

THEATRE ON WEST CHESTNUT STREET, LANCASTER

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER.

IN the summer of 1830 a large brick barn, the property of the Reigart estate, in the first block of West Chestnut street, between Market and Prince, Lancaster, was converted into a theatre. The building was enlarged by the addition of a frame structure for the stage; and the interior, when completed, consisting of gallery, pit and scenery, presented a most attractive appearance. The theatre was next to the public school building, which was erected in 1823, and in which Lafayette was entertained when he visited Lancaster in the summer of 1825. Subsequently, the building was converted into a foundry for the manufacture of stoves, by the late Christian Kieffer. The United States post office now occupies the site of the theatre and the school.

The Lancaster Journal of Friday, August 20th, 1830, informed the public that the conversion of the barn into a theatre was nearing completion, and that it was expected the theatre would be ready for occupancy by September first. The theatrical company engaged to open the playhouse was advertised as being highly respectable in character and eminently qualified "to hold, as 't were, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure."¹

A subsequent issue of the paper stated that a benefit for Mr. and Mrs. John Duff, noted players, would be held in the theatre on Monday evening, August 30th.² How many plays were presented or the names of the companies engaged, during the first year of the theatre's existence, are not known, since many of the performances were advertised by handbills instead of in local papers; and few, if any, of these circulars have survived the destroying hand of time to help complete the unrecorded pages of our local history.

Toward the close of 1829, Joseph Jefferson I, then about 55 years of age, one of the most distinguished actors who have graced the theatre in America, and a player who had been the delight and ornament of the stage for a quarter of a century, felt that he was gradually losing his popularity with the public.

His last benefit took place in Philadelphia on December 23rd, 1829, and it being suddenly arranged and announced, failed to attract many of his old admirers to the house. Owing to the reverse of fame and fortune he bade adieu to Philadelphia. With the aid of his wife and children, he formed a traveling company and played in a number of the smaller towns of Penn-

¹ Hamlet, act III, scene II.

² Lancaster Journal, Friday, August 27th, 1830.

sylvania, Maryland and Virginia, making Washington, D. C., his headquarters. His son, Joseph II, was not only the manager of this company but also actor, scene-painter, stage-carpenter, and, in fact,—anything and everything connected with the art and business of the stage.

In the spring of 1831 Joseph Jefferson II, made an effort to rent the theatre on Chestnut street, Lancaster, but for some unaccountable reason was denied that privilege. He then engaged the ball room of the Red Lion hotel on West King street, the building of which is still standing and is now known as the St. George hotel. After fitting it up as a theatre, he opened it on Wednesday evening, May 11th, 1831, with the highly amusing plays, "Animal Magnetism" and the "Poor Soldier." A local paper,³ in covering the performance, stated that "Mr. Jefferson as the Doctor, in the former, and Darby in the latter, met with such a reception, after an absence of nearly eleven years from Lancaster, as must have been gratifying in the highest degree to this veteran of the stage; and in return for which he delighted his audience with innumerable touches of the finest comic acting.

"Messrs. John Jefferson, Richards, McKibbin, and Wills, made a very favorable impression and displayed powers of acting which we doubt not will render them favorites with a Lancaster audience. With Mr. John Jefferson's "Bagatelle" we were delighted; and we much doubt whether the scene of the reading of the challenge was ever given with much more comic effect by [Thomas] Wignel and [Francis] Blisset, than by the two Jeffersons."

