

founded; though it is often built up on some ludicrous pretensions of vanity, still the structure has generally some sound substratum of reality. But though there are many amateur actors who would really seem to have been born to act, there are others who were never intended by Nature for actors, though they imagine that they have every qualification for the stage, and that they require no teaching or training to step forth ready-made players. The performances of this latter class of men, however, are often only the outcome of excessive vanity, and too frequently begin and end in a desire to look pretty, the attainment of even this object being very often a most lamentable failure. In the ranks of this class are those odious beings whose photographs meet you in all sorts of places, men who have played for some charity; or at the house of some foolish, good-natured, stage-struck woman, and who have never recovered from the overdose of sugar, or, as the slang term is, "taffy," then given to them. These men generally play in dress pieces, and in the accuracy of their ruffles, the tie of their wigs and the amount of bismuth that they wear to whiten their hands, they give points to any professional. They are great at 'making up,' and though this is a very desirable qualification, it becomes less so when it is the only one the amateur has, as is too often the case, and therein lies their only greatness. And they often, nay, generally, have one terrible physical defect, and one that the camera too palpably and cruelly reproduces—they have no calves. Their poor legs, when cased in silk stockings, almost invariably go to extremes: they either resemble carefully covered broom-handles, or they cruelly recall the terminations of a grand piano-forte.

There are exceptions and notable ones to this rule, and the recollection of the glorious development of solei and gastrocnemii muscles of the legs of an amateur whom the writer once beheld in the character of a Highland chieftain, only proves that there are no rules without exceptions. Those legs alone would have carried their owner triumphantly through any part, and they were the admiration of all the ladies, the envy of all the men, and the cause of immense applause on the part of the gods who were privileged to behold them on the occasion referred to; but such legs are like the proverbial visits of celestial beings, few and far between, though in saying this we do not mean to state that they are bow-legs.

To return to the men spoken of before this by-the-way dissertation on those noble legs intruded itself, they are never amenable to criticism. If they play a part abominably, as they nearly always do, they are sure to reply to your comments, "Yes, I see what you mean, but I read the part differently," and they generally have views which are wholly at dissonance with those of the author. Their vanity is loathsome, and their incompetence only illustrates it the more forcibly. But they have their admirers; often quite a large number. They star at various country houses, playing their own limited repertoire, and sometimes a few poor little plays from their own feeble pens, which seem to be all feather and no quill, and when the day comes when they are laughed at, if not hissed, they retire into private life, and ever afterward growl at and anathematize the deplorable lack of appreciation of their efforts on the part of the uncultured bores who ridiculed them.

The amateur actress is also great fun, though space will not allow a full description of her at this time. She is invariably inspired, and her *Juliet* or *Lady Teazle* is acknowledged to be wonderful. "You never saw anything like it on the regular stage," say her friends, and it is with a feeling of de-

vout thankfulness that we confess we never did.

It is surprising how vulgar the best-bred people can be when you put them into a fancy dress and give them the dramatist's words instead of their own. Nervousness or want of knowledge occasions extravagance quite as often as timidity: so those amateurs who are the very first to condemn the hardworking professional men and women, whom they term 'stage hacks,' will upon occasion so out-Herod Herod that the spectator is astonished, if not disgusted.

Who does not know some infuriated amateur actress who feels that her proper sphere is before the footlights? She is a very nice girl before she takes to acting, but a course of *Pinafore*, or what you may please often wholly demoralizes her. On the stage she blurs and blots the delicately limned characters that only a gifted touch can vivify; off the boards she offends by her second-hand coquetties and futile attempts at epigram.

But even amongst amateur actresses there are some ladies of really wonderful ability, but such are born artists who would have been first-rate actresses had circumstances required; but such are rare, and when met with only call forth our praise the more from the contrast they present to the ordinary run of amateurs.

Far be it from our intention to decry altogether the efforts of the amateur element; it may be said that, when it does not interfere with the regular workers, it is beneficial. It founds and cultivates a taste for the drama: it preserves a high standard, and it is often unselfish and free from egotism. How generous some of these amateurs are will be readily testified by many of their professional brethren, whose pockets have often been the better for their aid. It is not the really talented amateur that we decry, but those who were never intended by nature or anything else for the stage. May the amateur element flourish, as long as it does not interfere, as before said, with the 'regulars,' but there need scarcely be any fear of that for there is room enough in the world for amateurs and professionals alike.

With the above brief introductory remarks, we proceed to say that Miss Ruby Quinton and Mr. C. W. A. Dedricksen got through the "Lady of Lyons" on Saturday without any fatal results.



SUGGESTIONS THANKFULLY RECEIVED.

The door opened and he came in. (This is the correct mode of commencing these stories. It is immensely 'pschutt' and good form.) He was a rather grave-looking man, and he advanced towards our desk and sat down.

"My name is Snobkins," he said, "and I used to contribute to your paper—articles—not money." We intimated that he was one of a very numerous class.

"Maybe so," he went on, "but my articles were better than money, but you have lately refused several little things I dashed off, and your paper's no good. It's bosh."

We intimated that the public had hinted that Mr. Snobkins' contributions had been 'bosh,' and that that had been the reason of our refusing to publish any more of them.

"The public's a fool," he burst out, "and you're another."

He died very quietly.

We rolled the remains up in several exchanges and sold them yesterday for waste paper. 1 cent per lb.



Hardly had we stowed away the evidences of our meritorious action, for we are modest and detest ostentation, when, with a rap at the door, in stalked the Reverend Mr. Honeydew.

"Good day to you," he said.

"Sing hey to you," we replied, with that vivacity that is one of our distinctive traits, "pray be seated."

"Thank you," replied his reverence, "I merely called to reason with you as a man and a brother, about your paper. It is becoming lamentably profane. You made fun of Pontius Pilate last week, and this week you say 'gosh' twice: I shall be compelled to stop my subscription unless you reform, and I should like you to publish a few of these," he went on, producing several cuttings from a theological work, neatly pasted on an old sermon cover, "You must please all classes, and these might go in amongst the patent medicine advertisements which everyone reads."

"Well, sir," said we, "we are ever happy to oblige our patrons, and we will willingly do so if you will act upon our suggestion: we pay for a pew in your church, which counterbalances your subscription to this paper: See? We will publish your scraps if you will read some of our jokes interspersed throughout your sermons. How does that strike you?"

"Ridiculous," answered the minister.

"Why ridiculous?" we asked. "You take upon yourself to find fault with our paper, but we don't get up and snort when you spring some of your remarkable ideas on us in your discourses. We pay you to preach, and have just as much right to pick holes in what you say as you have to—vice versa," we said, rather at a loss for a word and dropping into French, of which language we are a master.

"You are not only slangy but impertinent," answered the other, "vulgarity is not wit—"

"So we were informed a few days ago by a