

THE
WARREN FAMILY.

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The Warren Family.

THE ELDER WARREN.

The Busy and Eventful Life of an Early American Manager.

On the 19th day of October, 1796, there stepped ashore in New York, from a vessel which had brought him by a tedious passage of three weeks from Gravesend, a young Englishman, whose ability as an actor and enterprise as a manager will always be held in reverent and grateful remembrance by the dramatic profession and play-going public of America. His name was William Warren, and he was born in the city of Bath on May 10, 1767. His father, a respectable mechanic, gave him no more education than he thought was needful to fit him for following a trade; but the boy, having a strong predilection for the stage, and having been applauded for certain youthful attempts at acting, scorned to apply himself to the occupation of cabinet-maker, for which he was intended, and determined to become an actor. In 1784, therefore, at the age of seventeen years, he made his debut as a player in the character of *Young Norval*, in Home's now almost forgotten tragedy of "Douglas," with a company which was making tragedy comical, and lowering comedy to farce, in a little village near Bath, called Chippenham, or Chipping-Norton. His reception encouraged him to proceed in the career he had chosen. In this strolling company, under the management of one Biggs, he played all the first parts in tragedy and comedy, and of course gained some professional knowledge, though the school was bad. For this labor, which must have been a true labor of love, young Warren received less than four shillings per week. Leaving Biggs' party, he joined the forces of another stroller called "Tag" Davis, who had a company of a higher order, among the members of which were Samuel William Ryley, the author of "The Itinerant," and Bignell, afterward in America, but only known in the South. At the end of the season, Warren, too poor to pay for a place in the coach, walked home to the house of his indulgent parents. Nothing daunted by the ill success, pecuniarily, of his venture, he rejoined Davis at the opening of another tour, having become attached to him, as well as to a wandering life. Poverty was attached to both, as before, and Ryley speaks of their situation at Lyme as being deplorable; they were utterly penniless and without food, which could be procured only by stratagem. On this occasion the author of "The Itinerant" quotes Warren as exclaiming in mock heroics, "Was it for this

I left my father's shop?" and then adding from Dogberry, "Would he were here to write me down an ass!" For Biggs, his first manager, (now having a company in the neighborhood of Davis' barn) Warren did double duty, starring it in both establishments, walking from Lyme to Bedminster and back again, to serve his two masters, not having profit enough from his "double toil and trouble" to pay for any other "leathern convenience" than his shoes. His next engagement was with Jefferson the first (Thomas, who had his career in England, and died in 1807); but he was induced to return to his friend Biggs by the tempting offer of ten shillings per week. This munificent salary enabled him for the first time to ride on the top of the stage to his destination. During his rambles about this period he met two actors, afterward well known in Boston and New York—Hogg and Baker. After several changes of place and manager, Biggs, having been deserted by most of his company, followed Warren and another stroller named Woolley, and, being unable to persuade them to return, arrested them both, and, carrying them, guarded by a constable, before a magistrate, swore they were journeymen tailors who had deserted from him, and left clothes unfinished which they had engaged to complete. But the magistrate discharged the young men, advising them to return to their homes and parents. This advice was not followed, however, and "Tag" Davis, having a new opposition house built for him in Exeter by a man who was rich enough to indulge his desire to overthrow the established dynasty, Warren joined his company. To give the reader an idea of the contempt shown in England by people of every condition toward the members of

STROLLING COMPANIES

in those days, two anecdotes of Warren are quoted by Dunlap. Biggs, who seems to have considered Warren essential to his well-being, again followed him, and endeavored to prevail on him to rejoin his company; but, not succeeding, changed his persuasive tone to abuse, which he carried so far as to provoke Warren to break his pipe over the manager's head. For this Biggs again took him, with the aid of a constable, on charge of assault and battery, and the justice, hearing the accuser state that the accused was a strolling player, was about committing him to jail, but Warren retorted the title of strolling manager on Biggs, and the magistrate dismissed both with contempt from his august presence. The second concerns the treatment of the whole of the elder Jefferson's company. One Mr. Carey, a man of fortune, on the occasion of

some family festival engaged Jefferson and his company to go to Tor Abbey, his place of residence, and perform a play. Accordingly, they all proceeded thither, not in carts or on foot, as most of them travelled usually, but, attended by their very respectable manager, in coaches, post-chaises and gigs. When they arrived at Tor Abbey they were shown into the servants' hall, where a table and dinner were prepared for them. Jefferson sent a remonstrance to Carey, and the company prevailed on the manager to take a coach and turn his back on the aristocrat, while they performed a play for his emolument. They then refused food in the inhospitable mansion, and Mr. Carey, finding the actors so stomachful, made his appearance and apologies, showed them into a more dignified part of his house, and prevailed upon them to take food more nourishing than the air of offended pride which they had assumed and were endeavoring to digest for the occasion. They ate and drank, and played their play and farce for the amusement of the great man and his family, and returned home content. Commenting on these and similar instances, Dunlap says: "That so many come out of the furnace, if not purified, yet so far uninjured as to assume the rank of respectable and honorable men, is truly wonderful. If we look back upon the lives of most of those persons who have come to America and have challenged admiration as actors and respect as men, we shall find that they passed through, from early youth to manhood, a succession of scenes sufficient to destroy all sense of moral propriety. To have undergone such experience with such debased and debasing associates, and yet to stand erect in society, is proof of uncommon merit; that many sink never to rise, is plain."

The frequent recurrence of poverty, insult and disgrace at length, as the novelty and enticements of liberty began to lose their charms, brought Warren to reflect upon the folly of his conduct. "He had experienced," says Carpenter, "poverty in its most intolerable shape—hunger." He had found that innocence was not a protection to the player if accused of a crime, for the magistrate considered him as a vagabond. "Indeed," he continues, "what could we hope, seeing, as he did, so much penury around him, and, at the same time, so much ignorance and incapacity in many of his associates?" While thus ruminating on his sad condition he received a letter from his father inviting him home; and hoping to qualify himself for, and obtain, a higher post in the profession he had chosen, he returned to the paternal roof. A few weeks later, through the influence of Inledon, Blanchard and other London actors with whom he became acquainted, he got a situation in a respectable provincial theatre, and obtained the friendship of Downton. He now strove to make himself truly an artist, and by industry and good conduct acquired skill and importance in his profession. He was a member of the Salisbury Theatrical Corps in 1787, when a prosecution was instituted through malice against the proprietor,

and he was cast on the old vagrant act. This caused a repeal of the statute, and a protecting act was passed by which justices of the peace were enjoined to license and protect any manager who chose to establish a theatre. From this time the now prudent actor increased in reputation and emoluments. In 1788 he joined the company of the famous Tate Wilkinson, and Mrs. Siddons being engaged to appear at York, Warren had the advantage of playing *Gloster* to her *Jane Shore*; *Count Baldwin* to her *Isabella*; *Priuli* to her *Belvidera*, and *Old Norval* to her *Lady Randolph*. His habits of industry and attention to the business of the scene gained him the approbation of this lady, who, in her provincial tours, was annoyed very generally by the absence of those virtues. While in this position (a favored performer in a respectable company, directed by a man of talents) he was found by Thomas Wignell, who had gone to England to obtain recruits for the new theatre in Philadelphia. Mrs. Siddons gave the young actor a very strong recommendation, and Wignell made him an offer which he immediately accepted. Warren was then married, and, as the highest salary in Wilkinson's company was only a guinea and half a week, and some stood as low as 15 shillings, it is no wonder he was tempted by the sum offered by the American manager.

WIGNELL AND HIS PLANS.

It is proper at this point to glance at the record of this famous manager, and what he was doing at the time of Warren's advent. Thomas Wignell, the son of an old London actor, and himself a histrion of considerable experience, though he had barely attained his majority, was sent to this country in 1774 by his cousin, Hallam, the pioneer manager in America, either as a substitute for himself or as a desirable recruit, to join Douglass at the John Street Theatre in New York, which he was intending to open in the autumn of that year. Wignell reached New York in October, but on the day after his arrival a resolution of the first Provincial Congress, passed on the 24th of that month, was promulgated, agreeing to discountenance and discourage every species of extravagance and dissipation, and, among others, naming "gaming, cock-fighting, exhibition of shows, plays and other expensive diversions and entertainments." This resolution was conveyed to Douglass in a letter from the president, Peyton Randolph, and the committee of New York likewise gave him notice of the same; and, knowing that all the theatres of the continent were virtually closed by it, and that it would be in vain to hope for patronage or support under these circumstances, Douglass embarked with Wignell and the rest of the company for the more loyal colonies of the English West Indies. They landed at Jamaica, where they remained until the United States had become an independent nation. Douglass settled permanently in Jamaica, where he played the part in real life of one of his Britannic majesty's judges. He relinquished the management of the American company to Hallam, who took as a partner

