

**LIFE AND RECOLLECTIONS
OF YANKEE HILL: TOGETHER
WITH ANECDOTES AND
INCIDENTS OF HIS TRAVELS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649179909

Life and recollections of Yankee Hill: together with anecdotes and incidents of his travels by W. K. Northall

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W. K. NORTHALL

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1850



GEORGE HANDEL HILL.

Yours Truly
G. H. Hill

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OF
HIS TRAVELS.

EDITED BY
DR. W. K. NORTHALL.

NEW-YORK,
PUBLISHED FOR MRS. CORDELIA HILL,
BY W. F. BURGESS, 22 ANN STREET.
1850.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1850,
By CORDELIA HILL,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the
Northern District of New York.

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INTRODUCTION.

It is to be regretted some means cannot be discovered whereby the impression which the player makes by his acting could be Daguerre-tyed, so that his pictures may be handed down to posterity, that those who follow after us may know what manner of man he was. The immortality which crowns the labors of the painter in a great measure depends upon the durability of the material he employs in his art. If the splendid conceptions of Raphael had faded from the canvass upon which they were realized, as speedily as those of the Actor fade from the public memory when he is no longer able to make them palpable, the Player's art would not suffer, as it does now, from com-

parison with that of the Painter. It requires as high a degree of intellect to embody a living representation of character on the stage as it does to impress it on canvass, and the Painter has only the advantage of being able to render that lasting which is evanescent and short-lived with the Player.

No matter what command of language the Biographer of an eminent Actor may possess, what skill he may employ in the detail and management of his subject, it is utterly impossible for him, in language, to convey a full and nice appreciation of those fine qualities of his genius which spoke from the eye, were felt in the tones of the voice, and gave meaning to the very slightest action of the body. In writing the Biography of Mr. HILL, whose fame as a delineator of a peculiar class of character is co-extensive with the land that gave him birth, I cannot but feel all the difficulties and embarrassments which arise from a want of means, as well as power to do justice to his character as an actor, and if it

were not that I am addressing thousands who have seen him, and whose memories will supply that which language cannot convey, I should feel almost disposed to abandon the task I have assumed, in despair. It is a common error with a certain class of people, to suppose that a man who devotes his time and life to the amusement of the public, has no higher claims to the respect of the community than those which might be preferred by the dancing monkey. I have yet to learn, however, that the wit which can make the judicious smile, is less a spark of heavenly fire than the pathos which can make the tender weep. If people are easier made to laugh than cry, it is rather a strong motive for believing that God designed that mirth should be the rule and weeping the exception; and he, in my opinion, who devotes his life to humanize the over long-drawn solemn face, people a desert of wrinkles with cheerful spirits, and relieve the lachrymal gland from an eternal flow of tears, thus saving a thousand cheerful impulses from a watery

grave, lives to accomplish a noble purpose, and should command admiration in his vocation, rather than the obloquy too frequently bestowed upon his efforts. The man who goes about continually moaning and groaning, stereotyping his face into a fixed misery, is a fool to himself and an ingrate to his God. The birds are cheerful at all times, in season, the flowers are decked in the gayest colors, and is man, made in the image of his God, to go sneaking through the world as though he had no business in it, and as though he must make himself miserable in order to be happy? The Actor's art has higher aims and nobler purposes than the Aminadab Sleeks of the day are willing to award it; and the time, I trust, is not far distant when the stage, purified from the adventitious evils which have grown around it, will justify itself, and take its proper place among the highest and surest means of reforming and elevating society. I have spoken thus freely, because I have undertaken the biography of Mr. HILL, "with a will,"