

Every turn, cross and position of the underlings must be subservient to the star, and their obedience in adhering to his behest increases his greatness. "The combat was a picture of real ferocity," I have read in the morning papers—but provided Richmond missed a rehearsed blow, would not Richard squeal, therefore, the ferocity must be carefully guarded and blows artistically counted, or between the combatants there would be real bad blood, as on one occasion in the French Spy—the queen of pantomime art, "Madame Celeste" had a new "Mohammed" who struck her two blows on the finger. She became enraged and with audible *sacres* smote the accursed dog until he incontinently fled. This is natural, but it is too natural for the stage. There is little if anything new under the dramatic sun. Scrape off the veneer and you will find its prototype. It is the treatment of the subject. The critics will also in their notice of a drama possibly say, "Mr. So and So created the part." Where was the author? He creates—the actor delineates. What would Mr. Shakespeare have said if this train had been used of his divine creations. Now-a-days it is more of *imitation* than creation. The creations of Fanny Davenport are merely French copies. Bernhardt has copied the methods of Rachel. Daly has his German prototypes, and farce comedy is as old as the hills. The greatest of them all in Yankee portraiture will find his precursor in Rosina Meadows, which is but an Americanized version of the "Luke the Laborer" school. Again, the greatest actors have made the greatest pauses, and pauses which were unnatural, and the greatest effects have been made by conversational transitions. It is said Macready made one great transition which I have seen copied in Macbeth, and which the audience applauded: The impetuous Thane almost hurls his command at Seyton, "Give me mine armour," and then ultra colloquially says, "How does your patient doctor?" These are telling stage contrasts, but no one can call them natural sequences. It would almost seem from the public standpoint that the most unnatural acting achieves the greatest success. The school of realism, which takes in trains in motion, saw mills in action, steamboats in transit, with explosions here and fearful denouements there and everywhere, is so full of unrealism that it is unnecessary to dilate upon it, but it is conclusive enough to show that natural acting on the stage, which is so often lauded by the critic, is an absolute impossibility.