalier Wikoff, originally from Philadelphia and a close companion of Edwin Forrest in his early days. Every detail of the original, from his tasseled smoking cap and faded dressing gown up to his magnificent self-assertion and the cunning with which he disguised his weaknesses and the imperfections of old age, was there. And yet Wikoff had not been so old a man when Irving had studied him. His knowledge of the character was basic and elementary; the man grew old in reality as he had grown old in the actor's mind.

In his young days Irving at least paved the way for his later triumphs. He studied earnestly, and whatever he undertook to do he tried with all his might to do well. No one ever knew him sloppy or indeterminate in any part he took in amateur theatricals, in any piece he recited. Thus it was that, whilst the energies of others, during the moments of supreme endeavor, were given to recalling the words of the text, he was putting all his strength into the expression of them. It was little wonder that, when, amidst a fairly typical gathering of young men and hobbledehoyes who formed what was shortly afterwards called "the City Elocution Class,"

the boy of fifteen was allowed, in a tolerant way, to make his effort. He won instant success. He fairly electrified all by his force and passion in his declaiming of "The Uncle." At this period he was described as rather tall for his age; his face was very handsome and was set in a mass of black hair, and his eyes were bright and flashing. It was the same youth grown to the prime of manhood when, at the Lyceum, thirty-one years afterwards, the commanding force of his passion in the play scene of "Hamlet" swept the audience like a storm.

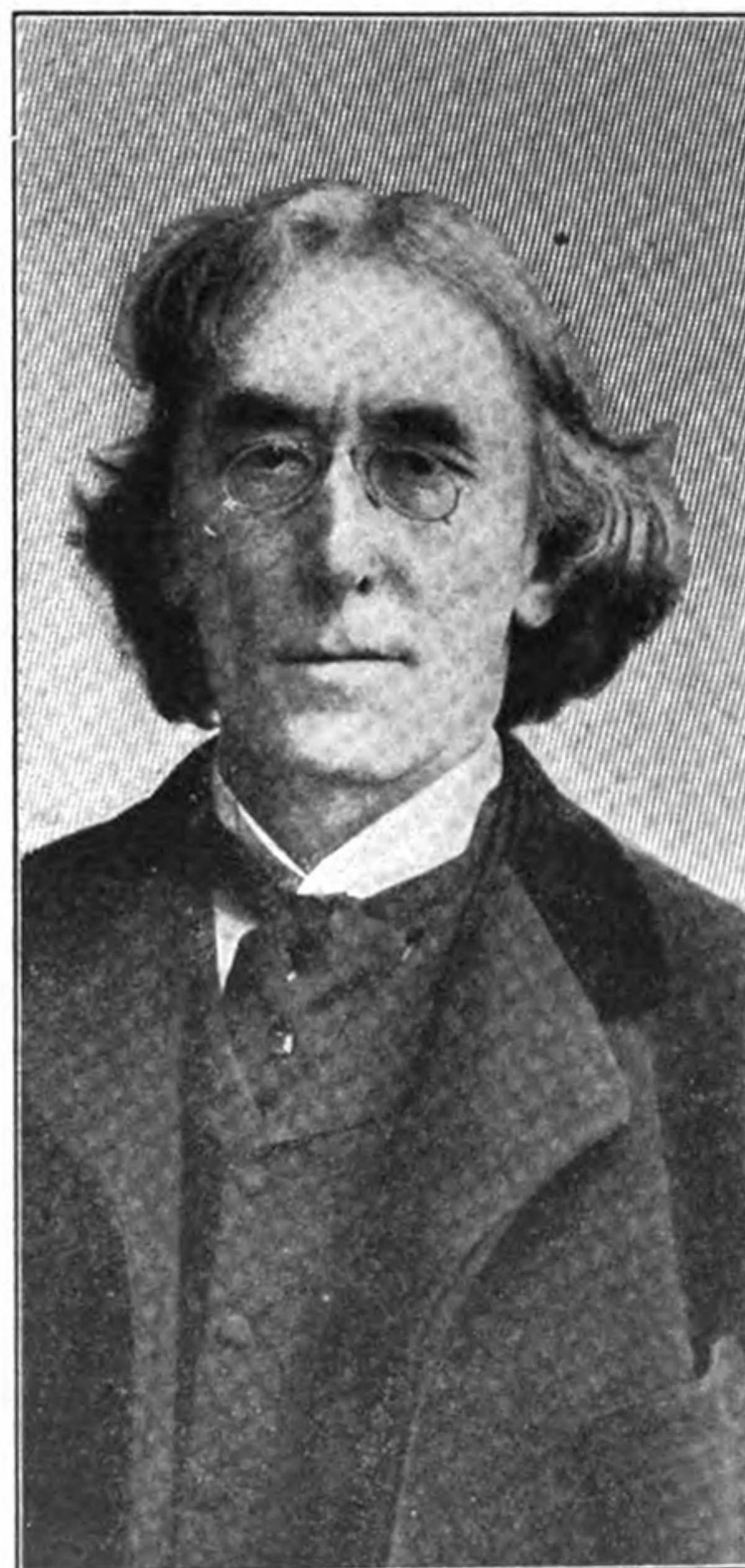
In His Earliest Acting Days He Began to Study the Philosophy of His Art

