

Very eloquent and touching was the tribute which Mr. Bram Stoker paid the late Sir Henry Irving, with whom he was for so many years associated, in a lecture which he delivered at Westbourne Park Chapel. Beginning with a description of the famous actor's early environment, Mr. Stoker told how, when quite a lad, he was sent to live with some relatives in Cornwall. "They were strongly religious people, who looked upon the theatre, not merely as the ante-chamber of hell, but as hell itself." Even in his baby-hood Irving acted, said the lecturer, and when only a youth of fifteen, the few pennies he spent on books he had to take out of the money for his food. His pennies, also he used to save up to go to Sadler's Wells Theatre, where Samuel Phelps was acting. To Phelps Irving became greatly devoted, and Mr. Stoker, in an amusing passage, told how the ardent and eager youth also developed a romantic attachment for Phelps's daughter, whom he had never seen except at a distance, and who, said the lecturer, "was a lady no longer young, and, as I have heard, no longer beautiful."

One of the most interesting anecdotes which occurred in the course of the lecture was to the effect that when the committee on the revision of the Bible had finished their labours, they went one night to the Lyceum Theatre. The chairman of the committee, said, Mr. Bram Stoker, sent for me and said, "I want you to bear in mind that we wish to put it on record that we, who have just revised the Bible, have come here and we not only see nothing to object to, but we think this theatre is altogether a place for good." Mr. Stoker adopted some curious and interesting methods of estimating the popularity and success of the late Sir Henry Irving. For instance Mr. Stoker told of messenger boys waiting outside the theatre in New York, where Irving was acting, on a Wednesday evening to book seats for the performance on the evening of the Thursday week. Another illustration in the same vein was that of the actor stranded in San Francisco, who earned his fare to New York by standing in the gallery line for a week and selling his place. But the quaintest illustration was that in which Mr. Stoker estimated that, if all the people who had ever gone to see Irving act were to stand in one long line, allowing a foot space for each, the sun, rising at six o'clock over one end of the procession and sinking at half-past six over the other end, would have shut 1,000 miles of people into utter darkness.