

## My First Night's Experience on the Stage

By Paul Evertson, of "The Third Degree" Company.

**M**Y chance to go on the stage came to me while a boy living in Brooklyn. I was working for a retail clothing company, when one of the clerks in the store, who was a prominent member of a dramatic society, offered me a part

with the Amynth Dramatic club of Brooklyn. They were going to put on Sheridan Knowles' play, "The Critic," which incidentally was afterwards produced by the late Augustus Darrow under the title of "The Red House." I agreed to accept the offer made to me by my friend, and was cast for "The Beef Eater" in this play.

Learning that Robert Hilliard and Edith Kingdon had at one time belonged to this dramatic society, I began to picture myself as a star. So anxious was I to begin my theatrical work that I was two hours ahead of time at the first rehearsal. My part consisted of only a few lines, and yet during the five weeks this piece was being rehearsed under the direction of a man by the name of Beck, a great legitimate director at that time, I must have gone over my part at least 5,000 times.

The first performance was given at the old Academy of Music in Brooklyn

in the winter of 1888. As excited was my sword, and then striking against my adversary's sword. So earnest was I in making the duel as realistic as possible that I put all my strength back of my sword and my adversary became so scared that heads of perspiration stood out on his forehead and his limbs shook as if he had the palsy. The audience did not realize anything out of the ordinary, but the fight, foreshadowed by the noise made by the clashing swords, stood in the wings and gazed at us in breathless astonishment. I suppose that if my sword had not broken, the fight would still be going on. This was such a terrific climax

that the amateur stage manager rang for the curtain, which descended amidst storms of applause.

Incidentally, I was notified that my services with the Amynth Dramatic club would no longer be required.

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