



Harrigan as Old Lavender.

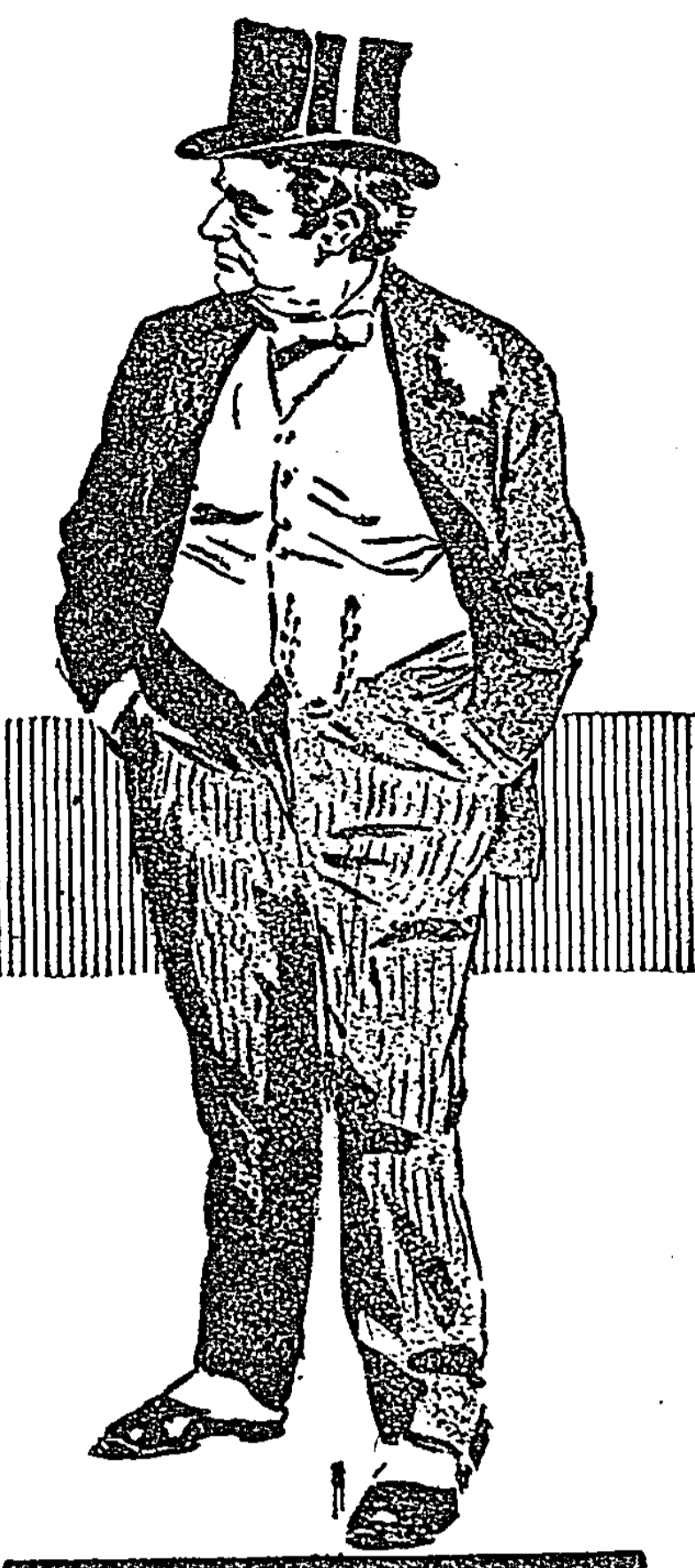


Edward Harrigan.

The Death of Edward Harrigan Brings Back to the Older Theatregoers Recollections of the Most Famous Comedians of Their Time in New York.



Harrigan as Michael O'Brien.



Harrigan as Gilmartin.



Mrs. Annie Yeamans.



Harrigan in "Reilly and the 400."



In "The Bird in the Cage."

we go to singing and dancing again, when of a sudden, in the middle of our fun, the chandelier begins to waver, and then there is a crack and the floor above breaks and all the negroes fall through on our heads. Dummies they were, to be sure, but it made a fine curtain. All covered with white stuff we were."

Ed Harrigan and Tony Hart.

Squatter Sovereignty!

- CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY.
- FELIX MCINTYRE.....Mr. EDWARD HARRIGAN
 -An astronomer.
 -Mr. TONY HART
 -Mr. JOHN WILD
 -Mr. WILLIAM WEST
 -Mr. HARRY FISHER
 -Mr. EDWARD BURT
 -Mr. M. F. DREW
 -Mr. M. BRADLEY
 -Mr. JOHN QUEEN
 -Mr. JAMES TIERNY
 -Mr. GEORGE MERRITT
 -Mr. ROBERT HALL
 -Mr. WILLIAM ALLEN
 -Mr. J. McCULLOUGH
 -Mr. J. FITZSIMMONS
 -Mr. EUGENE ROURKE
 -Mrs. ANNIE YEAMANS
 -Miss MARY BIRD
 -Miss LIZZIE FINN
 -Miss SUSIE BYRON
 -Miss EMILY HARRIS
 -Miss MARIE EMMONS
- The McIntyres and the Maguirea represented by Mr. M. Foley, Mr. Fred Queen, Mr. J. McCullough, Mr. G. L. Stout, Mr. William Merritt, Mr. Thomas Ray, Mr. Robert Hall, Mr. Emil Husel, Mr. J. Coffee.
- ACT I.—Widow Nolan's Shanty, by Charles W. Witham. THE MATOH
- ACT II.—Drawing Room in Capt. Kline's Mansion, by Chas. W. Witham. THE BRIMSTONE.
- ACT III.—View of Shantytown by Moonlight, by Charles W. Witham. IGNITION.

The Old Stock Company Cast.

One hundred and fifty a week was a deal more than it is now. "It was down at the Theatre Comique on Broadway, below Spring Street, that we began. Harrigan and Hart had been doing turns there and had been having

I did not mean much to the matinee girl and her blithe escort to read this week the line, "Edward Harrigan is Dead," but there was not a New Yorker of middle age who failed to stop and read and say, "So old Ned Harrigan is dead, is he? Well, well, how time flies!"

Odd lines of old songs have been hummed these last few days, springing out of nooks and corners of brains which had hardly suspected their existence for many a year. What a good song Ned Harrigan could write—how catchy a melody Dave Braham could set down to his comrade's lines—what a fine, jovial old time that was forty years ago when Harrigan and Hart played a part in the city's life, something like that of Weber and Fields these later years, but far more intimate and affectionate.

Fourteenth Street was still fashionable in those days. Above Fifty-ninth Street on the west side the goats roamed gayly. The squatters had been so long in possession that some people said they owned the ground by right of residence. There was no immigration to speak of except from the Emerald Isle. The Slove and the Southern European was as mysterious to New York as the Hindu. It seems like talking of the Middle Ages, but it was only forty years ago that Harrigan and Hart began to be the delight of New York.

The passing of Edward Harrigan is more than the death of a good man and a capable actor. It marks the end of an epoch. With his death the fact is emphasized again that the New York which saw the birth of those who are to-day hardly more than beginning to turn gray is forever past. With it has gone a set of social conditions, a cycle of old jokes, and an era of good fellowship. Compared with the '70's and '80's when Harrigan and Hart were in their prime, New York to-day is almost as foreign as Hongkong. New times, new people, new ideas—even a new conception of humor.

It is a little saddening to think of all this, though prosperity and expansion may be very good things. Everybody says they are except a few folk hopelessly old and disquietingly new in their ideas. "I could not sleep last night," said Mrs. Annie Yeamans, sole survivor of that old-time group of fine actors, the day after Ned Harrigan's death. "I could not sleep for thinking of the old times."

They were a jolly, wholesome lot. There was Ned Harrigan, handsome, charming, the hardest sort of worker—dramatist, actor, singer, dancer, stage manager, everything. There was Tony Hart, charming, too, but not of Harrigan's steady turn of mind, fun-loving, fun-making Tony Hart, who died years ago off in the country, broken down in mind and body, but never forgotten by his friends. There was John Wild, who could be as negro as any negro, the best colored impersonator, perhaps, in that day when there were so many humorists along that line. There was William Gray, not less skilled than Wild, some thought, and Harry Fisher, who played German. There was Dave Braham, who composed the "catchy music of the charming songs Harrigan used to write. They were all a big family on the best of terms with themselves and the audience.

Weber and Fields had the applause and admiration and affection, too, but the comedians of the big city never could get as close to the people as Harrigan and his company did. New York was small enough in those days for New Yorkers to be acquainted. Men of distinction were known to all by sight. Provincial it may have been, but certainly it was intimate and home-like.

When Harrigan drew his types they were men and women known to all his audience. The Mulligan family, whose adventures he set forth in a long series of successful plays, were neighbors and friends. "Squatter Sovereignty" dealt with a picturesque group, now almost as extinct as the cave man, but a very live issue forty years ago. New York was small enough to have but one set of jokes in those days.