But not only in those early years did Henry Irving develop his own powers. The work which he did then—the slow laborious toil of early mornings and late nights,—aided much in his work when he became an actor in reality. Before he took an engagement he had made himself letter-perfect in a vast number of characters. He knew all the small parts in those plays of Shakespeare which were commonly acted, and in many that were acted but rarely, if at all. But he did not content himself with letter-perfection. He knew almost instinctively—with that instinct which is the result of conscious thought running freely,—that acting is not merely the delivery of words, but that situations have to be studied, as also the relations of any one actor to all the others on the stage. Thus he had in his own mind some concrete idea not only of the bearing of the character and of the expression of the acts and moods set down for him by the dramatist, but also of his special purpose in the general scheme of the play. Doubtless he altered an infinity of detail in these matters when he came to gain experience and to understand the rules of his craft.

Those rules of old, discovered, not devised,
Are nature still,—but nature modernized.

Still later, when he became a producer of plays,—when he had to understand for himself so that he might teach others all that belonged to the play and to every character, situation, development, and dominant idea in it,—he began to realize more fully the philosophy of his chosen art. With this philosophy it is impossible to deal within the scope of an article, but I have in hand a book of my "Reminiscences of Henry Irving," and in it I hope to be privileged to say something of this subject gained from a rare intimacy of twenty-seven years. Be it sufficient to remember here

that, when he entered on the active life of a player, he felt the full value of his previous thought and study. In the "fifties" stage matters were much cruder than they are now. The old "stock" system was based on an almost nightly change of the bill, and this required from young actors the perpetual study of new parts. Sometimes as many as six or seven had to be studied in a single week, and with the added difficulty that the "parts" were few and often imperfect. In stage parlance a "part" is that portion of the text which contains the lines allotted to the character, together with the necessary cues,—the last words of each preceding speech. It is not hard to see what a vast help to a young player it must have been to know already and to *understand* the lines he had to speak. In such cases he could spend the time, necessarily given to the text by those not equally well prepared, on dress and concomitant matters. At this stage of theatrical evolution dress was an important element in the perplexities of the young actor. The "wardrobe" was usually limited, and priority of claim was a rigid rule. The "Tragedian," the "First Old Man," the "Heavy Father," the "Jeune Premier,"—or "Juvenile Lead,"—and the seconds and thirds of all these cults had choice in sequence of their importance,—an importance fairly well expressed by the place toward the head of the salary list. Thus, when the "young men" came to be clothed, they had to be content with the leavings of the others. It was not a bad symbol of his having his "marshal's baton in his knapsack," that Irving had prepared himself for his task by other ways than by skill in the use of his sword. He had also



THE LATE HENRY IRVING

attended to what might be called the commissariat department. He had spent with infinite pains and endless thought somewhere about a hundred pounds sterling on dress, wigs, and property,—all those little means of giving finishing touches to appearance which belong to the equipment of an actor's craft. It is not too much to say that the consciousness of being properly, if not well, dressed is an assistance to any artist. It was not merely for self-pleasure that Rubens donned his best clothes when he took in hand his brush and palette and maul-stick.