Performances were given on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. On Friday evening, May 13th, 1831, the comedy entitled the "Birthday," was presented, in which Joseph Jefferson I, essayed the part of "Captain Bertram," and his son, John, that of "Jack Junk." The entertainment concluded with the operatic farce "Turn Out," in which the part of "Gregory" was taken by Joseph Jefferson I; "Restive," by John Jefferson; and "Somerville," by Joseph Jefferson II. John, as "Restive," sang a song entitled, "All the world was born to vex me." A quartet, consisting of Joseph Jefferson I, Joseph Jefferson II, and his wife, formerly Mrs. [Thomas] Burke, and John Jefferson, entertained the audience.⁴

On Monday evening, May 14th, the comedy entitled "Charles II, or The Merry Monarch," afforded a house well filled the highest gratification. The part of "Captain Copp" was considered one of Mr. Jefferson's best characters. On Friday, May 20th, the comic play entitled the "Review, or the Wag of Windsor," was presented in which Joseph Jefferson I, a highly gifted and accomplished actor of the old school, gave a masterly delineation of the character of "Caleb Quotem."⁵

On the succeeding Friday evening, May 27th, a benefit was given for the elder Jefferson. The comedy entitled, "Charles II, or The Merry Monarch,"

³Lancaster Journal, Friday, May 13th, 1831.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Lancaster Journal, Friday, May 20th, 1831.

was repeated. To this was added the farce of the "Spoiled Child," in which the veteran actor assumed the role of "Tag."⁶

In the summer of 1831, the public was informed that Joseph Jefferson II, actor and scene-painter, had engaged the theatre on West Chestnut street, Lancaster, and that extensive alterations were being made to the building. Windows were placed in the walls, in order that the theatre could be ventilated; comfortable boxes were erected for the patrons; and a ceiling was added to improve the acoustics.⁷

The Lancaster Journal of Friday, September 9th, 1831, contained the following:

"We are requested by Mr. Joseph Jefferson II, to state that the theatre on Chestnut street, this city, which has recently been fitted up and improved in matters of convenience and comfort, as well as of ornament and decoration, will be opened with a favorite play and farce on to-morrow evening, the 10th instant.

"It gives us pleasure to add, that we were yesterday surprised and astonished at the alterations and improvement which, in the course of a very few days, have been made in the interior of the theatre. It seemed like enchantment, we could scarcely credit, and cannot describe it. The ornaments and draperies are in the chastest style, rich but not gaudy, and not inferior, in general effect, to those in the theatres in our Atlantic cities. The whole will be heightened and finished by a beautiful drop curtain from the graphic pencil of Mr. Jefferson, which, we are confident, cannot fail to please all having pretensions to taste in these matters."

In view of its unfinished condition, however, the theatre was not opened until Monday evening, September 12th, as will be seen by the following statement in the Lancaster Journal of Friday, September 16th, 1831:

"The theatre on Chestnut street, in our city, was opened on Monday last [September 12th], by Mr. Jefferson's company, with the favorite play of the 'Mountaineers,' and the farce of 'He Lies Like Truth.' Our old friends were received with hearty greetings, and acquitted themselves in their usually accurate and interesting manner. The additions to the company are Mrs. [Hester Jefferson] Mackenzie, and Messrs. Palmer and Gilmer. Mrs. Mackenzie appeared as 'Zoraydn,' and though somewhat embarrassed by the timidity incident to a first appearance, is doubtless possessed of a share of the talent which so eminently distinguishes the Jefferson family.

"Mr. Palmer appeared as 'Octavian,' and evinced considerable talent for the drama; but he ought, in our opinion, to use his natural voice. The unnatural tone which we have latterly heard from several of the young aspirants for dramatic fame, is intolerable to our ears. No one, we believe, ever became a great actor, whose ambition was to imitate the voice or manner of any of his predecessors; and the reason is obvious—it cannot be natural.

⁶ Lancaster Journal, Friday, May 27th, 1831.

⁷ Lancaster Journal, Friday, September 2nd, 1831.

THEATRE.

“For Auld Lang Syne!!”

For Mr. Duff's

BENEFIT,

AND

Mrs. DUFF,

For One Night only.

Mr. DUFF takes leave most respectfully to inform his friends for mer patrons and fellow citizens generally of Lancaster and vicinity, that his Benefit and last appearance will take place

On Monday Evening, August 30,

On which occasion he is happy to say, Mrs. DUFF will have the honor to appear for the first time here, in the much admired Tragedy of the

GAMESTER.

Beverly,

Stakely,

Lawson,

Jervis,

Bates,

Dawson.

