

## Only a Day.

BY W. E. HARRIS.

(CONTINUED.)

As time moves with fettered feet when one is waiting anxiously for it to pass, I again plied my good natured friend in the neighboring seat with further questions. I remarked that the manager of this gigantic affair must have a most wonderful brain, to say nothing of untold wealth. My friend replied in the affirmative and added: "He is indeed wise, to say nothing of his wealth, but strangest of all, no one has ever yet seen this mysterious man. He controls this whole show, furnishes everything wanted and directs the play as well and yet is invisible even to the actors. These men, who are taking part in to-day's play, have, I am told, been with this mysterious manager from their earliest infancy up, they have been fed, and clothed, and cared for, and paid by him, and some are now really very old, and yet have never seen the manager's face. I understand that a number are to participate in some very interesting events to-day, and a number of others are making "positively their last appearance."

"What becomes of those actors when they have made their final appearance?" I anxiously inquired.

"In order to make you understand I shall be obliged to make an explanation at some length and then leave you still in the dark," said my friend.

The "manager" of this establishment is the builder of it, and the owner, as well as manager, everything is directly under his control, and yet it is alleged that this same extraordinary Being has a much larger, grander and infinitely beautiful playhouse in a Country far away, where all the actors, who have served him and acted their parts well and fulfilled their engagements, are sent when they have made their final appearance in the play in the "lower house." The other one I refer to is called the "Upper House," and in this all those who have been faithful in acting their parts in the "Lower House" are permitted to see and be with their "manager" in person; but to those who have failed to act their parts as ordered, admission to the "Upper House" is refused, and they say the disappointment of this refusal converts their after existence into a perfect hell.

I was very much astounded at this piece of information, and remarked that great inconsistency lurked within such a story as that just repeated. I said quite warmly that he had just told me that each day's programme remained up to the very day and hour of the performance as a sealed volume and therefore it was impossible for me to see how any

actor could be expected to execute his part in a satisfactory manner, having had no practice beforehand, and under such peculiar circumstances who was to judge whether a man had performed his part well or not?

"Ah!" said my friend, "one difficulty leads to another and this matter requires great explanations before I can help you to clearly understand the situation. I can only liken this play to real life in order to demonstrate the case to your satisfaction. For instance, you arise from your bed in the morning with no conception whatever of what may be before you in the way of events before the sun sets, you are daily confronted with dangers and difficulties and with circumstances in which you are obliged to refer to your conscience before taking a step which may lead you far in the wrong direction. You must admit that when a man meets with an unusual condition of affairs the path of duty always shines out clearly before that man's vision, and if he follows that path, as directed by his conscience, or sense of duty, and subsequently finds he took the wrong course, the man acted rightly in so far as he could tell, and therefore no blame whatever attaches to him. Now, in this great play enacted here each day, the circumstances are precisely the same and the same rule applies. When an actor is puzzled to know how to act aright, if he does as he thinks the "manager" wishes him to, we are told the actor invariably comes out all right and is just as surely ranked as a first class actor and therefore eligible to the more exalted position in the "Upper House."

Of course it takes some time to make these explanations on paper, but the above conversation occupied but the space of a few minutes.

Our attentions were then attracted towards the stage once more, for the sun was mounting higher and higher in the heavens and lying clear before our eyes was all the vast landscape beneath and beyond. I fail to find words adequate to describe the beauty of this scene which now met my gaze. Here lay before me a whole world bathed in the early morning dew, rich and mellow with the soft golden rays of the early morning sun. Oh! such scenery! Vast mountains and valleys clothed with great stretches of dark forest, mighty rivers and tiny streams, large lakes and numberless little ponds or lagoons dotting the surface of the country, (reminding one of a hen and her chickens, when comparing their sizes.) Then one could detect highways running here and there, and also railroads piercing the country in many directions. Then came large towns, vast cities and even small country villages, and beyond all this lay in plain sight the ever heaving, restless

waste of waters, forming some great ocean.

I did not see this all in a glance, but only as it passed before our eyes in the course of the play. As each new scene was displayed a new set of actors took their places on the stage, and acted, each in his respective role.

I shall find it hard to describe these scenes as portrayed in the play, and give you but the faintest idea of it all, yet will add the thoughts which filled my own mind as each new scene and act was presented.

The first scene, after that of the breaking day, was a life-like representation of a large city waking once more to the joy and gladness, to the sadness, sorrow and suffering which combine to make up the stern realities of every day life. As this scene passed from our sight we carefully noticed the different aspects of a great human hive, which we are pleased to call a city. This was indeed a striking scene! We noticed the wide and narrow streets, with their rows of costly buildings or tumble down houses and shops; we saw the great churches and factories, warehouses and the various styles of shops all decorated to suit the particular class of business to which the occupant gave his attention. We saw the busy throng of human actors, each bending his steps towards some particular point. It was the broad square wherein stood the market place that presented the first tragedy of the day. I was watching the different stalls with the busy salesmen offering their wares to the passersby, when suddenly I noticed a great commotion which I saw a moment later was caused by two large dray horses suddenly taking fright and dashing off at a terrible rate across the square, scattering people in all directions; as does the autumn wind scatter the leaves of the forest. Anyone who has ever witnessed a sight of this kind does not require a lengthy description of the scene to aid them to recall vivid recollections of the same. The frightened pedestrians running for safety, and shouting lustily to those near by to do likewise, and the frantic yells of the driver as he vainly strives to recover his lost reins. Faster and faster go the horses until suddenly they reach a sharp corner in a street leading from the square. Here the wagon collides with the curbstone and a street lamp, the horses are freed from the wrecked dray in the twinkling of an eye, and dash off more furiously than ever, with their broken harness trailing behind. So much for that! This is quite a common occurrence, and worthy of nothing more than a short notice in the daily papers; but as to the man who lies gasping and dying beside his broken dray, how about him? Is this a common occurrence