John Henry. Returning to New York, this company effected the long-deferred opening of the John Street Theatre, Nov. 21, 1785. It included the managers, Wignell, Harper, Morris, Biddle, Wools, Lake, Durang, Mrs. Morris, Mrs. Harper, Miss Tuke, Miss Durang, and occasionally Miss Storer, who afterward became Mrs. Henry. Hallam, Henry, Wignell, Morris and Wools were sharers; the others were salaried. The opening bill included "The Gamester" and "Love à la Mode," and Wignell made his first appearance on the American stage as *Lewson* in the former and *Squire Groom* in the latter piece. He grew into great favor in New York, and also in Baltimore, where a new theatre was opened on Aug. 16, 1786; in Richmond, where he appeared in October, and in Philadelphia, where the company next proceeded. The following February the company returned to the John Street house, where, according to Dunlap, on April 16, 1786, was performed the first American play ever produced on a regular stage by a regular company of comedians—a five-act comedy called "The Contrast," written by Royal Tyler of Boston. The next month a farce, by the same author, called "May-Day, or New York in an Uproar," was produced for Wignell's benefit. Wignell remained a member of the company until 1791, when, in consequence of some ill treatment at the hands of Hallam and Henry, (principally, Ireland believes, the refusal of a promised furlough to visit his friends in England), he left the concern, and embarked in an opposition enterprise, which resulted in the organization of the finest theatrical corps ever then seen in America, and probably never surpassed since, and the founding of an establishment in Philadelphia which for years took precedence of any in New York in the rank of its performers and the completeness and elegance of its stage appointments. Under Wignell's energetic direction the long-contemplated plan of a new theatre in the Quaker City was matured and put in execution. Mr. Reinagle, brother of the famous animal painter, and a professor of music of distinction, entered into partnership with him; their friends furnished such additional funds as were necessary; a site was purchased on Chestnut street, next to the west corner of Sixth street, and an elegant edifice was erected. An Englishman named Anderson was associated with Wignell and Reinagle in this scheme, and afterward acted as the financier of the firm and treasurer of the theatre. While the playhouse was building Wignell went to England amply provided with money to engage a company, and he secured and landed in America in September, 1793, a

REMARKABLE COLLECTION OF TALENT,

including (beside Mr. and Mrs. Morris, who seceded with him from Hallam and Henry's forces), Fennel, Chalmers, Moreton, Marshall, Harwood, Whitlock, Green, the Darleys, senior and junior, Francis, Bates, Blissert, Warrell, Mrs. Whitlock, Mrs. Oldmixon, Mrs. Francis, Mrs. Marshall, Miss Broadhurst, Mrs. Warrell, Miss Williams (afterward Mrs.

Green)/Miss Oldfield, and others of less note. With this company and the magnificent new theatre all looked prosperous, notwithstanding Henry had anticipated the managers of the enterprise by bringing a strong re-enforcement from England to the "Old American Company" and taking the field in Philadelphia before them. But the new company of Wignell and Reinagle encountered at its very arrival the news of the prevalence of yellow fever, which scourged Philadelphia so awfully more than once at the close of the last century, and which for years had the effect of destroying the well-laid plans and excellent arrangements of these judicious and indefatigable managers. So complete was their establishment on the arrival of their first company that, before the Philadelphia house could be opened, a debt of nearly \$20,000 had been incurred. Of course, this heavy burden was increased by these visitations of pestilence. The frightful state of the city in 1793 (the year when the fever raged with dreadful fury) compelled them to quarter their large force in different villages of Delaware and New Jersey, where a monstrous debt was hourly accumulating in salaries alone, nearly every performer having claims, by the terms of the contract made in England, for his pay from the moment of his arrival. While awaiting the return of health to Philadelphia, Wignell and Reinagle opened the old theatre in Annapolis, and subsequently the Baltimore theatre, with their fine corps, and thus it came about that it was not until Feb. 17, 1794, that they were able to open the new house in Philadelphia. The plan of the structure was furnished by Richards, Wignell's brother-in-law, and secretary to the Royal Academy, who likewise presented to the managers several fine sets of scenery and a beautiful drop-curtain; the house was decorated and the other scenery supplied by Milbourne, a scenic painter brought from England by Wignell. Reinagle directed the orchestra, and Wignell superintended the stage, while Anderson looked after the front of the house. The new enterprise immediately sprang into great popularity. In the early autumn of 1796 Wignell made a second trip to England for recruits for his company, and engaged Mrs. Merry, née Anne Brunton), Thomas Abthorpe Cooper, then a youth of twenty, Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Byrne (the dancers), Mr. and Mrs. Lestrangle, and William Warren. They arrived in New York, 21 days from Gravesend, on Oct. 19. It is comical to think that Mrs. Merry was actually importing with her three husbands at once; but such was the case, and all concerned surely would have been amazed could they have foreseen the incidents of a not very remote future. Merry died in 1798, at Baltimore, and his widow married Wignell in 1803. He, in turn, died suddenly, seven weeks after their marriage, and, in 1806, the enterprising widow married Warren.

WARREN'S FIRST APPEARANCE

on the stage in America is recorded as having taken place in Baltimore, but the exact date is not a matter of record, and the rôle is also unknown. It is certain, however, that his début

must have occurred between Oct. 19 and Dec. 5, 1796, for at the latter date, according to Dunlap (excellent authority, it may be remarked), he appeared in Philadelphia with Wignell and Reinagle's company, playing *Friar Lawrence* in "Romeo and Juliet" (Mrs. Merry being the *Juliet* and Moreton the *Romeo*), and *Bundle* in "The Waterman." Warren played in Philadelphia through the remainder of the season, and in the following August went with the company to New York, opening on the 23d of that month in the Greenwich Street Theatre, which had been altered from Rickett's circus, and fitted up for a summer theatre by John Joseph Holland, an architect and artist, whom Wignell had brought from London the previous year. Otway's "Venice Preserved" was the principal feature of the opening bill, with Mrs. Merry, Cooper and Moreton in the principal parts. Warren made his first appearance in New York on this occasion as *Prinzi* in the tragedy, and *Old Doiley* in the farce, "Who's the Dupe?" which formed the afterpiece. "The company," says Wood in commenting upon the event, "was at this time of an extent and power never since equalled. It numbered, for comedy and tragedy, Fennell, Cooper, Moreton, Wignell, Fox, Mrs. Merry, Mrs. Oldmixon, Mr. and Mrs. Marshall, Miss Broadhurst, Mr. and Mrs. Warrell, Mr. and Mrs. Morris, Mr. and Mrs. Harding, Mr. Harwood, Mr. and Mrs. Bernard, Mr. Blissett, Mr. and Mrs. Francis, Mr. Warren, Mr. and Mrs. Byrne (dancers), and many others." But in spite of the merit of the troupe the summer season was not profitable, and Wignell and Reinagle closed a season of 14 weeks at their temporary establishment with a loss of \$2,350, and drew off their forces to winter quarters. The summer of the following year (1798) the company was employed at Annapolis and Baltimore. At the former place William B. Wood, a native of Montreal, born May 26, 1779, who subsequently became Warren's partner in management, made his first appearance on the stage as *George Barnwell* on June 26, and was thereupon engaged with the company. Beside their interest in the theatres of the cities above named, Wignell and Reinagle in 1800 became connected with one at Washington—the United States Theatre—a new house, originally intended for a hotel, subsequently known for many years as the post office and patent-office, and finally destroyed by fire. The managers prepared at Philadelphia, scenery, and an artificial dome and other embellishments for the auditorium; but on the way to the capital city a rain storm invaded the slow-moving wagons, and much of the stuff was ruined, causing great delay in opening the theatre. But after awhile they accomplished their object, and thenceforward added Washington to their circuit. This circuit arrangement rendered possible an excellent and prudent feature of Wignell and Reinagle's management—the employment of the company in the summer while their Philadelphia house was closed. Beside taking the histrions out of that city during the season of fever, it enabled the

managers to avoid the annoyance and uncertainty of collecting together so numerous a body (frequently numbering 70 or 80 persons) for the autumn season in Baltimore, and also gave the junior performers the means of uninterrupted progress and study. The summer season was managed on the sharing plan, graduated by the winter salaries, and it was conducted by the successors of Wignell and Reinagle for many years with great advantage until the starring system was introduced, to the speedy ruin of these safe companies, and, finally, to the utter prostration of the larger establishments. Alexandria was subsequently added to the circuit.