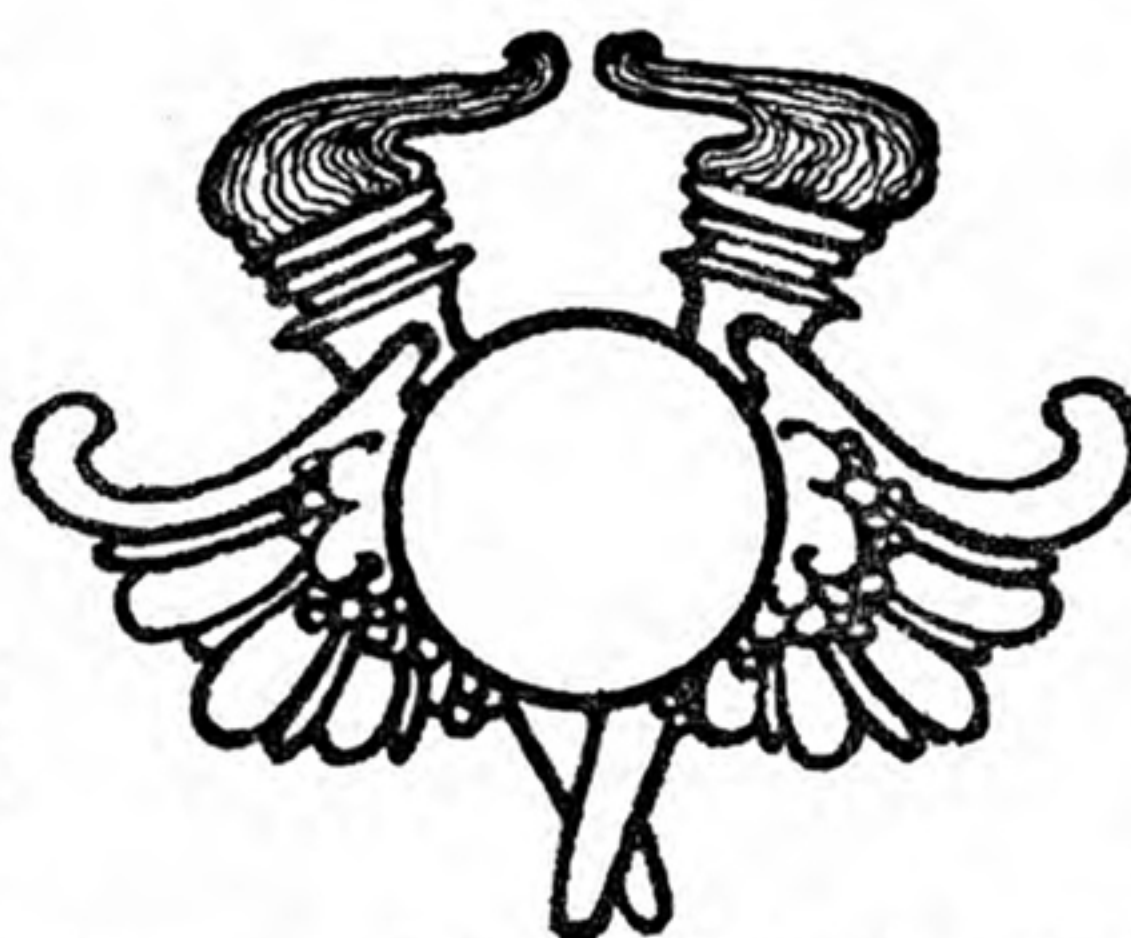
The same care and foresight marked Irving's work on the stage, and for the stage, all through his long and strenuous life. He never left anything to chance. He never grudged or shirked work in any possible way. As an actor he always came to rehearsal—even to the first, whereat custom allows certain laxity,—admirably prepared; letter-perfect in words, and with distinct ideas as to how every word should be spoken and every movement and action carried out consistently. His dress had been carefully thought out, made, and fitted not only to look well, but also to move in with ease. As a manager he had literally thought of everything. When he came to discuss scenery with the scene painters, he could tell them offhand not only about entrances and exits, not only of the picturesque effects which he wished to produce so as to heighten and aid the imagination of the spectators, but even of the suggested *sentiment* of the scene. This he would himself heighten later on by his lighting, for no one else could light a scene like Irving. I do not believe that any one before his time tried properly to do so. Since he showed the way, others, of course, have followed, but when he began there was no such practice as he evolved, as that of using together all sorts of different lights in different ways at the same time. The development of the use of colored lights for stage purposes was altogether his own doing.

