

carefully written a long and most interesting speech, but that unfortunately he had lost it and begged leave to go and look for it, as, not having memorized it, he hadn't the ghost of an idea what it was all about. On the conclusion of "The Crushed Tragedian" he was again recalled, and, pretending to be intensely nervous, said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I'm blessed if I can find that speech. I can't for the life of me remember the beginning, but I'll try the middle or the end, and wander about it, if you'll kindly give me rounds of applause whenever it strikes you as singularly bad. The good points will take care of themselves—at least I hope so. This is the one hundred and twenty-sixth performance I have given on this stage. Eighty-four times have I appeared in 'The Crushed,' which piece I was obliged to withdraw from the bills owing to a severe sore throat. By the way, you know all this, but I'll gradually arrive at a point. All I ask is, as prize fighters say, 'Time!' Mr. Byron has, in 'The Crushed,' most cleverly and good-naturedly satirized the old school of provincial tragic acting, and has kindly allowed me to 'build up' the part of Fitz Altamont, and make a special study of it. I have succeeded beyond my utmost hopes, for press and public have universally acknowledged that, as a creation, if I may use the word, Fitz is fully equal to Dundreary. But enough of myself. Many thanks to the gentleman in the stalls who says 'No, no!' but if I don't rattle on I shall lose the thread of what I am trying to arrive at, so I repeat 'Enough of myself;' for I want to speak of a dear old friend of mine, Mr. John T. Raymond, who will more than fill my place on these boards on Monday night. (Good!) I knew that would 'bring down the house!' Do it again. Thank you. As *Colonel Sellers*, he has stamped himself.—(Voice from the dress circle—'He's what?') I don't mean he's postage stamped himself; I mean he's proven himself one of the finest character actors of the age. On Friday next he will have performed *Colonel Sellers* 1,000 times, and if he

lives, you may eventually add two or three 0's and say 'there's millions in it!' (Applause.) Ah! I had you again. Thanks. Now I'll have a fly at something else. I wish publicly to thank Mr. Henry Abbey, the manager of this theatre, for his kindness, thoughtfulness and liberality. My thanks are also due to the ladies and gentlemen who have so greatly helped me through what I am proud to call a most successful engagement. To the press I am much indebted for the generous way in which they have criticized our performances, and especially for the kind words of encouragement they gave me when I made the bold and dangerous experiment of 'irizing' a school of acting that some even yet believe in. With Mr. Byron's permission I shall write in (he would do it much better, but he won't; he hasn't the time) another scene, in which *Fitz Altamont*, failing as a lecturer on the 'Carriway Tribe,' turns prestidigitateur (what a frightfully long word), I mean a conjuror. I merely add that to make things extra clear. Robert Heller is a very old friend of mine, and he has, in the kindest manner, been teaching me the wildest sorts of tricks. They do look so easy, and they are so difficult. He thinks nothing at all of pulling babies and bird cages out of his boots, and putting them up his sleeve or palming them. But then he requires music. Now, I don't. That gives me encouragement. As to Miss Heller, she has most graciously for months past endeavoured to explain to me the 'Second Sight' mystery. I've conquered the 'First Sight.' It's the 'Second Sight' that floors me. For instance, in conjuring, I can take a common hat like this—we'll call it a common hat, but it isn't—and you see at once how, by a pure effort of memory, I gently produce a common baby, weighing thirty-two pounds and a few ounces. Of course, it's a fearful strain on the mind; but you see at a glance how it is done, don't you? Well, I'll do it again. (Voice from stalls—'When?') When I return from England. Good night. God bless everybody!"

THE END.