THE FIRST BREAK BY DEATH

of the little coterie with whom Warren came from England was the sudden taking off by apoplexy on Jan. 24, 1798, of Mr. Merry, husband of the accomplished leading lady of the company. Mrs. Merry's contract with Wignell expired shortly after, and she was offered \$600 per week for a season of 34 or 40 weeks, and a guarantee of \$600 for a benefit, to go to New York, but she declined, and re-engaged herself at the Philadelphia house, the company at which, in the season of 1799-80, included Warren, Wood, Cooper, Bernard, Marshall, Cain, Blissett, Darley, sr., Lestrangle, the Warrells (senior and junior), Francis, Wignell, Morris, Robins, Cromwell, Mitchell, Hopkins, Master Harris, Mrs. Merry, Mrs. Marshall, Mrs. Morris, Mrs. Warrell, Mrs. Francis, Mrs. Gillingham, Mrs. Salmon, Mrs. Bernard, Miss Lestrangle, Miss Arnold, Miss Solomon, and Miss Broadhurst. The next season there were a number of changes in the corps. Mrs. Morris went to England, and Mr. and Mrs. Marshall, Mr. and Mrs. Lestrangle, both the Warrells, Mrs. Warrell, Darley, Cromwell, Mitchell, Master Harris, Mrs. Gillingham, Mrs. Salmon, Miss Broadhurst and Miss Lestrangle went elsewhere, and in their places came Darley, jr., Prigmore, Durang, Bailey, Usher and Hammond, Mrs. Shaw, Mrs. Snowden, Miss Juliana Westray, (who subsequently became Mrs. Wood), and Miss E. Westray. The following year the company was deprived of Cooper, who broke his contract and seceded to New York, on the ground that he had not been given the opportunities his abilities deserved; but was enriched by the accession of Mr. and Mrs. Jones, who came to this country in the summer of 1801, and Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock from the Boston Company. In the autumn of 1802, Fennell and Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock went to New York, and there were some minor changes in the company. Mrs. Merry remained a widow until the first of January, 1803, when she bestowed her hand upon Wignell. On Feb. 23 Wignell died suddenly and unexpectedly from the inflammation of a vein in which he had been bled a few days previous for a determination of blood to the head. He is described by Dunlap as an athletic man, below the ordinary height, with a slight stoop in his shoulders, handsomely formed limbs and remarkably small feet. His large blue eyes were rich in expression, and

his comedy was luxuriant in humor, but always faithful to the author. Wood adds that he was a most amiable and well-mannered man, and that he found in him an invaluable friend and father. For several years before his death he appeared rarely on the stage, the labors and cares of management absorbing his whole attention. By the demise of Wignell, the management devolved upon his widow and Reinagle, and, after closing the Philadelphia Theatre several nights as a tribute of respect to the memory of the deceased, they opened it with Warren as acting manager; Wood, who since 1799 had been treasurer, as assistant, and Reinagle, as before, in charge of the musical department. Wood says in his "Personal Recollections," that, though Warren could plan a season admirably, he found the labor of carrying out his designs an insupportable toil, and, though professedly stage manager, the bulk of the labors of that office fell to his (Wood's) share. During this season, the second part of Shakespeare's "Henry IV" was gotten up for the first time in America, and Warren at once acquired the high reputation he afterward maintained as *Falstaff*. Wood went to England in June, 1803, for rest, recreation and recruits. Prior to his departure a most important engagement was effected for the theatre, it being with

JEFFERSON THE SECOND

(the first Joseph). Mr. Jefferson was born in Plymouth, Eng., in 1774, and came to this country in 1795, under engagement to Charles Stuart Powell, to appear at the Federal Street Theatre in Boston. Powell failing, however, Jefferson made his American debut with Hodgkinson and Hallam's company, which acted at that house from Nov. 2, 1795, until Jan. 20, 1796, and accompanied it to New York, where he played two seasons at the John Street Theatre and five at the Park. He was engaged at the Chestnut to take the place of John Bernard, who had repaired to Boston, and joined, at the opening of the season of 1803-4, a company which included, all told, Warren, Downie, William Francis, William Twaits, Francis Blissett, W. B. Wood, Cain, Owen Morris, Warrell, Durang, Mestayer, Melbourne, Fox, Hardinge, Lestrangle, Usher, Mrs. Wignell, Mrs. Oldmixon, Mrs. Shaw, Mrs. Francis, Mrs. Wood, (Juliana Westray), Mrs. Solomon, Mrs. Snowdon, Mrs. Durang, Mrs. Downie, Mrs. Morris and Miss Hunt. Winter justly remarks that the union of powers thus indicated for comedy acting was marvellous. The weight, dignity and rich humor with which Warren could invest such characters as *Old Dornton* and *Sir Robert Bramble*, made him easily supreme in his line. He held the leadership, also in the line of *Falstaff* and *Sir Tobey Belch*. Blissett's fastidious taste, neat execution and beautiful polish made him perfection in parts of the *Dr. Caius* and *Bagatelle* order, which he presented as delicate miniatures. Francis was finely adapted for such boisterous old men as *Sir Sampson Legend* and *Sir Anthony Absolute*. Jefferson, conscientious and thorough, and at the same time brilliant, ranged from *Mercutio* to *Dom-*

inie Sampson, from *Touchstone* to *Dogberry*, and from *Farmer Ashfield* to *Marworm*, and was a consummate artist in all. Wood was the *Doricourt* and *Don Felix*; and Twaits, a wonderful young man, brimful of genius, seemed formed by nature for all such characters as range with *Dr. Pangloss*, *Tony Lumpkin* or *Goldfinch*. The season was a fairly prosperous one, and so was that of 1804-5, with few changes in the company. At the end of the last-named season, however, there were some secessions from the force, and, in the summer of 1805, Warren went to England on recruiting service, returning with Mr. and Mrs. Woodham, Bray, Cross, Mr. and Mrs. Mills and Rutherford. With this addition to his regular force, which included Wood, Jefferson, Francis, Morris, Harwood, Cain, Mrs. Wignell, Mrs. Jefferson, Mrs. Wood, Mrs. Francis, Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Melmoth, Warren began an active and profitable season. The next summer (Aug. 15, 1806) Warren and Mrs. Wignell were married. This year (1806) the Philadelphia company was composed of Warren, Wood, McKensie, Mills, Webster, Woodham, Spencer Cone, Cross, Cain, Francis, Robins, Sanderson, Blissett, Bailey, Jefferson, Taylor, Durang, Bray and Seymour, Mrs. Warren (late Wignell), Mrs. Francis, Mrs. Seymour, Mrs. Morris, Mrs. Jefferson, Mrs. Cunningham, Mrs. Mills and Miss Hunt. Twaits, Harwood, the Daileys, Fennell, Rutherford, Mrs. Oldmixon and other former members of the troupe were this year in New York. In Feb., 1807, Mrs. Warren played an engagement in New York, and, in March, Cooper returned the compliment by playing in Philadelphia.

WARREN AND WOOD.

The year 1808 brought a sad bereavement to Warren. During the two years which had elapsed since his marriage to Mrs. Wignell they had been happy in their new relation and prosperous in their business enterprises. The future looked very bright to them; but their plans were frustrated by the sudden death in childbed of Mrs. Warren, on June 28, at Alexandria. The demise of this beautiful and brilliant woman was deeply lamented by all who knew her in private life, and mourned by the great public which had delighted in her genius as an actress. Warren's dislike to the fatiguing details of the directorship has already been mentioned. Now that his wife was dead he felt incapable of attending to business affairs for a time, and a double burden was thrown upon Wood. Three years previous the latter was laid up for some time by the rupture of a blood vessel while playing *Charles de Moor*, but the injury was not deemed permanent. For some time he had been acting stage manager, and in 1806, soon after Warren's marriage with Mrs. Wignell, was formally appointed to that position. His health gradually gave way under the strain, and in the summer of 1808, when his labors were greatly increased, he sank into a state of nervous disability so alarming that his medical advisers ordered an immediate suspension of labor, and a sea voyage as the

only chance of recovery. He, therefore, made a second visit to England, remaining away until October, 1809.

In that year Warren was married for the third time, his wife being Miss Esther Fortune, the daughter of Mrs. Euphemia Fortune, the widow of a Scotch merchant, who for many years kept a lodging house adjoining the John Street Theatre in New York. The third Mrs. Warren was a sister of Miss Euphemia Fortune, who married the second Jefferson nine years previously, and with him became a member of the company at the Philadelphia Theatre in 1803. Thus the two families of Warren and Jefferson were united.

On Wood's return from Europe, some of his Philadelphia friends supplied him with funds, and he purchased one-half of Warren's rights in the Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington theatres, and entered into an equal partnership with him. Under this arrangement, Wood, as proposed by Warren, assumed the entire active management, and the new plan went into effect at the opening of the Baltimore season in the autumn of 1810. The company at that time consisted of Warren, Wood, Jefferson, "Gentleman George" Barrett, Spencer Cone, (afterward a noted Baptist clergyman), Francis, McKenzie, Blissett, Wilmot, Hardinge, Robins, Mrs. Wilmot, Mrs. Wood, Mrs. Jefferson, Mrs. Francis, Mrs. Seymour, Mrs. Twaits, Mrs. McKenzie, the Misses White and others; and it was immediately enlarged and strengthened. Previous to entering upon his duties as manager, Wood visited New York, where he played a brief engagement with Price at the Park, opening in the character of *De Valmont*. Warren and Wood continued as co-managers for 16 years, during which time they experienced many vicissitudes of fortune. The curious reader will find the record minutely, if not always impartially, kept by Wood in his "Personal Recollections," published in 1855. Warren left copious manuscript journals, which, as they furnish ample material for a volume covering one of the most interesting periods in the history of the American stage, it is to be hoped will some time be edited and published.

An account in detail of the experiences in management of Warren and Wood during this long period cannot, of course, be given within the limits of this article; the principal events only can be mentioned, and very briefly.

EXPERIENCES-IN MANAGEMENT.