"Ah, my dear," said Mrs. Yeamans, "we had good times. The plays that man Ned used to write. Two weeks it took

him for most of the Mulligan plays. Two weeks to put together the plot and dialogue and compose the song, and Dave Braham, he wrote the music. Dave's son, you know, is a conductor now, like his father, and it was Dave Braham's daughter that Ned Harrigan married.

"Three years ago Dave died and Tony Hart much longer than that. We used to laugh at Tony for the way he loved a good time, but it was the end of Tony in the long run. He could not work and play the way he did and keep it up. I am seventy-five, my dear, the last one of them left. I can still do a song and dance, thank God, but it is natural I should sigh a bit for the old friends, and it is natural I should believe things were a little better in those days.

"Good work they do now. I know, for I am no old fogey to criticize the young, but it takes time and patience to learn to act, and sometimes I think the young people nowadays are in too much of a hurry.

"For all our fun in those days we weren't rough, I think, and Ned Harrigan, when he had to draw a comic Irishman or negro, didn't make it up out of his head. He was always going around seeing people with funny ways and getting odd bits of talk to put in his plays. He drew from life, my dear. He was very conscientious and a great artist. God rest his soul.

"In those days things were different from what they are now. Such small stages as we had. But Harrigan managed to get capital effects on them. The salaries weren't large till Josh Hart raised them way back in '71, I think it was. Some of the good turns got big pay in those days, thanks to Josh Hart. Fine vaudeville artists got \$150 dollars a week, and it was worth while working hard.

When we came from there up town to what is the Herald Square Theatre now. It had been an old aquarium. It has been made over since my day, though it is much the same looking place it was when we went there, but Tony Hart had left by that time. They were good plays, I think, and though Ned Harrigan thought New York had forgotten him, it wasn't so. They remembered him, and they remembered me. The audience was very kind, my dear, and the older you grow the more you understand that the Lord takes care of people who try to do right.

"Ned Harrigan's favorite song was 'Poverty's Tears' in 'Old Lavender.' We used to sing them over—the old songs. The young people gathered at his house. All the young Harrigans, you know, and the Brahams, and they would play and sing the old pieces. Mrs. Harrigan loved to have us do it, because it cheered Ned up.

"There is a woman for you, Mrs. Harrigan. What a wife and mother and sister she was! It was she who took care of Ned's money for him and made good investments, so that when he died he had everything anybody could want. They were nothing alike in this respect, Tony Hart and Ned Harrigan, for Tony loved to spend his money as fast as he got it, and Ned let his wife take care of it for him. Tony would be riding in coaches when Ned would be going on the street car.

"Ned, you know, was a poor boy here in New York before he made his success on the stage. He wasn't overfond of school, he used to say, in his young days, and what he learned the streets and his playmates taught him mostly, but he got over that. It was only the boy of him that made him not want to study.

"When he got older he knew how much good it would do him, and he taught himself a great deal. He learned French because he thought the French plays might help him, but they never had anything he wanted. New York, with its colored people and its Irish, was always good enough for Ned Harrigan.

"Harry Fisher played the German when after a bit Ned introduced a German called Lochmuller. Lochmuller never took any part in the fights between the colored people and the Irish, and went about his business, which was being a butcher. Harry is still alive, out West, I think, and Billie West, who was with us a long time, is living, I know, but all the rest are gone.

"Many is the memory that comes to me these days," concluded the brave little old lady, "and it is sad to know that Ned Harrigan is gone. There never was a better man living than Ned Harrigan."

Mrs. Yeaman's creed is not to weep for the dead, for she knows they are happy, and tears are but the expression of our own selfishness, but her eyes were bright as she spoke of her dead friends, and truly, all that she said and more must have been deserved. A wonderful spirit of "good fellowship and happiness Ned Harrigan seemed to spread around him. 'The Dickens of America, Howells called him, and so he was in the love of his fellowmen, and, to an extent, in his art.

If he did not approach Dickens in his characterization he was at least of the same hearty, honest school. He tried to make people as they were, and he did this in the age when gush and sentiment ruled the stage. When Claude Melnotte and the Lady of Lyons were ideals, he brought out Dan Mulligan and poor broken-down Lavender, and he made people understand and love them. He bettered Dickens in this one respect, that he had no lapsés into sentimentality, and he made his characters true to themselves even when there was the temptation to fine language, which the master himself never could resist.

To read of his Irish and his negroes to-day is to get a history of the time that seems very far off, but the human nature of the thing still has its charm. And above all, there is about his plays the atmosphere of good fellowship and friendliness and sweet temper which marked that set of players which delighted New York and crowded the old Comique forty years ago. It was not great drama, perhaps, but it had the high quality of truth, and so far America has produced nothing more national, more distinctly its own, than these same plays of the Irish in New York.