

TALKING OF KEELEY.

A Man who Hoaxed the Public out of £2,000,000.

The century has seen many humbugs come and go, leaving the world richer by their going; but John Keeley, who died recently by common consent king of them all, a title which would no doubt have given him as much pleasure as his ill-gotten millions.

Keeley tried many vocations before he discovered that his proper field was in exploiting the gullibility of the public. In early days he had carried a trav, tumbled in a circus-ring, played the violin in an orchestra, been a conjurer and an Indian scout; but fortune turned until the idea of his motor first entered his brain a quarter of a century ago; and it speaks volumes for the cleverness of the man that through all these years he successfully imposed on the public and died with his fraud undetected.

It was in the seventies that the rumour began to circulate among scientific men and speculators that a wonderful motor had been discovered which, in the words of its inventor, a certain John Erres: Keeley, would drive a train of cars at the rate of a mile a minute, with the power derived from a small egg-cupful of water; while, in his own expressive language, 'with a bucketful of water it would drive a steamer so fast that she would split in two.'

There were obviously millions in a discovery so wonderful, and the obscure ex-water became a hero whose rooms were inundated daily by fashionable and wealthy crowds. There was little to see and no one understood even that little. The mysterious motor certainly worked with a clanging of machinery and rapidly-revolving wheels, and to set in motion it was only necessary for the magician to pour a few teaspoonfuls of water into it or scrape the strings of a violin.

The 'master' could not be induced to betray its secret. He simply looked unfathomably wise, talked scientific jargon about 'annihilating gravity, charging the vaporic generator, and propelling the harmonic engine.'

The man was so plausible and had such a child-like air of sincerity that thousands believed in him and his motor, which was to be the mechanical revolution of the century. Engineers and other leading officials of the chief American railways inspected the machine and, for want of actual knowledge, vaguely agreed that there was 'something to it.' What was more to Keeley's purpose, certain capitalists advanced several thousand pounds to perfect the motor.

One woman of wealth believed so implicitly in the imposter, that she allowed him £50 a month while he was completing his great discovery, and from time to time advanced him as much as £20,000. She even made her will in his favour, and when he died she survived him only a week or so.

There were sceptics, however, who asserted that the whole thing was an imposture, and that the motor was really driven through fine copper tubes by compressed air, on principles as old as Columbus himself. On one occasion one of these doubters, in the presence of a roomful of Keeley's admirers, dared him to cut one of the so-called wires, asserting that it would be found to be a tube for the passage of the compressed air.

At this challenge Keeley waxed righteously indignant and promptly cleared the room. A few minutes later he recalled his visitors; but in the interim he had substituted a wire for the tube, and triumphantly cut it to prove that it was wire and not tube.

In process of time the Keeley Motor Company was floated with a capital of £1,000,000, which enabled Keeley to live in regal style and to surround himself with art and luxury. Still the mysterious motor never emerged from its secret place, and it was still there when he died, leaving a paltry £500 out of the £2,000,000 of which he had relieved the public.



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After his death a thorough examination was made of the secret chamber; the flooring was taken up, and the long unworked secret discovered. The motor had, as the sceptics imagined, been driven by air, compressed in a hidden tank, and conveyed to the motor by pipes. The machine was, of course, valueless, and no more in invention than a common pump. It had, however, brought its fraudulent designer 300 times his own weight in gold.

Tennyson's Humility.

The poet Tennyson was gifted with the grace of humility. His letters disclose his dissatisfaction with himself and his achievements. He pitched his ideals high, and he knew, none more clearly when he failed to grasp what he had reached after. An anecdote contributed by the Duke of Argyll and quoted by Miss Cary in her volume, 'Tennyson,' exhibits the poet's humility.

"The first words I heard him utter," says the duke, 'remain indelibly impressed upon my memory. On being introduced to him at an evening party in the house of Lord John Russell, I said, perhaps with some emotion: "I am so glad to know you!"

"Not in the tone of voice of a mere conventional reply but in the accents of sincere humility, he answered: "You won't find much in me—after all."

All the Difference.

The English Outlook contains the following tale, which is 'told for true in Australia:

While a troop of Australian horsemen was one day resting after drill, a private, running his charger alongside one of the officers, lighted his cigarette from that of his superior. The officer took the unconventional act in good part, but he did say: "Harry, in the British army you could not have done that."

"Right you are," was the prompt reply, "but in the British army you would not be an officer."

An Enormous Christening Cake.

At the christening of the twin children of Mr. C. H. Seeley, M. P. for Lincoln, and Mrs. Seeley, the other day, the tenantry were entertained at the White Hart Hotel, where there was a christening cake, surmounted by a cradle and twins, and having other appropriate devices. The following day the whole of the school children of Lincoln were entertained at tea, and each child received a piece of the christening cake, 9,000 packages having been made up for the occasion. The cake weighed two tons in all.

Tableting No Chances.

"There's something the matter with this bar," said the man who was learning to ride the bicycle to the dealer who had lately sold him the wheel. "It looks to me as if it might snap in two at any time."

"Oh, I think not," said the manufacturer's agent. "I think not, sir. At any rate, if it should break, we will, of course, provide you with a new one."