The summer succeeding their entrance into partnership, Mr. and Mrs. Duff were added to the company, under a contract for three years, which was subsequently extended to five, an accession of great value, the latter being probably the greatest tragic actress that ever trod our stage, while the former was an actor of fine and versatile talent. It was to Mrs. Duff that Moore addressed his lovely melody, "While Gazing on the Moon's Light." She was born in London, married Mr. Duff while on the Dublin stage, came with him to America in 1810, and in subsequent years had a career of astonishing brilliancy—darkened however, by much personal

misfortune. She retired from the stage, and embraced religion in her later years, and finally died in obscurity in New York, Sept. 5, 1857, at the age of 63.

In October, 1811, McKenzie, without giving notice, seceded from the company at the Chestnut to join that of the rival house, the Walnut. This move was severely censured by Warren and Wood in a published card, and the result was a riot, or, rather, a series of riots, in their theatre, which, however, were fortunately unaccompanied by serious results, though they interrupted performances and caused the management considerable loss. McKensie, who was a dissipated man, several years afterward drowned himself in the Back Bay at Boston.

The season of 1811-12, owing to the war with England, was a disastrous one to the new management, though the standard of the company and the dramatic productions were kept up; that of 1812-13 was no better, and, with nightly expenses of \$300, the managers sustained a great loss. That of 1813-14 was an improvement. On May 10, 1814, Warren and Wood opened a new theatre on Holliday street, Baltimore, with much éclat, though part of the scenery, in transit from Philadelphia, had been destroyed by the British troops at Havre de Grace. Warren was much vexed at the loss, but consoled himself with the remark, in allusion to the material of the drop curtains, that "These were the only bays (baize) the English had yet gained by the war." The city of Baltimore levied a tax of \$10 per night on the new house, and applied the fund thus raised to relieve the distress of Baltimoreans who were wounded and the families of those killed in the battles of Bladensburg and North Point and the bombardment of Fort Henry. The Philadelphia season this year was also prosperous, and the coming of peace in 1815 helped to recompense the managers, as well as others, for their losses during the war. It was in this year that gas was introduced in the Chestnut Street Theatre. From this time until 1819, Warren and Wood were quite uniformly successful in their enterprises, their theatres in Baltimore and Philadelphia both doing remarkably well. Toward the end of the last-named year, however, there was a period of depression, which even extended to benefits. Warren tempted the public by an entertainment consisting of five acts from as many different plays of Shakespeare; but it drew only \$427, and he submitted the following appeal:

MR. WARREN'S BENEFIT.

Mr. Warren presents his respectful compliments to his friends and patrons of the drama, and begs leave to offer his name for a second night. That which was intended for his benefit on the 3d of January having proved wholly unproductive, he has been induced by some of his old friends to make the second effort, in the hope that he may receive a share of that patronage which, even in this failing season, has not been withheld from others, and surely

" 'Tis no sin for a man
To labor in his vocation."

But this second attempt, on Feb. 25, 1820, yielded only \$274. This dispiriting season in Philadelphia closed on March 29 to a heavy losing average of \$399. The company re-

paired to Baltimore for the usual spring term, opening on April 3 in a snow storm. That night a sad blow fell upon the enterprising managers in the total loss by fire of their theatre in Philadelphia, the destruction of which included scenery, machinery, wardrobe, library, an organ, two pianos, music—everything—the only articles saved being the green-room mirror, the little model of a ship, and the prompter's clock. There was no insurance. Warren and Wood were literally deprived of all they possessed, and with the burning of the theatre saw the toilsome earnings of 20 years turned to ashes. Despair, however, was not the fashion of the time, and within a few hours they had effected a lease for eight years of the Walnut Street Theatre, or rather circus, at the corner of Walnut and Ninth streets. This establishment was reconstructed at great expense, and opened under their management Nov. 11, 1820.

A NOTABLE EVENT

in this same month was the first appearance, on the 27th, of Edwin Forrest, then a lad of 16, as *Young Norval*, with Wheatley as *Lord Randolph*, Wood as *Glenalvon*, Warren as *Old Norval*, Mrs. Williams as *Lady Randolph*, and Mrs. Jefferson as *Anna*. No great excitement, says Wood, was perceptible on the occasion, though the novice acquitted himself so well as to create a desire for a repetition of the play, which soon followed, with increased approbation. Soon after, Forrest added to his reputation by a spirited effort as *Frederic* in "Lover's Vows;" still, no enthusiasm was evident in the public, and his benefit as *Octavian* was even less than the former nights, which were: *Douglas*, \$319; *Frederic*, \$252; benefit, \$215. Time has rendered remarkable the fact that Forrest's first appearance at the Walnut was immediately followed by that of Kean, who played a profitable engagement, notwithstanding there were rumors afloat that the theatre was unsafe. The advent of Kean, Wood notes, "introduced to America a custom which, however tolerable in view of his great genius, led subsequently to much annoyance and to many abuses—the habit of calling out performers, *dead or alive*, and, after the curtain has dropped, to receive a tribute of extra applause."

Warren and Wood were not active in efforts to rebuild the Chestnut Street Theatre, as, Wood shrewdly observes, "no one except a manager can conceive the advantage of monopoly in theatrical concerns." They refused an offer from Beekman to play their company in New York from September to March, and from March to July, concluding that their field was already large enough. The autumn season of 1821 at Baltimore was notable for the appearance with the company of Junius Brutus Booth, who, after a successful engagement at the New York Park, was on his way South. He played *Richard III.* on Nov. 2, and created an unusual sensation, though the receipts for his six performances averaged less than \$350. The Philadelphia season opened with Mr. and Mrs. T. Burke, Mr. and

Mrs. H. Wallack, and Nichols, from the Charleston Theatre, added to the company. James Wallack, who was announced to appear as *Hamlet*, was thrown from the mail stage on his way from New York, and received a fracture of the leg, which rendered him for many months incapable of any professional exertion, and consequently greatly disarranged the plans of the managers. During the same year the company suffered from sickness, Jefferson, Francis, Wheatley, and others having been unable to appear for nearly a third of the season. Blissett, who had been in the corps for 28 years, retired to come into the possession of a fortune left him by his father. Altogether, the season at the Walnut was not more prosperous than that which preceded it; and the audience, always looking back to the old house on Chestnut street, became impatient for its revival. Accordingly, a subscription list was opened and filled within three days, and a lease was granted (in consideration, as was expressed, of personal feelings toward the lessees) of the most liberal conditions, and unshackled by any annoying stipulations; it was for ten years, at a rent of \$3,000, renewable for ten more at the end of the first term. The new house was finished and opened on Dec. 2, 1822. An address by William Sprague of Boston was spoken by Wood, and "The School for Scandal" was performed, with Warren as *Sir Peter Teazle*, Francis as *Sir Oliver Surface*, Wood as *Charles Surface*, H. Wallack as *Joseph*, Johnson as *Backbite*, Jefferson as *Crabtree*, Hathwell as *Rowly*, T. Burke as *Moses*, Darley as *Careless*, John Jefferson as *Trip*, Greene as *Snake*, Mrs. Wood as *Lady Teazle*, Mrs. Laselle as *Lady Sneerwell*, Mrs. Francis as *Mrs. Candour*, Mrs. H. Wallack as *Maria*, and Mrs. Greene as the *Maid*. (This is Wood's record; Wemyss assigns *Backbite* to Thomas Jefferson.) The season at the new house was a very successful one, as might be inferred. Wilson first appeared as *Pierre*, and joined the company, and Wemyss was also added. Cooper, J. Wallack, Charles Matthews, Booth, and others appeared in addition to the regular force. Meantime, the Walnut Street Theatre had been sublet to a branch of the New York company under Cowell's management, which played to a long succession of good houses. The opening of the Philadelphia season on Dec. 2, 1823, was marked by a change of prices by Warren and Wood, which was injudicious: nevertheless, the season was fairly successful. Illness again proved a great drawback, Duff being away 33 nights, Mrs. Duff 43, Wallack 10, and Jefferson 9, from this cause.

THE STARRING SYSTEM

told heavily against all the theatres under this control, as the stars took nearly all the receipts, leaving the managers barely enough to pay the expenses. This was especially noted at Baltimore, where stars of all degrees and magnificent spectacles were produced at unsparing cost, but all in vain. The Washington season was little better, having been a failure for the first time. The Philadelphia

season of 1825-'6 was no improvement on the preceding one. Kean's engagement was a light one, as there were threats of a riot. Cooper's visit was not profitable, though he had Miss L. Kelly with him. Conway, the tragedian, began an engagement and deserted after the second night; he subsequently threw himself into the sea, when on the way to Charleston, and was drowned. Mr. and Mrs. Hamblin failed to draw, and so did Mrs. Barnes. The season ran 151 nights to an average of \$301, which, as the expenses of the house and company were \$300, to say nothing of the demands of the stars, left the management a very small margin. The Baltimore spring season of 1826 began cheerfully with Miss Kelly's eight nights' engagement. Then Kean and trouble came. "Richard III." was acted in dumb show the first night, the audience indulging in the most tumultuous demonstrations, which rendered inaudible every word spoken on the stage. The theatre was therefore closed, and Kean finished his engagement in Philadelphia in June—a most unseasonable time for a round of tragedies.

