

are well-nigh dispelled, and in the broad expanse the fitting symbols and shadows have given place to the stern, but dignified, actualities of life, and the vesper-bell, what is it but that which the world's rapt ear has so long been straining to hear, that note of universal harmony—the brotherhood of man—that shall, ere long, usher in the full, mellow eventide of peace and joy!

A MCGILL MAN.

BY JAY WOLFE.

*Written for the UNIVERSITY GAZETTE.*

CHAP. X.

"All the world's a stage—  
And all the men and women merely actors!  
They have their exits and their entrances,  
And each man in his time plays seven parts."

—Shakespeare.

"Death ere thou hast slain another  
Good and fair and bright as she,  
Time shall throw his dart at thee!"

—Sir Philip Sydney.

The night of our entertainment was a memorable one. Clooney and his rival glowered at one another in the green-room, and kept Charley and me busy in inventing means to keep them apart. Molkenstone, the rival aforesaid, rehearsed his part with great gusto, and as he exclaimed—"O! most adorable, I love you distractedly!" Clooney grated his teeth and roared out his part—"Villain, thou shalt die ten thousand deaths!" There was a large audience present, and it seemed to be in perfect good humour with itself and the actors. The wheezy piano was made to do duty as orchestra, and to play slow music in the death scene of the robber chief, and, I have no doubt, it added to his death agonies, and tended to reconcile him to his approaching dissolution.

At eight o'clock the curtain was rung up, and at ten minutes past eight he last corner had cleared the ground, and was slowly vanishing into the flies. During this ten minutes the actors had been standing on the stage, their feet visible to the audience, but that was all. I was stage manager, and Charley prompter. He lay under the centre table, hidden by the long cloth, and it was laughable to the initiated to see how affectionate the actors were towards the table. They continually leaned upon it.

Clooney was in the first charade, and, dressed in his stage costume of a mountaineer, looked extremely picturesque. The sympathy of the female portion of the audience was with him from the first, and he was frequently applauded. Then came a tableau—"Ajax defying the gods." I was Ajax, and had given Clooney and Charley particular instructions in the methods of raising the curtain, but they lacked practical experience. I took my position close to the curtain, the bell rang and the curtain shot up several feet. Then

it stopped. Clooney laboured with the cord on one side, Charley on the other, but it moved not. The ineffectual movement of the curtain began to make the audience laugh. It rose and fell on one side and the other like a ship in a gale, and still I stood half visible to the audience.

"For goodness' sake, raise it," I whispered.

The two bent their backs to the work, but the curtain did not stir.

I shrieked to them to let the curtain drop, but it would not drop, and the audience began to clap and stamp.

Charley wiped his brow with his handkerchief and looked at me. Suddenly he went upon the stage, crawling under the curtain, and I heard him say—

"Ladies and gentlemen,—the programme calls this scene 'Ajax defying the gods.' Ajax authorizes me to state that he defies the gods to move that curtain. I am also authorized to state that the scene before you is called the 'walking legs'—a remarkable freak without a body. They can walk any way. For example, they will now walk to one side of the stage."

They did walk to one side of the stage, and would have got off all right if Clooney had not given the curtain an extra pull. However, he did so, and the whole affair came down, the curtain enveloping my form and the rod smashing my skull. I was angry, and, springing to my feet, marched off the stage with the curtain entangled about me and the broken rod clattering at my feet, while the audience roared itself hoarse. If ever I am persuaded to engage in theatrical performances again my friends have my permission to put me into an asylum.

The curtain was fitted up in a very few minutes, and the next charade began. Miss Mayflower was certainly the success of the evening. She looked superb, and though her acting showed a trace of constraint, it was otherwise exceedingly natural. Clooney thought it too natural, and I was afraid there would be another quarrel on this account. Nor was I wrong. Clooney left the place as soon as he could be dispensed with, and went to his room. There was a dance after the entertainment, and I was sent by some of his admirers to find and bring him to them for congratulation. I found him sitting in the dark at the window, looking out into the night, his head between his hands, and had to speak to him several times before he answered me. After much persuasion I succeeded in getting him to come down to the hall with me and receive his congratulations. As soon as this was over he left me, and sought Miss Mayflower. I saw him whisper to her, and they went out, as others were doing, to walk up and down the verandah. What passed between them I afterwards heard—

"Permit me to congratulate you upon your acting," said Miss Mayflower.

"Thank you," replied Clooney, "my acting was far inferior to yours; but then I had not my heart in it as you had."

What he meant was conveyed by his tone so clearly that Miss Mayflower could not pass it over.

"What do you mean, Mr. Blake?" she said. "Do you mean that the part was agreeable to me?"