

doubtless went far to win the verdict of guilty. The general introduction of such exhibitions and performances in court would certainly be edifying and have the effect of keeping the jurors awake.

To a mind saturated with poesy, the word "minstrelsy" brings up notions of the minstrel infirm and old, his withered cheek and tresses gray, one who had known a better day (like Noah before he went into the ark), the harp, and the orphan boy staggering thereunder. It and the phrase, "entertainment of the stage," were thoroughly discussed by the Court of Appeals in New York, some five years ago, in an action brought by the mayor and council of New York city against Eden Musee American Co. (102 N.Y. 593). The defendants maintain an exhibition of wax-works, "not funny, but calm and classical," and charmed the ears of all beholders with the entrancing strains produced by the band of instrumental musicians known as "Prince Lichstenstein's Hungarian Gypsy Band," which gave concerts in a room or alcove opening into but above a large hall. The mayor wanted the company to take out a license, without which it is unlawful "to exhibit to the public in any building, garden or grounds, concert-room or other room in New York city, any interlude, tragedy, comedy, opera, ballet, play, farce, minstrelsy, or any other entertainment on the stage, etc., etc.," alleging that the music furnished was "minstrelsy." The counsel engaged hurled an immense amount of learning, antiquarian, legal, poetic, and dictionary-etic, on the subject of minstrels and minstrelsy, at the court; the judges dodged it and did not decide the question of main interest to us, "What is minstrelsy?" but, saying that the word has a much wider meaning now than in days of old, held that the performance in question was "an entertainment of the stage," and that a license must be obtained.

We readily pass from minstrelsy to bards. According to the old Welsh laws, "the bard of the household" was a man of considerable importance, no mere musician, but, as Herr Klesmer said, "he helped to rule the nation and make the age as much as any other public man; he counted himself on level benches with legislators"; although by statute his harp was only worth six score pence and his tuning key twenty-four pence. He was the eighth of the fourteen individuals entitled to sit upon chairs in the palace of the king. He had his land free, and his horse: his linen clothing had to be supplied by the queen, and his woollen garments by her royal consort. He sat next to the chief of the household at the three principal feasts, and that functionary had to hand him his harp. When singing was in order, the chaired bard had to begin, and the law prescribed that his first song should be one of praise to God, the second one of praise to the king who owned the palace where the high revels were being held; but if there were no such monarch, then any king might be glorified. After this performance, the bard of the household had to sing three songs on various subjects. If the queen desired melody the bard of the household had to sing to her without limitation, but (fortunately for the non-musical) in a low voice, so that the hall might not be disturbed by him (Ven. C., B.I., c. 14). When he entered upon his duties he had a harp from the king and a gold ring from the queen, and it was against the law for him to part with his harp (Dim. C., B.I., c. 18). The