In the summer of 1825 Wood, dissatisfied with the existing state of affairs, and feeling, as he says, that his partner was allowing his judgment to be swayed by outside parties, offered to buy out Warren's interest, and so become sole manager of the Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington theatres. Warren objected, urging that management held out a safe and comfortable prospect for him and his family in his advancing life, and he did not wish to abandon it. Wood thereupon declared that Warren must become sole manager himself, and gave notice that he should retire from the connection at the end of a twelve-month. For some time Warren could not believe Wood's purpose of retirement could be real, but, finding him settled in his determination, joined him in arrangements for the separation in the summer of 1826. Easy terms were adjusted without difficulty, and Wood transferred all his share of the property in the different theatres, as well as in the lease of the Philadelphia house, having 16 years to run at \$3,000 a year, to Warren. The latter insisted that Mr. and Mrs. Wood should retain the situations they held as actors so long as they continued in Philadelphia, which they agreed to. Warren then, as sole manager, opened a summer season in the new theatre at Washington on Aug. 31, 1826, and played there until Oct. 6. Unfortunately, he tried the attraction of a number of stars who failed to draw, and took all the receipts, and the experiment failed. The Baltimore house remained closed. Mr. Warren opened the Philadelphia theatre on Dec. 4, with a company including himself, Jefferson, Wood, Joseph L. Cowell (stage manager), F. C. Wemyss, John Jefferson, Porter, W. Forrest, Heyl, Singleton, Meer, Jones, Wheatley, Webb, Darley, Hallam, Greene, Bignell, Hosack, Parker, Murray, Garner, Howard, Klett, Mrs. Wood, Mrs. Jefferson, Mrs. J. Jefferson (late Mrs. J. Burke), Mrs. Anderson, Mrs. Francis, Mrs. Greene, Mrs. Darley, Mrs. Cowell, Mrs. Meer, Mrs. Murray and the

Misses Hathwell. Miss Kelly, Macready, Booth, Mrs. Knight and Edwin Forrest were the stars of the season. "The Comedy of Errors" was produced for the purpose of presenting Jefferson and Cowell as the two *Dromios*, and proved quite a success. An interesting event was the first appearance of Miss Hester Warren, March 27, 1827, as *Fidelia* in "The Foundling;" she created a very favorable impression at first, but was subsequently cast in parts ill-adapted to her style, and did not gain the success expected of her. The season was not successful, though it was publicly stated that it brought neither profit nor loss to the management.

A NEW PROJECT

was now devised, which it was hoped would restore the waning fortunes of the theatre. This was the effecting of arrangements of a very extensive character for the importation of notable performers from England, and, in effect, though not professedly, a trial of the starring system in place of the former stock methods. With this end in view, a considerable number of the regular company was discharged, and Francis Courtney Wemyss was engaged by Warren as acting and stage manager for a term of three years, and was dispatched to England on June 20 to make the projected engagements.

In the meantime a new opposition arose. A fine theatre was quietly and hurriedly, but substantially, erected on Arch street, and its management was offered to Wood, who accepted it, disregarding the clause of his contract with Warren providing that he should only play with his former co-manager while in Philadelphia. Wood got together a fairly good company, but there was no unanimity of purpose among its members; dissension followed dissension, and the first season, which was opened on Oct. 1, was closed at the end of three months, although the performances were well patronized by the public. Ill fortune seemed to follow Wood from this time on, and in the latter part of his career he met with many reverses, seriously impairing the ample fortune he had previously acquired. He took a formal leave of the stage at the Walnut Street Theatre, Nov. 18, 1846, at a truly complimentary benefit tendered him by the most eminent citizens of Philadelphia. He appeared on the occasion as *Sergt. Austerville* in the drama of "The Old Guard"—a most appropriate selection for the last remaining veteran of that corps which had included on its roll the names of so many distinguished histrions, and had been noted throughout the land as the best drilled and most efficient company of comedians known to the western world. He died in Philadelphia Sept. 21, 1861, in the 83d year of his age. Mrs. Wood (Juliana Westray) died in the same city, Nov. 13, 1836.

Wemyss returned from England in the autumn of 1827, bringing as recruits for Warren's establishment, Sloman, Southwell, S. Chapman, Mercer, Hutchings, Kerr, Willis, J. Thompson Norton, Rowbotham, Mrs. Sloman, Mrs. Rowbotham, Mrs. Mercer, Miss

Emery, Miss Hawthorne and Miss Kerr. Chapman quitted Warren after arriving, from some dissatisfaction about salary, and went with Wood to the Arch as stage manager. The others remained, and the season was opened on Oct. 29, with Southwell as *Romeo*, to \$638. Things dragged on heavily until Miss Emery's performance of *Bianca* and *Evadne* for a short time produced some excitement and some good receipts. Horn and Mrs. Knight played a successful engagement of three nights to an average of \$550, with a joint benefit of \$1,055, and subsequently repeated it with like results. Mrs. Sloman's arrival gave a new impetus to the theatre; her first seven nights averaged \$800. She occupied alternate nights with Mrs. Austin, whose houses produced \$312 each. Miss George had but indifferent success, and Miss Kelly drew moderate receipts. Miss Clara Fisher (afterward Mrs. Maeder) acted for ten nights to an average exceeding \$600, and Miss Rock and Mme. Celeste followed to moderate audiences. Notwithstanding these large receipts, the first 137 nights of the season barely left to the treasury \$330 per night. Cooper played a few nights, and then Forrest; Horn, Pearman and Mrs. Austin combined with no advantage. Even Cooper and Mrs. Sloman acted together to only \$211. The splendid spectacle of the "Gnome King" scarcely repaid its cost. This long season terminated on June 21, 1828, without profit to the treasury.

It was naturally expected that the premature closing of the Arch street Theatre would greatly benefit Warren's house, but the reverse was the case, the next season proving the lowest and most distressful in the Chestnut Street history. Wood, in his "Personal Recollections," says: "Warren surrendered all his power to others, who became discouraged at the ruin they were bringing about them, snatched what they could for themselves, and departed, leaving poor

WARREN TO REMAIN THE VICTIM

of their rash and fickle schemes. He found that his recent friends, who had got possession of everything he had, were now his insatiable and remorseless creditors." Warren's private diary through this season is mournful reading. Among his entries are many receipts like these: "Haunted Tower," \$61.50; "Thérèse," \$90; "Apostate," \$98, etc.; "Hunt, Miss Phillips and C. Fisher played together to \$60"; "the whole amount of this house, \$20.75; Southwell's benefit, \$52; Mr. and Mrs. Rowbotham's benefit, \$77; Miss E. Jefferson's, \$83." These, it should be remembered, were the gross receipts, while the regular and necessary expenses were \$300 at the least. Such business would ruin any manager; and so, on Jan. 1, 1829, the Chestnut Street Theatre, where Warren had passed the best years of his life, the scene of his toils, his triumphs and his reverses, passed out of his hands, and Lewis T. Pratt and F. C. Wemyss (the latter his acting and stage manager) became the lessees. The establishment, however, had not life enough left in it to be

revived by the new managers; their speculation was disastrous, and Wemyss retired at the close of the following season from management, and even from the stage for a time.

The breaking up of the old company was a heavy blow to some of its members, as well as the manager. Rees ("Colley Cibber") in recording the event speaks thus of Joseph Jefferson, Warren's brother-in-law: "He was considered rich, looked upon as such, and on every occasion of his benefit the public, the smiling thousands, turned out en masse. But soon a change came over his dream of life. His friend, William Warren, became involved in difficulties—suit after suit pressed him down the tide of misfortune; 'Old Jef' held out his arm to the rescue; it saved his friend for the moment, but ruined himself; their united fortunes were now a wreck, and in their old days, with large families around them, they were compelled to quit the scene of their success as well as misfortunes."

Jefferson made an appeal to his patrons, under circumstances of a peculiar nature, for a benefit. His claims upon the public, his losses, were set forth in language none could mistake. The night came [Dec. 23, 1829]—the house was deserted. Forlorn and broken-hearted, the old man quitted his home; his registered oath that he would never play more in Philadelphia was kept. Wounded in pride, and ill-prepared in pocket for this sudden reverse of favor and fortune, Jefferson bade adieu forever to the Quaker City, formed a traveling company with the aid of his wife and children, and wandered through the smaller towns of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, making Washington his headquarters. His daughter, Mrs. Anderson, and his youngest, Jane, died in quick succession; his son-in-law, Chapman, was killed by a fall from a horse; his son, John, fell dead in a fit, and, last grief of all, his wife was taken away. Overcome by this accumulation of domestic woe, he died at Harrisburg in 1832.