"And who do you think will come and get it?" demanded the beginner, with considerable heat; "my heirs?"

Concerning Him.

Tom: "You are very anxious to see the club succeed?"

Jack: "I am, indeed! We can't afford to lose a member!"

Tom: "You wouldn't want to see me resign?"

Jack: "I would do anything in the world to prevent it!"

Tom: "Then lend me a couple of guineas to pay my subscription."

Will Erect a Tablet to Gladstone.

Arrangements are being made for the erection of a tablet to the memory of Gladstone on the house in Rodney street, Liverpool, in which he was born. The work is being undertaken by the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, to whom the necessary permission has been granted by the possessor of the residence.

No matter how just the cause for a woman's anger, people always have sympathetic feeling for her husband when they see her display her temper.

TALK OF THE THEATRE.

(Continued From Third Page.)

Alice Neilson will not appear in London until next year.

Of John Oliver Hobbes' (Mrs. Craigie) new play of the Napoleonic wars in Spain, 'A Repentance,' which George Alexander has just produced in London, one writer says: 'The repentance is that of a Spanish count, originally a Carlist, who has turned Christianist (the date, it will be seen is set a good many years back). He is known to have been wounded in a skirmish and is supposed to have been dead for two years. But a liking for life kept him safe and sound at the cost of his allegiance to Don Carlos, and at the end of the two years he suddenly appears in the guise of a trier at his wife's palace. Here, after a good deal of needless mystification, he declares himself. The countess's joy at his return is clouded when he explains how he saved his life. He is touched by her grief at his lack of devotion to the cause, suddenly determines to die as the Carlist, and dies accordingly by the hand of a Christianist officer. The author's idea seems to have been to show that a man who cares little or nothing for causes themselves will yet willingly die for one at the bidding or even the wish of a woman. But this is not very clearly brought out, and, although the audience were very hearty in applauding and calling for the author, they were probably in a good deal of doubt as to the real meaning of the piece.'

The Paris correspondent of the London Times, speaking of the recent production at the Theatre Francaise of an adaptation, by Jean Rcard, of 'Othello,' says: 'In some passages M. Ricard has given his French audience a real sense of the force and easy swing of the poetic style of the original. In others the vigor and freedom of the Elizabethan phraseology have pretty well disappeared, and the tempered vivacity of the polite French text is in painful contrast with the fierce abandon of certain phrases of Shakespeare. This result, however, was all but inevitable, given the French taste, and, as a whole, the play was one of the most brilliant successes which I have ever witnessed at the Francaise, or, in fact, at any French theatre. M. Mounet-Sully's very faults served him as Othello in good state. His exaggerated gestures and mouthing accents, so often criticised, did not in this role seem to exceed the proper key of violence and passion which mark the personality of the hero of the drama. As for the role of Iago, which devolved on M. Paul Mounet, it provided him with an opportunity of displaying a talent the extent and power of which have hitherto been unknown to the French public.'

Mr. F. R. Benson has provided for the Shakespeare memorial performances at Stratford-on-Avon this year a special revival of the second part of 'Henry VI.' He promises, moreover, the production of 'Hamlet' in its entirety, according to the quarto edition of 1604. This will mean a performance lasting over the entire day—the first half being given at a matinee, and ending with the play scene in the middle of the third act, and the second part filling up the whole evening.

Dr. Conan Doyle's domestic comedy 'The Brothers,' will be produced in Aberdeen in April.

Charles Hawtreys' managerial plans in London include the production of a new four-act play by Herman Merival, a comedy by R. C. Carton, and a revival of 'The School for Scandal,' in which he, of course, will be the Charles.

Mr. Pinero's next comedy, 'The Gay Lord Quex,' has been read to the company of the London Globe Theatre, and is now in rehearsal. There are eighteen characters in the cast, four male and fourteen female. The natural inference is that there is good reason for his Lordship's gaiety.

Cooney & Harris have bought the American rights to 'The Ladder of Life,' a melodrama which has lately been played in London. It will be produced in New York in September.

Forbes Robertson may appear in a dramatization of C. W. Mason's 'The Courtship of Morrice Buckler.'

E. S. Willard has postponed his American tour until the fall of 1900.

Henry Miller will open the next regular season of the Knickerbocker Theatre, New York, with a new romantic spectacular play. Mr. Miller is to appear in San Francisco on May 15 with a specially organized company to play a season of eleven weeks.

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at the Columbia Theatre. He will be seen in 'Heartsease,' 'Lord and Lady Algy,' 'Phroso,' 'Gudgeons,' 'Sowing the Wind,' 'The Liars,' and 'Hamlet.' Edward Morgan and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Walcott now of the Lyceum Theatre Stock Company, will be in Mr. Miller's company for that engagement.

John Drew will go to London in May. He may appear there in a new play next spring.

Mme. Rejane is credited with a great success in 'Le Lys Rouge,' a new comedy by Anatole France, just produced in the Paris Vaudeville. The play is founded upon M. France's novel of the same name, and is his first work for the stage.

Arrangements have been completed to continue 'The Belle of New York' for another year in London.

