

**STORIES OF THE STAGE:
I. THE STAGE DOOR; II.
THE GREEN ROOM**

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Stories of the stage: I. the stage door; II. the green room by Clement Scott

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CLEMENT SCOTT

**STORIES OF THE STAGE:
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A PROLOGUE.

THE curtain rises, silence falls,
And minds attuned to gloom or wit,
Give expectation to the stalls,
And anxious faces to the pit.
In plays of ancient Greece we found
A form that after time forsook ;
Still I, your Chorus, must propound
The argument that guides our book.

A garland of old memories ;
Tales of romance and kindliness ;
Grief's calendar ; exultant cries
Heard up the mountain of success ;
The hate that dies, the loves that live,
The fun of which we never tire—
These humble gifts we freely give
To friends around the Christmas fire !

The young beginners, struck with fright,
Demand your mercy on their knees ;
But if I guess your thoughts aright,
You'll spare such favourites as these.
If there be error, mine's the blame,
Who forced on them a novel part ;
I think you'll cheer them all the same,
And Chorus thanks them from his heart.

Toil is a pleasure when we know
The sympathy that friendship sends,
And Chorus gratefully can show
A tried companionship of friends.
We most of us play many parts,
But let us thank this merry age,
That there's one DOOR to all your hearts,
And we have entered it—THE STAGE.

C. W. S.

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THE STAGE DOOR

EDITED BY

STORIES
BY
THOSE WHO
ENTER IT.

CLEMENT W. SCOTT



STORIES
OF
THE STAGE

EDITED BY
CLEMENT SCOTT

I. THE STAGE DOOR
II. THE GREEN ROOM

LONDON
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS
BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL.
NEW YORK: 416, BROOME STREET

THE
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THE STAGE DOOR.

MAIN

THE STAGE DOOR KEEPER.

BY CLEMENT W. SCOTT.



swarming with miscellaneous children, and lumbered up with ragged and disconsolate-looking scenery crumbling to ruin—a dark prison-looking gate, at whose ominous sight have fallen down the wreck of torn forests and the glory of departed palaces; the guardian an overworked and faithful servant, and the sentinel a carpenter, resting from his labours and smoking a clay pipe—this is the approach to a paradise that feeds the unhealthy imagination with unworthy fancies, and has given the text for many a lying sermon—this is the Stage Door.

It is always well that people should be slightly acquainted with the subject they dis-

A MEAN and narrow opening in an unromantic wall—an entrance less pretentious than any that can be found at the side of a factory gate—an approach difficult to find, hidden up a blind alley, cuss; and I sometimes wish that those who are so eloquent in denouncing scenes with which they are evidently unfamiliar, lives of which they know nothing, and professions which might be far more honourable and honoured were they not so persistently maligned, boasted half the philosophy, perspicuity, shrewd judgment, and common sense of my old friend Tom Porter. He was a stage-door keeper, and a man of vast experience, great memory, and considerable attainments. His father had been an actor who, under another name, was famous in the dramatic annals of his time, and his son promised to follow very close upon his father's footsteps, when his bright career was cut short by a blundering half-drunk carpenter, who left a trap open one night, and crippled the poor fellow for life. Misfortune, so I have been told, fell heavily upon Tom Porter's family soon after this deplorable accident, that nearly broke the heart of an honourable and ambitious man. He had seen all the great actors from the time he could toddle to Drury Lane or Covent Garden; he had lived in an atmosphere of art; the talk was of nothing else but acting at home, over the baked joint on Sunday down to bed-time on Saturday night, from morning till night, it was nothing but theatres and theatre-going, old texts and new readings; and young Tom had dreamed of playing

Hamlet, Macbeth, Werner, and Richelieu with the best of them, when the hospital doctor pressed his hand, and told him at the very outset of his young life that he would never act again, and poor Tom turned his face to the wall, and sobbed like a child, "God's will be done!" Yes, my dear sir, don't smile. Actors can pray, like the rest of us, and they have hearts of their own, I can assure you.

But how to remain at the theatre? It would have been death to Tom Porter to desert that familiar ship. The very smell of the place fascinated him; he would have taken checks at the top of the gallery staircase sooner than leave the dear old walls; but it was not so bad as he thought, for he was appointed confidential secretary to successive managers at the best established theatres in London; and it was only when age and infirmities crept upon him that old Tom went through the stages of prompter and copyist, till finally he was installed close by the stage door in that bright and cosy little recess, hung round with pictures, warmed by a bright fire, and made companionable by a comfortable cat. It was here that I made the good fellow's acquaintance, and derived such constant pleasure from his interesting and varied conversation.

"Yes, sir," he used to say to me, "there are good theatres and bad theatres, just as there are good parsons and bad parsons, or good judges and bad judges. We're none of us perfect in this world, except, no doubt, the good gentlemen who know such a precious lot more about our business than we do ourselves. Look round here, sir, now do, and see for yourself, where are the broughams, and bouquets, and diamonds, and the swells waiting outside, that the papers make so much fuss about! It all seems pretty neat, and

tidy, and decent now, don't it? You can sit there in the corner by the fire, and see them pass. All right, sir, sit you down; don't mind the black cat, old Othello always takes the most comfortable seat in the room."

And so I sat down and observed. A constant swaying backwards and forwards of an adjacent door; dressers and messengers passing in and out with a "Good evening, Mr. Porter," or a "Good night, Tom;" modest women and quiet men passing in and out in an orderly, business-like way; an occasional author, who disconsolately called for his manuscript, or exultingly deposited a great roll of brown paper that would have broken down the rack, and was accordingly put aside for the manager—why, there was really nothing in the outside appearance of the place to distinguish it from a factory, when the wheels of the machinery of pleasure spin round between seven o'clock and midnight. Where on earth is the fascination of the stage door, and the glittering revelry of life behind the scenes? I could not find anything of the kind, and old Tom was delighted at my antipathy to the dull and unromantic side of a world spangled with so much idealism and fancy. No sensible spectator likes to have his illusions destroyed. He does not care to see the ropes and spars, and guys and pulleys; to be convinced that it is not a forest, but canvas; not a grass bank, but matting; not a sparkling river, but glass and gelatine; that the heroes and heroines discuss the ordinary affairs of life in the green-room; that the adorable actress is compelled to paint her face and her eyebrows, and never fails to smother you with powder when she shakes her head; that the pale student Hamlet looks as brown as a Zulu Kaffir, and the love-sick Romeo is daubed over like a Red Indian. No one has a right