In May, 1829, Warren—now grown feeble and dispirited, and with all his plans defeated and his former friends and advisers represented by the sheriff in the old theatre—joined the regular stock at the Walnut Street house, which was reopened under the management of S. Chapman and J. Greene. Mr. and Mrs. Wood were also at this establishment. Warren appeared on May 30, and acted occasionally through the summer. He had a benefit, when William Chapman and Mr. and Mrs. Rowbotham played for him, and Mrs. Francis, who had left the stage some time before, volunteered as *Mrs. Malaprop* for her last appearance on the boards. The season ended on July 29, and at its termination Warren went to Baltimore. The next record of his appearance on the stage is more than a year later. The Adelphi, a new theatre, erected in Baltimore for the elder Booth and John R. Duff, was opened on Oct. 4, 1830, and Warren was a member of the company. It was at this house (commonly called the "Mud Theatre" on account of its location) and during this season that *Hamlet* was produced with the following cast, without doubt the most extraordinary one

it ever had in America: *Hamlet*, Charles Kean; *Ghost*, J. R. Duff; *Polonius*, William Warren; *Laertes*, Archer; *King*, Isherwood; *Horatio*, Hazard; *Osrice*, John Sefton; *First Grave Digger*, Flynn; *Second Grave Digger*, Mercer; *First Actor*, McKinney; *Second Actor*, Junius Brutus Booth; *Ophelia*, Mrs. Flynn; *Queen*, Mrs. Duff. Warren played here occasionally throughout the season, and when, on Aug. 29, 1831, the "Three Williams," Jones, Duffy and Forrest, opened

THE ARCH STREET THEATRE

in Philadelphia, he migrated there. Pratt and Wemyss, nothing discouraged by their failure of the preceding January, reopened the Chestnut Street house on Sept. 16, 1831, and Warren went there in Nov. to play what proved to be his last engagement. Infirm, and with none of his old-time spirit, he acted three nights to \$210, \$36 and \$90 respectively. His benefit on the 25th reached only \$206, and of course was a loss of about \$100. He essayed *Sir Robert Bramble* in "The Poor Gentleman" on this occasion, and it was a melancholy night to many present; for, in the third act, his memory wholly failed him, and it was with difficulty that the other performers were enabled to support him through the remainder of the play. His health, as well as his spirits, had been rapidly declining, and he retired to Baltimore, never to act again. He lingered a year, and, on Oct. 19, 1832, gave up a life clouded toward its close by many more afflictions and cares than fall to the lot of most men.

In a sketch of Warren's career, written by James Rees ("Colley Cibber") and published in the Philadelphia Dramatic Mirror Aug. 22, 1841, the following reference is made to his last days: "Mr. Warren removed to Baltimore in 1831. The writer of this sketch found him the landlord of an obscure inn; the sign of 'John Falstaff' hung over the door. It was the resort of the friends of the drama, but they, alas! were few, for the drama had but few friends in the Monumental city. Of an evening I noticed the old veteran stager hobbling before his door the victim to gout, his once round, plump figure shrunk up, and his once jolly face the relic of other and brighter days. It is melancholy to dwell upon the last expiring rays of genius; but alas! how much more painful it is to watch life going out with its last rays. So it was in Warren, the glimmering of the one was the dying of the other."

Of Warren's ability as an actor there is ample testimony in the pages of contemporary critics and historians. A distinguished critic, in 1812, remarked of him that "he was the only stock actor in America who would be able to maintain in any theatre in Britain the same rank that he held here." Another, quoted by Rees, said, in 1811: "In 15 years constant observation of the acting of Mr. Warren, the public must certainly have made up their minds upon his professional merits. No one on the stage has a more clear and indisputable right to be the character than he has, since, performing continually in tragedy and comedy, play and farce, and taking, as the occasional exigencies of the theatre demand, any and

every character of consequence, he is never less than respectable in any of them. Equally ready for *Old Norval* or *Lord Randolph*, *Falstaff* or *King Henry*, he is always sure to be perfect in each. But he is entitled to praise of a much higher kind than that of being merely respectable. In his performance of old men in tragedy and in sentimental comedy, he is judicious, nervous, chaste and pathetic. His *King Henry* in "Richard III," his *Old Norval*, *Brabantio*, *Priuli* and *Stockwell*, with many we cannot now name, are instances of his excellence in this department. In broad comedy, for instance in *Falstaff*, *Lacafogo*, *Sir Peter Teazle*, *Hardcastle*, *Governor Tempest*, *Sir Anthony Absolute*, *Old Phillpot*, *Old Rapid*, *Caustic*, *Old Dowlas*, and an infinite number of other characters, we should, among the players of this country,

LOOK IN VAIN FOR HIS EQUAL.

and in some of them, scarcely find his superior in Europe. Of him, indeed, may be said, what may be said of no other in this country but Cooke, that as an actor he would be able to maintain in any theatre in Britain and Ireland the same rank he holds here." Rees himself says: "Warren's *Falstaff* was a masterpiece; he seemed, particularly in the latter part of his life, 'the *Falstaff* Shakespeare drew.' His *Sir Peter Teazle* was the beau ideal of all that was good; his *Old Norval* we shall never forget; his *Sir Anthony Absolute* in 'The Rivals,' and *Old Hardcastle* in 'She Stoops to Conquer,' will never find another such a representative. When he died, they all died."

W. B. Wood, after referring to his qualities as a manager, says: "He occupied, besides, an extensive and laborious list of characters (the old men of the stage) requiring great study and labor. Viewed, indeed, as a comedian generally, his value, highly appreciated as it was by the public, was never too highly estimated. But it was by no means to comedy that his ability was confined. His able performance of *Stockwell*, *Old Downton*, *Sir Matthew Bramble*, *Las Casas*, *Old Norval*, *Antonio*, *Owen Glenroy*, *Capt Bertram*, *Adam*, *Baron Wildenheim*, with numerous other characters, showed his possession of sterling pathetic powers, while his *Sciolto* in 'The Fair Penitent' and *Acasto* in 'The Orphan,' were ranked as among high efforts in pure tragedy. His theatrical education was of the soundest kind, and gave to his acting a rare truthfulness and natural simplicity. He loved and respected his profession, and was willing at all times to favor the efforts of deserving novices by freely aiding them with the result of his own experience. Averse to the turmoil of management, he was, at the same time, one of the most industrious actors I ever knew. As an instance of his versatility, as well as of his devotion to the public, I may mention his judicious performance of *King Henry IV*, on the occasion of Cooke's appearance as *Falstaff*, Warren's most popular character."

It only remains to be said that Warren's private character, as son, brother, husband, father and friend, was such as to command universal esteem.

THE WARREN FAMILY.

The Marital Relations and Descendants of the Elder Comedian.

The elder Warren was married three times. His first wife, to whom he was united in England, accompanied him to this country. She was not an actress, and, as she was not known to the general public, and died soon after arriving in America, her name has not been preserved in theatrical annals. Mr. Warren's second wife was an actress of brilliant ability, accounted both in England and in this country as the greatest tragic genius since Mrs. Siddens. She was born Anne Brunton, May 30, 1769, and was the eldest daughter of John Brunton, manager of the Norwich (Eng.) Theatre. Her debut on the stage was made as *Euphrasia* in "The Grecian Daughter," at Bath, Eng., in Feb. 1785, on the occasion of her father's benefit. She was received with astonishment and rapture, and repeatedly performed the character, as well as *Horatia* in "The Roman Father," and *Palmira* in "Mahomet," to crowded and admiring houses. The report of her triumphs soon reached London, where she was immediately engaged by Mr. Harris, and on Oct. 17, 1785, appeared at Covent Garden as *Horatia*, introduced by a prologue from the pen of Arthur Murphy, spoken by Mr. Holman. Her success there was even greater than at Bath, and the reputation thus quickly acquired she firmly retained, and continued in the highest favor until her retirement in 1792, on her marriage with Robert Merry, a gentleman well-known in the literary world as the author of the *Delia Crusca* poetry, of marked genius, superior education, handsome person, and elegant manners. Although his pecuniary affairs were at a low ebb, he being a bon vivant, and addicted to all the extravagances of high life, the pride of his two aunts, from whom he expected legacies in due time, forced him to withdraw his wife from the stage; but poverty afterward staring them in the face, the offer of high terms by Wignell, who was in England engaging recruits for his company, induced them to visit this country. In the character of *Juliet* on the Philadelphia stage, Dec. 5, 1796, Mrs. Merry first faced an American audience. Her husband dying suddenly at Baltimore in 1798, she married on Jan. 1, 1803, Mr. Wignell, who survived the union only seven weeks, dying in Philadelphia on Feb. 23, at the age of 50 years, from blood poisoning, caused by the injudicious use of the lancet. For the third time Mrs. Wignell entered the matrimonial state on Aug. 5, 1806, with Mr. Warren. For nearly two years nothing occurred to mar the felicity of this match, when she was seized in her confinement with epileptic fits, which terminated her existence June 28, 1808, at Alexandria, Va., where her tomb is still a conspicuous object in the old Episcopal churchyard. Ireland says of her that "in America she has since been equalled in pathos by Mrs. Duff, and surpassed in sublimity by Fanny Kemble; but, excepting these two, every tragic actress seen here

would suffer by comparison with this highly gifted woman." Other members of the Brunton family became distinguished on the English stage; Mrs. Warren's brother occupied a respectable position for many years, and her sister, who married the Earl of Craven, and her niece, famous as Mrs. Frederick Yates, were prominent favorites in London.

Mr. Warren's third wife was Esther, the youngest daughter of Mrs. Euphemia Fortune, the widow of a Scotch merchant, who long kept a lodging house in John street, New York, adjoining the old John Street Theatre. The house appears to have been much frequented by members of the dramatic profession. An old bill announcing the benefit of one of the actors of this theatre on June 3, 1793, has printed at the bottom:

Tickets of Mr. West, at Mrs. Fortune's, next to the Play House.