Mr. DUFF.

Clarke.

Haupt.

Palmer.

Smith.

Durang.

Mrs. Beverly,

Charlotte,

Lucy,

Mrs. DUFF.

Miss Hamilton.

Mrs. Stevenson.

Between the play & farce

A Skipping Rope Pas Suel Dance,

By Mrs. Smith.

The Scottish recitation of Ullin's
daughter,
By Mr. Johnstone.

To which will be added Colman's admired and humorous musical afterpiece, with songs, &c. called

The Review
OR
Wag of Windsor.

Looney Mactwolter, Mr. DUFF.

CALEB QUOTEM,	MR. CLARKE,	DUBBS,	MR BRYAN.
CAPT. BEAUGARD	HOUP.	GRACE GAYLOVE,	Miss Hamilton.
DEPUTY BULL,	SMITH.	LUCY,	MRS. SMITH.
JOHN LUMP,	DURANG.		

Songs in the Piece.

The poor Little Gipsy,' by Mrs. Smith.

'Oh Whack Judy O'Flanagan,' by Mr. Duff.

The Dashing White Sergeant, by Mrs. Smith.

'I am parish clerk and sexton here by Mr. Clarke, and 'I was the boy for bewitching'them.' by Mr. Duff,

TICKETS to had of Mr Duff at Mr. Greaff's Hotel, and at the Theatre

REPRODUCTION (SLIGHTLY REDUCED IN SIZE) OF A PLAYBILL ADVERTISING A THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE ON MONDAY EVENING, AUGUST 30TH, 1830, IN THE THEATRE ON WEST CHESTNUT STREET, LANCASTER, PA. THE UNITED STATES POST-OFFICE BUILDING NOW OCCUPIES THE SITE OF THE THEATRE.

"Mr. Gilmer, as 'Violet,' was quite respectable, but is somewhat in the fashion of the day in assuming a voice not altogether natural to him.

"The entertainments for this evening are highly attractive: Shakespeare's 'Merchant of Venice,' and the laughable farce of the 'Irish Tutor.' The exertions made by the company to please are very great; and they will, we hope, receive that countenance and support which they certainly merit from a liberal and literary community."

"Rob Roy," a dramatization of Sir Walter Scott's interesting novel, and the "Irish Tutor," were advertised for the evening performance of Friday, September 23rd, 1831. On the following Friday evening, "Ways and Means, or a Trip to Dover," a comedy by George Colman, was scheduled to be presented. The performance was to conclude with a melodrama entitled, "The Blind Boy." Between the play and the farce, a comic song entitled, "The Good Old Days of Adam and Eve," was sung by Mr. Richards; and another song, not announced, was sung by Mr. James Wills.⁸

The Lancaster Journal of Friday, October 7th, 1831, contained the following, under the heading, "Theatre," contributed by a correspondent who signed himself "X":

"We are happy to find that the exertions of Mr. Jefferson and his company at this establishment, have drawn full and fashionable audiences, who have all been, apparently, gratified by the creditable manner in which every play attempted has been performed. Indeed, it is a great merit, and one almost peculiar to this company, that they attempt nothing which they are not capable of doing ample justice to.

"The tragedies and comedies that they have given us, have been well sustained throughout, and many of the best farces in the language have been played with a vivacity and spirit that could not have been imparted to them without the combined talents of [Joseph] Jefferson I, John Jefferson, Mrs. S. Chapman and Mrs. Joseph Jefferson II, formerly Mrs. [Thomas] Burke.

"We have, in addition to them, Mr. Palmer, who has passed the ordeal of the Philadelphia theatres with credit to himself, and whose very judicious personations of 'the Jew that Shakespeare drew,' 'Jaffer,' and 'Abaellino,' have made him quite a favorite with us. We find that his own estimation of his abilities does not prevent him from making himself useful to the manager when called upon for any part, however trifling—for instance, 'Mad George,' in 'Ambrose Gwinett,' a part quite unworthy of his talents. Mr. Gilmer, as a light comedian, possesses every requisite for success in the profession; all he needs is hard study, without which he may rest assured that he will remain stationary. His 'Ambrose Gwinett,' although rather turbulent, was creditable in every scene; and, in many, truly affecting.