Completeness of Detail and Artistic Finish, rather than Gain, Were His Aim

When he undertook a play he not only obtained the best expert archaeological experience possible, but he himself studied the subject in his own way, always with an eye to stage effect and its bearing on the development of the play. He was so earnest in his work that other great artists were willing to help him,—to devote their own talents and experience to the work he had in hand,—and the fees which he paid for such services were frequently very great indeed. It might be truly said that all the arts rallied round him at his call. Such painters as Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema, Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Seymour Lucas, R.A., Edwin A. Abbey, R.A., Keeley Halsewell, and Charles Cattermole,—such musicians as Sir Arthur Sullivan, Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Sir Julius Benedict, and Edward German,—all were eager contributors to the general effect. In addition were the scene painters who did the actual work,—great men, these, in their own art: Hawes Craven, William Telbin, Joseph Harper, and Walter Hann. There was also the regular staff of various artists who were employed by him all the year round.

It is not too much to say that Henry Irving devoted his life to Art. He never wearied in her service; he never faltered or hesitated at any sacrifice necessary in her cause. For her he spent the fortune which he made; for her he exhausted the great strength of brain and body with which he was gifted. I worked for him and with him for seven and twenty years,—ever since he took into his own hands the management of a theater and a company. In all that long time I never knew him to scamp or skimp anything. The artistic result and completeness were what he sought for, and nothing else would satisfy him. He did not aim at making money. I do not believe that ever, during his whole life, did he consider the ultimate substantial gain to arise from any work he took in hand. Money came and went; with him it was always only a means to an end. I have myself received for him, and passed through my hands in the expenditure incidental to his work, more than ten million dollars. His personal wants were simple, so that all he made was available for further work.

Devotion like this to an art could not fail of great achievement. The public was quick to acknowledge it, and the acknowledgment of the



public is not only a stimulus, but also a means to further and loftier endeavor. In 1878, when he took over the management of the Lyceum Theater, he was known as a great actor. When he left it, in 1899, having transferred his rights to a company, the Lyceum had become known all over the world as the foremost theater anywhere,—the home of the loftiest ideals and of the most thoughtful and artistic productions. His management was the most revered and respected of theatrical enterprises. The assistance and encouragement given to him by the great American public all through the vast continent from Maine to California, from the Great Lakes

to the Gulf of Mexico, aided and encouraged him further in his work from 1883, when he paid his first visit, till 1904, when he left its hospitable shores—for ever. The feeling of the nation for the man, or of the man for the nation, never changed, never lessened, but grew, and grew, and grew.

Of course no man can climb so high as he did into public esteem without being now and again assailed by the shafts of jealousy and envy, but throughout his long artistic life he always won the love and good will of his fellows. By them he was accorded not only the first place, but a place which had no second. When her late majesty, Queen Victoria, conferred on him the honor of knighthood, his fellow players presented him with an address set in a wondrous casket of gold and crystal which alone would cap the honor of any career. It was signed by every actor in the Britannic Kingdom, and is in itself a monument of affection and respect. No man could seek such an honor; few could deserve it. It stands alone in the annals of histrionic craft.