Wilson Barrett is the latest addition to the list of foreign stars who are preparing to invade the United States in the early fall.

Julia Marlowe has made such a hit with 'Colinette' that she will probably continue it for three entire weeks of her Boston engagement.

William Gillette will give up his part in 'Secret Service' in April, and will devote himself to completing 'Sherlock Holmes,' his next season's role.

Charles Frohman will open his Duke of York's theatre, London, next season with 'The Christian,' Evelyn Millard playing the role of Glory Quayle.

So great has been the success of 'Zaza' that Mrs. Leslie Carter will attempt nothing else for the next two years. She will tour the large cities of America next year, and the following season go to England.

The latest New York Casino novelty, 'In Gay Paree,' was tried on the dog at New Haven, Conn., last week. This new lyric fantasy by Clay M. Greene, Grant Stewart and Ludwig Englander, depicts the adventures of a prospective benedict, who projects a honeymoon excursion upon severely economical principles. Among the scenes shown in the course of the three acts is a view of a famous Paris Suburban resort.

Julia Arthur has not succeeded in securing a New York theatre for the presentation of her adaptation of 'More Than Queen' next season. The play will be produced in Paris shortly, with Jane Hading in the part that is to be played here by Miss Arthur. Scenically and in the matter of costuming, 'More Than Queen,' it is said, will be far and away the most elaborate production in the dramatic line that has ever been made in France. Following, as it will, such an enormous success as 'Cyrano de Bergerac,' it has been thought necessary to make a most lavish presentation.

Duse is now in Paris consulting with the manager, Schurmann, about a great tour of the United States, beginning in October Irving, Bernhardt, Duse, the Kendals and Alexander will thus strike almost at once. Zaccos may come with Duse. The Italian actress, who has been so anxious to play the Greek dream, has had enormous success in the 'Antigone' of Sophocles, at Athens, so she is likely to play it on her next American trip. It is also said she will try a new d'Annunzio piece. Her intention of playing the Greek tragedy among the ruins of the same theatre in which it was first produced in the fifth century B. C., was thwarted by the weather.

E. B. McLean, Charles B. Handford and Odette Tyler, will begin an engagement in Shakespearean parts at the Herald Square Theatre on the 8th of April. Performances of 'Othello,' 'Romeo and Juliet,' 'The Merchant of Venice' and 'Julius Caesar' are promised.

Richard Mansfield has purchased the American rights in the English farce called 'The Soldier Boy.'

'Borrowing Boots,' a translation of a Chinese comedy, has been acted by English players in London.

It is said that Julia Arthur will soon add Juliet to her repertoire.

Victory Bateman, an actress, who was taken to a sanitarium at Stamford, Conn., two months ago suffering from acute mania the result of overstudy, has almost completely recovered, and the physician in charge of the institution thinks there is no reason why she should not resume her stage work at an early date.

Effie Ellier is in New York trying to make arrangements to return to the stage next season, either as a star or leading feature of an organisation. She and her husband, Frank Weston, retired from the profession several years ago. Mr. Weston devoted himself to some mining interests in the West.

The cast of 'The Man in the Moon' will include Dan Daly, Sam Bernard, John E. Henshaw, Walter Jones, Marie Dressler and Louis Free. Dan Daly will appear as Sherlock Holmes, and Sam Bernard will play Conan Doyle with a Dutch dialect. Daly as the detective is to have a part that will supply great opportunities for his drollery.

'Carac Sahib' is the name of Henry Arthur Jones new four-act drama, which is to be produced by Beerbehn Tree at Her Majesty's Theatre, London, early in April and by Charles Frohman in America next season.

Curiosities of our Calendar.

There are some curious facts about our calendar. No century can begin on Wednesday, Friday, or Sunday. The same calendar can be used every twenty years. October always begins on the same day of the week as January, April as July, September as December. February, March and November begin on the same days. May, June, and August always begin on different days from each other and every other month in the year. The first and last days of the year are always the same. These rules do not apply to leap year, when comparison is made between days before and after February 29th.

Very Different Now.

The guillotine is not actually as represented in conventional pictures of it. It has been made a much more delicate apparatus than it used to be, and has been reduced one-third in size. The parallel uprights in which the knife moves are now painted a dirty Vandycok brown instead of bright scarlet, and the knife is not a great triangular piece of steel, but an almost razor-shaped blade, weighted with mercury, and not with lead.

'Does your papa object to my calling upon you, Miss Doylers?'

'Not in the least, Mr. Spudds.'

'Does your mama?'

'No.'

'Do your brothers?'

'I think not.'

'Then I don't see any harm in coming.'

'But there is one member of the family you neglected to ask about, and who does object to your coming most heartily.'

'I thought I had named them all; but now think of it, I did omit to ask about your pug.'

'Oh Fido doesn't mind you.'

'Then who is it objects to my coming to see you?'

'It is only I, Mr. Spudds.'

Smallest People in the World.

The inhabitants of the Andaman Islands are said to be the smallest race of people in the world. The average height of a full-grown Andaman is less than 4 ft., and the anthropological experts who recently visited them found but few that weighed over 75 lb.

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