"Mr. Wills, in 'low Irishmen,' is without a rival—his 'Irish Melodies,' are deservedly popular with all classes, but we fear that if he does not vary them more frequently, they will be worn threadbare.

⁸ Lancaster Journal, Friday, September 30th, 1831.

"We have not leisure to particularize every member of the company, but not one is without merit. Miss [Mary Anne] Jefferson, during Mrs. Chapman's illness, has played many parts judiciously and at very short notice, which we were afraid she would prove unequal to; and Mrs. Mackenzie only requires practice to overcome her timidity to make her a favorite."

"Zembuca, or the Net Maker and his Wife," was advertised in the newspapers and by handbills, to be presented on Friday evening, October 7th, in a style that Lancaster had been unaccustomed to. It was to be preceded by a farce entitled "He Lies Like Truth," followed by a comic song, by Mr. Wills.

A writer in the Lancaster Journal,⁹ who signed himself "Dramaticus," addressed a communication "To the Lovers of the Drama," which was, in part, as follows:

"To the lovers of chaste and correct acting, we say: go and see 'Zembuca.' To the lovers of fun, and the sons of the laughter-loving 'Momus,' we say: go and see 'Old Jeff.'—and to all who are lovers of the drama, we say: no company was ever more entitled to your support and patronage than the one now exerting itself to please, by affording you innocent and instructive recreation."

The Lancaster Journal of Friday, October 14th, 1831, contained the following:

"The exertions of Mr. Jefferson to merit the patronage of our theatrical population, are certainly such as to entitle him to the highest commendations and success. Not only has the theatre been handsomely fitted up and embellished with tasteful decorations, but a variety of entertainments, of the first order, have been brought forward, and in a manner eminently recommending them to, as they have received, public support. We need but instance the popular melodrama of 'Zembuca,' which, independently of its intricate claims to favor, has been 'gotten up' (to resort to the established theatrical phrase) in a style of splendor serving to evince that neither pains nor expense have been spared. The scenery was rich and costly, reflecting great credit upon the skilful artist, Mr. Joseph Jefferson II.

"Without venturing upon the formal details of criticism, it may not be amiss briefly to revert to the general merits of the company. It is strong in point of numbers, and far more than respectable in talent. In addition to the entire family of the Jeffersons, several performers of considerable ability are attached to the corps.

"The very entrance of the veteran manager suffices to summon up

'Mirth that wrinkled care derides,
And Laughter, holding both its sides!'

"While he has a timber left, the expression of his merry phiz, and the sound of his jolly mellow voice, can never fail, as they never have failed, to call every feeling of good humor into healthful action. But a set panegyric on this peculiar inheritor of comic power, and exciter of 'fun and frolic,'

⁹ October 7th, 1831.

would be like attempting the addition of 'perfume to the violet.' Young Mr. [John] Jefferson is, like his father, a great favorite, and is sure to be always welcomed with hearty and deserved plaudits. His greatest fault is an occasional carelessness, unbecoming to the audience and unjust to himself. Mr. Palmer has furnished evidences of genius, but he has much to learn, and something to unlearn. For his own sake he cannot too soon rid himself of his unnatural tone of voice. His walk, too,—nor let him think this an unimportant matter—is susceptible of vast improvement. This is said in kindness; he should be told of his faults, that they may be amended; and, but for the fact that we believe him to possess talent of no mean order, they should not be pointed out so frankly. He is young; and perseverance, rigid discipline, with care to attain correctness of reading, cannot but elevate him to professional distinction. Mr. Wills, in broad comedy, has much excellence—in the 'Irishman,' he is *au fait*—all who witnessed his 'Dennis Brulgruddery,' will bear out this opinion. He sings a good song, too,—but if he would somewhat extend their range, the audience would be the better pleased, and he none the worse off. Mr. Gilmer generally enters with much spirit into the character he assumes; but he is somewhat addicted to 'mouthing it.' He should endeavor to divest himself of this unseemly fault. Let him bear in mind that

'No pleasing power distortions e'er express,
And nicer judgment always loathes excess
In sock or buskin, who o'erleaps the bounds,
Disgusts our reason, and the taste confounds!'