Mrs. Fortune, whose ashes, together with those of her husband now rest in the churchyard of old St. Paul's, at the corner of Broadway and Vesey street, New York, had two daughters. The elder, Euphemia, was married in 1800 to Joseph Jefferson (grandfather of the present well-known actor of that name); the younger, Esther, as above stated, was, nine years later, united to Warren. In this way the families of Jefferson and Warren, both so highly distinguished on our stage, were united. Warren had acted in England, under the management of Jefferson the first, and, coming to America, became the brother-in-law of Jefferson the second. [Another tie between the families was the marriage of Jefferson the fourth—"Rip Van Winkle"—in Chicago, Dec. 20, 1867, to Sarah, the daughter of Henry Warren, brother of our William Warren.] Mrs. Euphemia Jefferson made her first appearance on the stage Dec. 22, 1800, at the old Park Theatre in New York, as *Louisa Dudley* in "The West Indian," and was much admired as an actress. Her death occurred in Jan. 1831. Her name, which was also that of her mother, is perpetuated in that of her great granddaughter, Euphemia (Effie) Germon. Of Mrs. Warren's appearance on the stage there is no record, and it is altogether unlikely that she ever seriously contemplated entering the dramatic profession. She was a very estimable lady, was highly honored by all who knew her in private life, and was a most excellent wife and mother. Five children, who were the issue of the marriage of the elder Warren and Esther Fortune, became prominently connected with the stage—Hester, born in 1810; William, born in 1812; Anna, born in 1815; Emma, born in 1818, and Mary Ann, born in 1821. Henry, the only surviving member of the family, has never followed acting as a profession, but has been connected more or less closely with the theatre. He was for some years in management at Buffalo, N. Y., as a member of the firm of Carr, Warren & Smith, and later was for a time attached to the business department of McVicker's Theatre in Chicago, where he now resides. Brief biographical sketches of those of the family who have appeared on the stage are appended.

HESTER WARREN

was born in Philadelphia in August, 1810, and her first appearance on the stage was made at the Chestnut Street Theatre in that city, March 27, 1827, as *Fidelia* in "The Foundling." Her success was marked in this rôle, but her succeeding performances were quite inferior, and several years elapsed before she was enabled to take rank with the leading actresses of the day. On June 3, 1828, she eloped with and married Henry Willis, a musician of ability and leader of the orchestra at the Chestnut at the time of her début. This ill-assorted match, contracted contrary to the wishes of her parents, did not prove a happy one, and, after several years of domestic disquietude, the parties separated by mutual consent. Willis died May 26, 1836, while leader of the orchestra at St. Charles Theatre, New Orleans. Meantime Mrs. Willis, turning her attention to her profession with more earnestness, rapidly gained ground in popular esteem, and became a favorite in Baltimore. There she was found and engaged by Wemyss to return to her native city, where for two years she was the reigning attraction at the Walnut Street Theatre. She was next engaged by Simpson for the New York Park, but, before going there, married Joseph Proctor, at that time a member of the company at the Walnut, and, seeking a release from the New York manager, remained another season in Philadelphia. Mr. and Mrs. Proctor the following year tried a season in the West, but, not being pecuniarily successful, returned to the Walnut, the latter supporting Edwin Forrest in the only profitable engagement he ever played with Wemyss. Mrs. Proctor next went to Baltimore and joined the new Front Street Theatre on its opening. From there she and her husband proceeded to New York to appear under Hamblin's management at the rebuilt Bowery Theatre, at the opening of which they assisted. It may be remarked, en passant, that it was on this occasion (May 6, 1839), that "Nick of the Woods," in which Mrs. Proctor has since acquired so much fame, was brought out, he playing *Nathan Slaughter*, J. B. Rice (husband of Mary Ann Warren) appearing as *Col. Bruce*, and Mrs. Proctor as *Edith Forrester*. We next find Mr. and Mrs. Proctor at the National Theatre in Boston, under W. Pelby's management. Here they remained until the winter of 1841. In the latter part of November, "The Naiad Queen" was brought out, and during the performance Mrs. Proctor caught a severe cold. She continued to act, however, until after the second night of "London Assurance," in which she played *Grace Harkaway*; but this was her last performance. She died, after an illness of about 10 days, on Dec. 7, 1841. The funeral took place in Grace Church, and her remains were followed to the grave, in the Copp's Hill burying ground, by all the members of the dramatic profession in the city. Mrs. Proctor, in addition to great personal beauty, was one of the most intellectual and thoroughly educated women of her time. She held a leading position in the drama in every

city where she was engaged. In Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Baltimore and Pittsburgh, she was a wonderful favorite as a member of stock companies, while as a star she won golden opinions in various parts of the Union. She was the possessor of great versatility of talent, which grasped alike tragedy, comedy, opera or farce.

ANNA WARREN

was born in Philadelphia, Dec. 1, 1815, and first appeared on the stage in March, 1833, at the Holliday Street Theatre, Baltimore, in the character of *Rosalie Somers* in "Town and Country." She subsequently met with considerable success in similar parts, being young, pretty and spirited in her acting. Three years after her début (in Nov. 1836), while in Buffalo, N. Y., she married Danford Marble, the famous Yankee comedian, and thereafter, until his death, her fortunes were identical with his. Marble was born at East Windsor, Ct., in 1810; went to Hartford as a clerk, and then to New York to learn the trade of silversmith. After some practice in an amateur dramatic club, he made his first acknowledged appearance on the stage at the Chatham Theatre, April 11, 1831, paying \$20 for the privilege of playing *Robin Roughton* at the benefit of Mr. Nelson, the prompter. His second appearance was as *William* in "Black-Eyed Susan," and his third on March 6, 1832, as *Damon*, he paying the manager of the Richmond Hill Theatre \$10 for the opportunity. He afterward took a position in the profession of the very lowest grade, from which, in the representation of Yankee, Kentuckian and nautical peculiarities, he worked his way to fame and fortune. Shortly after his marriage to Anna Warren, he made his first great hit at Buffalo, as the hero of a piece called "Sam Patch." This piece was written for him by E. H. Thompson, and had for a motive the then famous, but now almost forgotten, leap of Sam Patch at Genesee Falls. It required a leap of quite a distance on the stage, and Mr. Marble, having hurt himself while performing it, got John P. Addams, who is now living in Boston, to rewrite and rearrange the work. This was done, and Marble played the rôle more than 1,000 times, it is said. In all parts of the country he met with success, and in the South and West was one of the most attractive of stars. In 1844 he went to London, and, on Sept. 30th of that year, made his appearance at the Strand Theatre, in "The Vermont Wool Dealer," with entire success. He continued in London and the provinces through the whole season, and it was during his engagement that William Warren made his début at the Strand. His return to America was a complete triumph, and, at the National in Boston, where he made his first appearance after his sojourn abroad, he set an immense audience in a roar by remarking, in the course of a speech he was called upon to make, "One country is just as good as another, and a darned sight better." In the height of his popularity he played his last engagement at St. Louis early in May, 1849. Going thence to Louisville, he was seized with the cholera,

which proved fatal on the 13th of that month. His funeral sermon was preached by C. B. Parsons, noted as a bad actor, who became a tolerably eloquent minister, and his remains were conveyed to the family vault in Buffalo, N. Y. Mr. Marble left his widow quite a large property, and a family, nearly every member of which has a good place on the stage. He was a great friend of Edwin Forrest, and the tragedian laid the corner-stone of the cottage the comedian erected in Buffalo in 1841 or 1842. Mrs. Marble appeared with her husband in all the prominent theatres of the country with considerable success, and some years after his death she returned to the stage she had temporarily abandoned. For several years she was a popular representative of old women's characters in Chicago, and she died in Cincinnati while on a visit, March 11, 1872. Among her children on the stage are William, John S. and Ed Marble, the latter well known as an author and stage director. He was for many years with Lotta and the elder Sothern; he then drifted into minstrelsy, and to his adaptability is due many of the innovations of modern minstrelsy. He is also the author of the first of American farce comedies—"Patchwork," as played by Salisbury's Troubadors. "Tuxedo," the minstrel farce-comedy, is also from his pen. Emma Marble and Mrs. Mary Myers, the latter the widow of the late Sam Myers, brother-in-law and former partner of J. H. McVicker, the Chicago manager, are the daughters of Mrs. Anna Marble. The only other child by this marriage was Danford Marble, who never followed the stage. He served during the civil war in the Mercantile Battery of Chicago, and at its close accepted a position in the Post Office in that city which he has honorably held through all the changes of administration up to the present time.