Henry Irving had, in an eminent degree, what has been called the courage of his own convictions. He always knew what he wanted and made his mind up for himself. His time for listening to advice was *before* an event, when he was gathering *data* for the formation of his own opinion. I never knew any other man—especially any other artist,—who was so anxious to know how other men before him had acted the same part that he was about to essay: of what value they regarded particular readings of various portions of the text; how they led the intelligence of the audience from one point to another; what effects they produced, and how. And yet, when his time came for playing the part himself, it seemed like a new creation. He was always grateful when anyone could recall from memory of the past distinctive visions of detail: how any one was dressed; how or where on the stage he stood at given times, and the particular modulation or expression of voice with which certain passages were given; and he was being proportionately amazed with an ever fresh amazement at how little of such things he could ever find recalled, for it is an odd thing that very few persons—even actors themselves,—can recall the detail of things they have seen and heard,—nay, more, even of their own work. He used often, when he talked of such things, to instance that past master of stage knowledge, Dion Boucicault, who could recall nothing of one of the most famous parts of his early life on the stage, except that he "wore a white hat."

There Is Always some Element in the Smaller Nature which Will Fesent Help

It is, I have noticed, always with great artists, and with them alone, that there is toleration and respect for the work of predecessors. Little people always want to do it all for themselves. There is some fierce streak of vanity or egoism in the smaller nature which resents help,—even from the dead! This is, indeed, the supersublime of folly, and every young artist should bear it in mind,—whether the instrument of his skill be the pen, the brush, the pencil, the chisel, the string, or bow, or that most gracious of all instruments, the body, with all its graces and powers which God has given him and which he has labored to make perfect to artistic use. Nothing in the whole scheme of creation is independent. Every atom, every vitalized cell, every created entity, is dependent on other matter,—on other force. All things are interdependent, and, unless one realizes this early in the life of artistic effort, he is apt to find his inner eyes so full of his own identity that there is neither time, place, nor opportunity for seeking for the great thoughts that precede great doings, or for recognizing them as great when, without his seeking, they float across his intellectual vision.

[Concluded on page 126]

BELIEVE - By STRICKLAND W. GILLILAN

Believe, and make the world believe, your jaw is set to win;
Believe (belief's contagious,) that your ship is coming in;
Believe that every failure's brought about by lack of grit;
Believe that work's a pleasure if you buckle in to it;
Believe there's help in hoping, if your hope is backed with will;
Believe the prospect's fairer from the summit of the hill;
Believe, with all your power, that you're sure of winning out;
Believe; keep on believing: they are brothers,—Death and Doubt.

Believe,—not as the dreamer, with his listless hands a-swing,—
Believe, with muscles rigid and life's battle flag a-fling;
Believe God does n't always wait until we cry to Him,
But blesses oftener the hand that's fighting with a vim;
Believe, with him of old, that all things come to them that wait,
Then, while you're waiting, hustle at a doubly strenuous rate;
Believe that, in this life, we get our sternly just deserts;
Believe the world is partial to the man that hides his hurts.

Believe the clouds have only veiled—not blotted out,—the sky;
Believe there's sweeter sunshine for the blessed by-and-by;
Believe the blackest dark proclaims the speedy dawn of day;
Believe your joy's but waiting till you drive the dumps away;
Believe the nights are nothing to the days that lie between;
Believe there's much that's better than you've ever heard or seen;
Believe that—not alone your sin,—your good will find you out;
Believe; keep on believing: they are brothers,—Death and Doubt.