"Mr. Hartwig has acquitted himself very handsomely in the different characters which it has fallen to his lot to present. In several performances of genteel comedy he has deservedly received high approbation. Messrs. McKibbin and Richards fill their respective stations very creditably; upon the former has devolved, in general, the old men of the drama, and he has sustained them much to our satisfaction.

"The ladies are the more especially entitled to approval when we take into consideration the peculiarly unfavorable circumstances under which they have so frequently appeared. Both Mrs. Jefferson and Mrs. Chapman have suffered from severe indisposition; and yet their animation has uniformly given life to the play, and delighted the audience. Mrs. Jefferson's reputation as a vocalist is well established; and, though caprice or fashion may have at times directed public preference to the ladies who have 'starred it,' upon the strength of transatlantic fame, it is hazarding but little to say that, for sweetness and compass of voice, she has not her superior, and but few equals on the American boards. Mrs. Chapman's performances are marked by a fine vein of liveliness and buoyancy of spirit, rendering them extremely engaging, and herself a decided favorite. In consequence of her protracted indisposition, many of her characters have been undertaken—not unfrequently, it is understood, at the shortest notice—by her sister, Miss [Mary Anne] Jefferson; and this young lady, despite the disadvantages arising therefrom, has always sustained them with credit. Mrs. Mackenzie, who made her 'first

appearance on any stage' but a few weeks since, is already quite a clever actress; and, when time has lessened her diffidence and matured her powers, she may well hope to increase in favor.

"It is pleasing to observe that no 'patronage by the pennyweight' has been meted out to the veteran manager, but that his claims upon the theatrical public have been properly appreciated. And while the strongest desire to merit success can attain it; professional superiority and private worth continue to be valued as they should be, Mr. Jefferson will not have reason to complain of 'a beggarly account of empty boxes,' but will nightly reap the harvest of his deserts in well-filled houses and well-pleased audiences."

"The Flying Dutchman, or the Phantom Ship," was advertised to be presented in Lancaster for the last time on Friday evening, October 21st. The entertainment was to conclude with "The Budget of Blunders."

The Lancaster Journal of Friday, October 21st, 1831, contained the following from a contributor, who signed himself "I":

"It is but an act of justice to speak of the truly splendid style in which, during the present week, the melodrama of the 'Flying Dutchman' has been brought forward. I had the pleasure of attending its first presentation, and to say that the scenery far surpassed anything of the kind ever before attempted in Lancaster, is but a feeble tribute to the skill and industry of Mr. Joseph Jefferson II. No degree of labor appeared to have been spared, and expense was entirely disregarded. The Fairy Grotto, with its corals and spars, was indeed magnificent. The rear scene in the second act, attracted the highest admiration, the tossing of the stormy billows, the rolling of the troubled ship, were extremely natural.

"The performers, too, appeared determined to do their part towards the gratification of the audience;—nothing was wanting to render the evening's entertainment in the highest degree worthy of approval. I perceive, with regret, that it has been announced in the bills that this week will close the performances for the season. I hope that the worthy manager may be prevailed upon to remain at least until himself and family shall have taken benefits. They are entitled to overflowing houses, and, on such occasions, their deserts, I cannot permit myself to doubt, would be substantially acknowledged."

The Lancaster Journal of Friday, October 28th, 1831, contained the following brief obituary:

"Died, suddenly on Tuesday last [October 25th], in this city [Lancaster], Mr. John Jefferson, comedian, (son of the veteran comedian of that name), in the 26th year of his age. He was an actor of much promise and of great versatility of talent. Upright and honorable in deportment, kind and affectionate in disposition, he was beloved by his friends and esteemed by his acquaintances. His remains were interred in the [St. James's] Episcopal burying ground on Wednesday last, followed by his weeping friends and a very large concourse of our most respectable citizens."