EMMA WARREN

was born in Philadelphia in 1818, and at an early age made her debut as an actress at the Holliday street Theatre in Baltimore. She had not been long on the stage when she married J. B. Price, a then well-known actor of Philadelphia. He died in 1848, and, some years later, the widow married David Hanchett, a member of the same company (Rice's), in Chicago, who survives her, and is now conducting a dramatic college on East Tenth Street, New York. Her professional career was confined almost entirely to the western theatres, and for several years she was a favorite at Rice's (her brother-in-law's) theatre in Chicago. She, however, played for a brief time in Boston, being a member of the company at the Howard Athenæum when it was opened by the late E. L. Davenport, April 25, 1859, making her first appearance as *Servia* to the *Virginus* of Joseph Proctor. During the season of 1859-60, she shared with the late Mrs. W. H. Smith the old women characters, her name appearing for the last time in the bills May 30, 1860, as the representative of *Deborah* in "No, or The Glorious Minority." She subsequently played under the management of John T. Ford (of Baltimore and Washington), but was in retirement for several

years before her death, which occurred at her residence in New York, May 16, 1879. One of her two children by her first husband, Fanny Bayard Price, born in Vicksburg, Aug. 9, 1847, became a favorite star in the South and West. She made her debut in Chicago, as *Alonso's* child in "Pizarro," to the *Kolla* of James E. Murdoch. She was with her mother in Davenport's company at the Howard, and thence went to Pittsburg for several seasons. In 1864 she was leading lady at the Louisville Theatre, and in 1865 she began a career as a star, under the management of her step-father, Mr. Hanchett, during which she appeared in all the principal cities of the country. Her first appearance in New York was made as *Deborah*, Oct. 21, 1867, at the Worrell Sisters' Theatre. She is now the wife of Judge Loring E. Gaffney, a prominent lawyer of Dakota, and is living in retirement in Deadwood. Miss Julia Hanchett, the actress, is a daughter of Emma Warren by her second marriage.

MARY ANN WARREN

was born in Philadelphia, and made her theatrical debut at the Walnut in that city, July 4, 1837, as *Lady Anne* in "Richard III." On the 24th of the following December she was married to John B. Rice, a native of Easton, Md., who acquired fame and fortune as a manager, and later in public life. Mr. Rice was at the Tremont Street Theatre in Boston in 1835, and he embarked in management with Charles Eberle at Bangor, Me., where they built and conducted a theatre. Early in 1837 he went to New Bedford to manage a theatre for Mr. Barrett of Boston; thence he went to New York, and, organizing a company on the commonwealth plan (John P. Addams, who was of the party, says they all had poverty in common), tempted fortune for a time in Wilmington, Del. From there Mr. Rice went to the Philadelphia Walnut, where he first met his future wife. Subsequently he was engaged in management in Albany, Buffalo and some other cities, and he finally settled down in Chicago, where, as the pioneer manager, he built and conducted a theatre for a number of years. He retired from the profession in 1856, and his wife, who was for years in his theatre, who was one of the best soubrettes that graced the western stage, also abandoned the footlights. Mr. Rice was always throughout his life one of the best and most honored and beloved of men. He was elected to the mayoralty of Chicago three times, and his faithful discharge of the duties of that office was acknowledged by his election to Congress. While in Washington his health failed, and he died in Richmond, Va., in 1875, while visiting a married daughter. None of the children of this marriage—one son and five daughters—went upon the stage. The son, William, fell at the head of the company he commanded on the battlefield of Chickamauga. Mrs. Geo. L. Dunlap, Mrs. Orson Smith, Mrs. Hester Kimball, Mrs. W. S. Smith and Mrs. J. W. Odell are the respective names of the daughters of Mrs. Rice, and are all well known in the society world of Chicago, where

Mrs. Rice was living in retirement. It was her brother William's custom for years to pay her a visit every summer. She died suddenly at Coronada Beach, Cal., during the summer of 1893.

WARREN THE YOUNGER.

His Childhood, Early Youth and Theatrical Debut.

William Warren, the younger, was born on Nov. 17, 1812, in the house numbered 12 (now 712) Sansom street, Philadelphia. His father was the famous actor and manager, whose career is sketched elsewhere in this issue, and his mother was Miss Esther Fortune, who became the third Mrs. Warren in 1809. The elder Warren, with William B. Wood as a partner, was at that time conducting theatres in Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, in which, by turns, he presented to play-goers what was probably the finest dramatic company that ever acted together in this country. All his enterprises were prosperous, and the future seemed full of promise. He could not foresee the disasters which, crowding thick upon him 17 years later, drove him into retirement, broken in health and fortune. But he remembered his early struggles as a strolling player in the old country, and the weary road over which he toiled to gain success in the new world, and he determined that his son should not be exposed to the trials and temptations of an actor's life. Young William, therefore, was destined for a mercantile career, and his education was planned with that end in view. The early life of the boy, on his emancipation from the nursery, was passed in the excellent common schools of the Quaker city, where he became the playmate and fellow-student of many lads who, in later years, occupied positions of eminence. Atty-Gen. Brewster was one of his schoolmates, and it was not long ago, while on a visit to Boston, that that gentleman tapped our comedian on the shoulder, and said, in boyish reminiscence: "Come, Bill, let's go and play marbles together on the State House steps!" Young Warren, on leaving the city schools, entered, and for some years attended, the Franklin Institute, then on Seventh street, and later continued his intellectual development at the Episcopal Seminary, conducted by Messrs. Ballantyne and Carson, on Locust street, above Ninth. Always a close student, he graduated from these institutions with high rank. But "what's bred in the bone will come out in the flesh." Of a family of actors, with a father actively engaged in management, and playing in nearly every piece he produced, with the theatre, plays, actors and actresses ever the uppermost topic of conversation at home, it was natural that the lad should look with aversion on the business life that had been planned for him, and longed to go upon the stage. Even the ruin which overwhelmed his father failed to discourage him, and when the family, after the elder Warren's retirement from the Philadelphia Theatre in 1829, removed to Baltimore, the young man pursued his study of the

drama with redoubled activity, undismayed by the misfortune, and hoping to be able by his talents to retrieve their fallen fortunes. He made no essay before the footlights, however, until three years later. His father, broken in spirit, feeble in body, and with failing mental powers, strove to keep the wolf from the door by occasional essays in his old rôles, but in vain; on the occasion of his last appearance on the stage (as *Sir Robert Bramble* in "The Poor Gentleman," at the theatre in Chesnut street, Nov. 25, 1831) his memory deserted him in the middle of the performance, and it was with great difficulty that the other actors supported him through the rest of the play. He then tried to eke out a subsistence for his family by keeping a humble inn, the "Sir John Falstaff," in Baltimore, but that resort proved futile. On Oct. 19, 1832, his troubled life came to an end. The family was left almost penniless, and friends at once set about to give them a benefit in Philadelphia, where they had resided in the days of their prosperity. Oct. 27 was fixed upon as the date, the Arch Street Theatre, then under control of Messrs. Jones, Duffy and W. Forrest, with whom the elder Warren had played shortly after they assumed the management the previous year, was secured for the performance, and, as a feature of special interest, the début of young Warren, the namesake of his father, was announced. John Home's tragedy of "Douglass" was the play chosen, and William's essay was to be made in the character of young *Norval*, the same in which his father first trod the boards in England, 48 years previously. Junius Brutus Booth promised to play *Glenarvon*, but for some reason failed to do so, and the performance was consequently somewhat crippled. But young Warren, though naturally, under the circumstances, very nervous, far from confident, acquitted himself admirably, and met with such encouragement from the sympathetic audience that his desire to become a professional actor was changed to a fixed determination.

In speaking of his début years afterward, Mr. Warren humorously remarked that it was "an advent and event" that he never could forget. "I was supported," he continued, "by Mr. and Mrs. Maywood and many other strong actors, and yet I fell."

"But it has always been understood," was remarked, "that you made a hit."

"So I did," was the response. "I fell and made a 'hit.'" When I made my entrance upon the stage my foot caught in the edge of the green baize carpet; I tripped and tumbled headlong at *Lady Randolph's* feet.

"How could you possibly regain your self-possession?" was asked.

"I did not," he replied, "until the people on the stage assisted me to rise, amid the encouraging applause and cheers of the audience. The ludicrous mishap suggested to me the idea that I might succeed better in 'low' comedy. But I didn't think of that just then—my mind was more inclined to tragedy."

Booth in after years expressed regret that he had not assisted on this occasion. Edwin Booth used to relate, as among the earliest of

his theatrical reminiscences, an incident attending his father's engagement at the Howard Athenæum in 1846. The elder Booth, after his performance of *Shylock* (the date was Nov. 27) seated himself with Edwin among the audience to witness Mr. Warren's acting of *Jacques Strop* in "Robert Macaire." The late Mrs. Asia Booth Clarke, mentioning the incident in her published memorial of the Booths, says: "It was an exceptional thing for him to make one of the auditory, but the débutant was a favorite of his. He always manifested a great interest in his career, and seemed to be thoroughly pleased with his performance that evening."

The veteran actor, James E. Murdoch, in his reminiscences, draws this portrait of young Warren at that time: "During my first

season at the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, in 1833, one evening, while waiting for my 'call' in the greenroom, I observed a youth, slight in figure and looking much like a student of divinity at home for a vacation: he was silent and thoughtful in expression, and very formal in manner. He was very soon presented to me as William Warren, jr., who had just made his first appearance at the Arch Street Theatre in the character of *Young Norval*."

Thus was William Warren launched upon a career throughout which, to quote the reverent tribute of William Winter, his quaint and tender genius in dramatic art has given happiness to thousands, and his exalted virtue and gentle life have made him an example and an honor to the stage and the community.