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Henry Irving's Fight for Fame

By BRAM STOKER

[Concluded from page 88]

In his early days on the stage Irving's qualities of resolution and endurance must have been pretty well tried. Fifty years ago the salaries of actors were poor and work was long and hard. The young men of to-day who stroll to rehearsal in the afternoon, if at all, and who draw salaries varying from twenty dollars to two hundred, would probably consider themselves aggrieved if they had to attend a long rehearsal every day in the week, as well as to play, perhaps, several parts at night, and to live on a salary of from five to ten dollars a week. Irving had achieved a large measure of success as an actor after ten years of honest work, and was, in addition, manager of a popular London theater, when he was able to draw a weekly wage of forty dollars. In those days, too, there was little to cheer or enliven an actor's life. He had, practically, no social position at all. Such friends as he had, in addition to his own fellows, were the result of happy chance. Such pleasures as were his, outside his own calling, were walks on lonely hillsides, or late evenings in noisy taverns. The doubtful joys of the latter style of amusement had to be heavily paid for in many ways. It was not a matter of chance that the young, ambitious, self-reliant, resolute boy avoided, when possible, such pitfalls. His pleasures were of the hillside, when obtainable. During the two and one half years of his life in Edinburgh, where he went after a few preliminary months in Sunderland, he made it a practice to walk every day round Arthur's Seat,—the mountain which towers picturesquely to the eastern side of the city. In these walks he studied the parts which he had to play at night or on coming nights, and thus contrived to mingle work with pleasure in a healthy way.

There was one special act in Irving's young life on the stage that has a lesson for all young artists. When, in 1859, having then had three full years of experience as a player, he got a three years' engagement in London and made his appearance at the Princess's, he came to the conclusion that his work was not yet good enough for metropolitan favor. So he resolutely bent himself to the task before him, and, with the reluctant consent of his manager, canceled his engagement. He went back to the weary routine and labor and hardship of the provinces, till the time should come for a more worthy effort. When we remember that a London engagement was, and is, the goal of an ambitious actor's hopes, and that it means regular work and regular pay and an ever increasing opportunity for distinguishing oneself, we can understand that his self-denying resolution was little less than heroic. When, however, he did come again, seven years later, he had his reward. He came to stay. He knew his work then, and knew that he knew it. His record from that on was an unbroken one of success and honor. His fight was won.

Thenceforward his success was that of the stage of his time. He won a place for acting, and the stage had only to act worthily to hold it. It might almost be said of his relation to the stage of his time, "He found it brick and left it marble."

The honors which crowned the later years of his life were many. He was given honorary degrees in three great universities, in the three nations of the kingdom of Britain. Dublin led the way, in 1892, with the degree of doctor of letters,—Litt. D. Cambridge followed, in 1898, with the same degree, and Glasgow, in 1899, added that of doctor of laws,—LL. D. In 1895, he was knighted by Queen Victoria, the first time that this honor or anything of the same kind was conferred on an actor in any country. This officially removed a long-standing grievance on the part of players; up to the second decade of last century their calling was classed amongst others in the vagabond statutes.

And now he has been given the supreme honor which can only come after the end of life. He was accorded a public funeral and burial in Westminster Abbey. He lies in Poet's Corner, to the east of the south nave of the cathedral. His grave lies between those of Charles Dickens and David Garrick, and where he would have lain, I am right sure, had he been granted his choice,—at the foot of the monument of Shakespeare.

How Kites May Help Geologists

KITE-PHOTOGRAPHY, first successfully essayed in France, about six years ago, bids fair to become an aid in scientific investigation, notably in the study of certain geological problems. A camera is attached to a kite and sent up to a height of several hundred feet, from which a photograph is taken of the country below, the shutter being controlled electrically from the ground. It has been found that such photographs will throw interesting light on the mode of formation of sand dunes. A single photograph shows clearly a considerable stretch of beach with the adjoining country, with the ridges and hillocks as clear-cut as in a geological model made with the greatest precision. Prof. Meunier, of the Paris Museum, predicts that a camera-equipped kite will hereafter be one of the geologist's most valued tools.



"The health of childhood,
The happiness of old age,
Quaker Oats"