The succeeding issue of the Lancaster Journal, dated Friday, November 4th, 1831, contained an obituary copied from "The Pennsylvanian," which was as follows:

"Died, suddenly at Lancaster, on Tuesday last, Mr. John Jefferson, comedian, aged 27 years, formerly of the Philadelphia and Washington theatres. Mr. Jefferson had long been well known to the citizens of Philadelphia, as a young actor of great and original power in the comic walks of the drama,—unequaled in his peculiar line; and in the opinion of many, standing second only to his father. His style of acting was entirely original and striking, from the perfect ease and absence of all effort which marked every performance. To the drama, Mr. Jefferson is a heavy loss, and one that cannot easily be supplied, as he was an actor who had formed his ideas of the profession from the comedians of the old school, and was entirely free from the grimace and talk which disgrace so many of the rising actors of the day. His good sense and just taste had enabled him to avoid these faults, and to act entirely from his own perceptions of the truth of nature. He has left few behind him qualified to take his place.

"Mr. Jefferson's death occurred on Monday night, immediately after leaving the theatre, where he had performed the part of 'Sir Oliver Surface' in the 'School for Scandal,' and 'Bagatelle' in 'The Poor Soldier,' for the benefit of his father. He was in perfect health, and it was remarked by many who witnessed his performance, that they had never seen him play with more spirit. On reaching home, he was attacked by an apoplectic fit, and died in a few hours. It is not a little singular that Mr. John Jefferson made his first appearance on any stage in Lancaster, in the 'School for Scandal,' we think about the year 1819, and performed again in the same play and at the same place on the night of his death, after a lapse of twelve years.

"We believe that this melancholy bereavement is the sixth which has occurred in the Jefferson family in a little more than two years. Their venerable father, the patriarch of the American stage, has the sincere sympathies of all to whom his private worth and public talents are known."

The remains of John Jefferson the talented son of the celebrated comedian were deposited in the churchyard adjoining St. James's Protestant Episcopal church, Lancaster, where they now lie in an unmarked grave. Under date of Wednesday, October 26th, 1831, the rector, the Rev. Dr. Samuel Bowman, who officiated at the funeral, made this brief entry in the burial register: "John Jefferson, Adult." He was the uncle of Joseph Jefferson III, born in Philadelphia in 1829, who immortalized the character of "Rip Van Winkle."

The editor of the Lancaster Journal stated that he thought "The Pennsylvanian" was in error. A search of the local papers shows that the Jeffersons played in Lancaster in 1820 and not in 1819 and did not return to Lancaster for the purpose of giving theatrical performances until the spring of 1831, nearly eleven years later. The Philadelphia and Baltimore company opened the theatre in Lancaster on Monday evening, July 17th, 1820, for a brief season, with the favorite comedy of the "Birthday, or Fraternal Discard," to which was added the comic opera of the "Agreeable Surprise." In the latter, John Jefferson essayed the part of "John" and his father that of "Lingo." Performances were given three times a week—Monday, Wednes-

day and Saturday.¹⁰ On Saturday evening, July 22nd, a comedy entitled, "Whisper Body," was presented in which John took the part of "Whisper" and his father "Marplot." The favorite play "The Rivals, or a Trip to Bath," by R. B. Sheridan, was presented on Friday evening, September 1st. On this occasion the favorite ballad, "Oh! Cruel! or The Wandering Melodist," was sung for the first time in Lancaster. John Jefferson was the fiddler. The last performance of that season was on Monday evening, September 4th, 1820.¹¹

Elizabeth Jefferson, in her reminiscences, has described her brother, John, as follows:

"Of all my father's children the most talented was John. He was the pride of our family. A classical scholar, proficient also in modern languages, a clever artist, an accomplished musician, a good caricaturist, an excellent actor, he was one of the most talented men of his day. Playing seconds with my father, he had caught his thoroughness of style, without becoming a servile imitator. He was a good singer and a graceful dancer. He possessed every attribute essential to an actor; but his attractive disposition and his brilliant talents soon gave him an exacting and perilous popularity. Gay company, and the dissipation that it caused, injured his health, though to the last he never was known to fail in professional duty. The last performance he ever gave was in Lancaster, Pa. When my father left Philadelphia, John, who had acted both at the Chestnut and Walnut, resolved to turn manager, and, for some time after that, he managed theatres at Washington and Baltimore, making summer trips to Harrisburg, Lancaster, Pottsville, and other places. It was while we were playing at Lancaster that John died. The pieces that night were 'The School for Scandal' and 'The Poor Soldier.' Part of the cast of the former was as follows:

"Sir Peter Teazle.....	Joseph Jefferson, I.
Sir Oliver Surface.....	John Jefferson
Rowley.....	Joseph Jefferson, II.
Lady Teazle.....	Mrs. S. Chapman (Elizabeth Jefferson)
Mrs. Candour.....	Mrs. Joseph Jefferson, II.
Lady Sneerwell.....	Miss Anderson
Maria.....	Miss Jefferson

"The Miss Anderson was Jane (afterwards Mrs. Germon), the eldest daughter of my sister Euphemia; the Miss Jefferson was my sister Mary Anne (afterwards Mrs. Wright); Mrs. S. Chapman was myself; so this was indeed a theatrical family party. In mounting the stone steps of the hotel, on our return from the performance, my brother John slipped on a bit of orange peel, and fell heavily, striking his head, and fracturing his skull. He was taken up insensible, and never spoke again. My father never rallied from the shock of that calamity. In this son his chief hopes had been centred. He

¹⁰ Lancaster Journal, Friday, July 14th, 1820.

¹¹ Lancaster Journal, Friday, September 1st, 1820.

believed that John was destined to great honor and fame, and that he would keep the name of Jefferson distinguished upon the stage. After this my father refused to act in any of the plays in which John had been accustomed to act with him, and in less than a year he, too, went to rest."

Joseph Jefferson I, the comedian, held peculiar ideas of death. It was not until a year before he died that he saw his first corpse. The first and only dead face he ever looked on was that of his son John.

While engaged with a theatrical company in Harrisburg, Pa., Joseph Jefferson I,¹² one of the greatest comedians in America, passed to his heavenly reward on August 4th, 1832. His remains were interred in the graveyard of St. Stephen's Protestant Episcopal church, that city. John Bannister Gibson, a jurist of high ability, prepared the inscription on his memorial tomb. After nearly forty years, the remains of Joseph Jefferson were removed from the Episcopal churchyard to the Harrisburg cemetery, and again laid in the earth. The same stone that marked their first sepulchre, marks their final place of rest.

¹² Joseph Jefferson I, was born at Plymouth, England, in 1774; and emigrated to America in 1795, where he became one of the most distinguished actors that have graced the theatre. He died at Harrisburg, Pa., in 1832. He was the father of nine children, as follows:

1. Thomas, died in 1824, at the age of twenty-seven.
2. Joseph II, born 1804; died 1842. He was the father of Joseph III, (1829-1905) who immortalized the character of Washington's Irving's "Rip Van Winkle."
3. John, considered the most brilliant member of the family. At the age of twenty-seven he was fatally injured by accidentally falling down the steps of the old Red Lion hotel, Lancaster, Pa., on the evening of October 24th, 1831. He died early on the morning of the 25th, and was buried in St. James's Protestant Episcopal churchyard, Lancaster. No tombstone marks his resting place.
4. Euphemia, married William Anderson.
5. Hester, became Mrs. Alexander Mackenzie.
6. Elizabeth, became Mrs. Chapman-Richardson-Fisher.
7. Mary Anne, married, first, David Ingersoll; second, James S. Wright.
8. Jane never went on the stage. Died in 1831 at the age of seventeen.
9. Name unknown. Died in infancy.