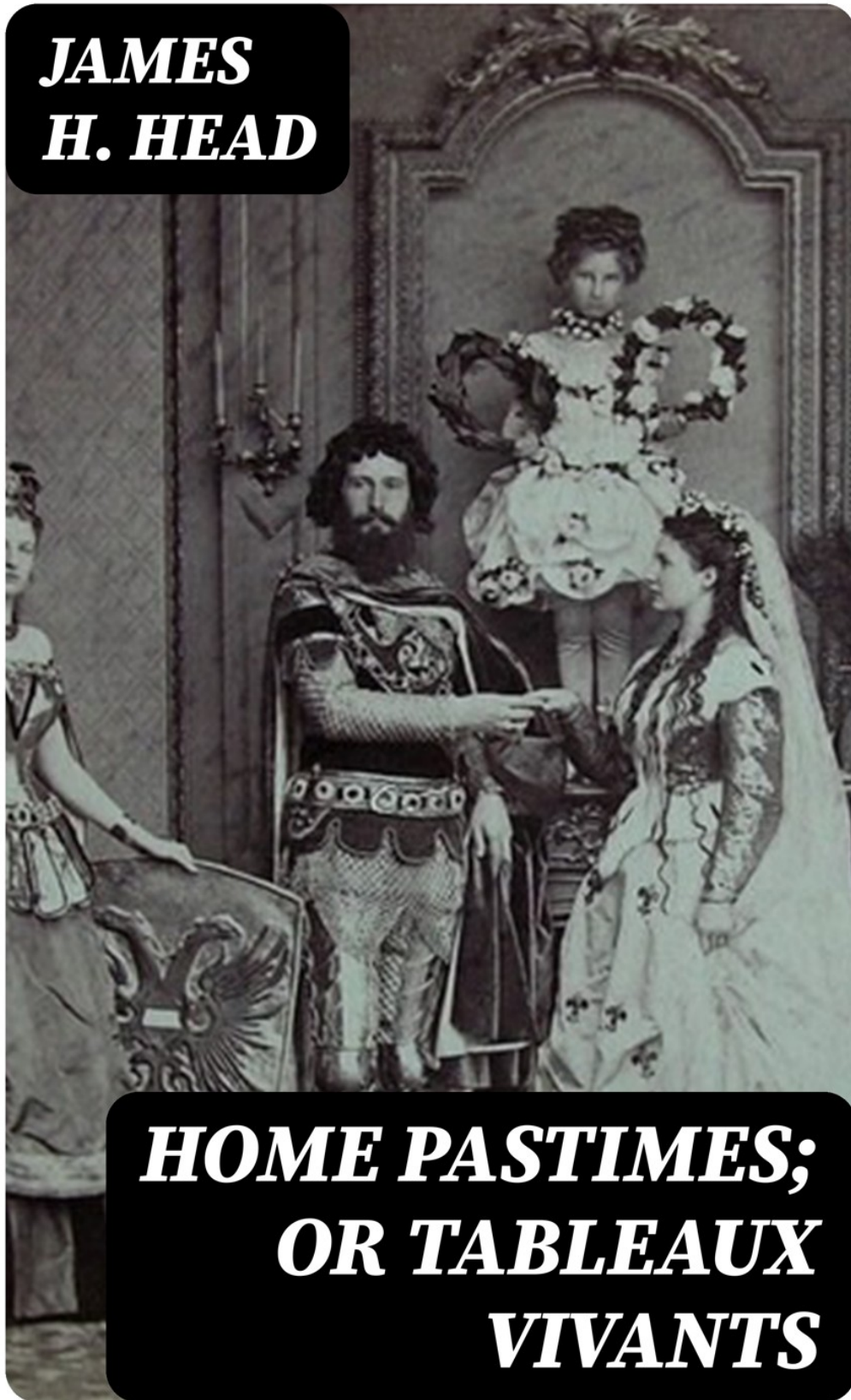


***JAMES
H. HEAD***



***HOME PASTIMES;
OR TABLEAUX
VIVANTS***

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H. HEAD***



***HOME PASTIMES;
OR TABLEAUX
VIVANTS***

James H. Head

Home Pastimes; or Tableaux Vivants

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A COMPLETE GUIDE TO

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WITH VALUABLE RECEIPTS FOR PREPARING MATERIALS.

Splendidly Illustrated.

BY THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

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A SINCERE desire to extend the influence of a pure and ornamental art, to promote and extend a perfect system of what is really beautiful in the forming of the Tableau, to awaken in the minds of many a quicker sense of the grace and elegance which familiar objects are capable of affording, and to encourage all to cherish a taste for the beautiful, have influenced the author to issue this volume.

Art should not be confined entirely to the studio of the artist. Her presence should embellish every home; her spirit should animate every mind. She is unwearied in her best and brightest attributes, restricting her influence to no peculiar spot of earth, nor conforming her claims to any one sphere. Beauty of form is still beautiful, be it found in the humble cottage or in the magnificent palace.

A perfect picture will be recognized and appreciated whenever displayed, or by whomsoever produced. In fine, nature is still nature, and the germ of poetical feeling is similar in its manifestation wherever it may chance to be shown.

The delineation of the natural and poetical, its realization upon canvas, or upon paper, or in the living picture, tends to improve the mind, assimilates the real with the ideal,

conforms taste to the noblest standard, overflows the heart with pure and holy thoughts, and adorns the exterior form with graces surpassing those of the Muses. The producing and forming of *tableaux vivants* have been the author's study for the past ten years. The choicest gems which adorn this volume are mostly imaginary scenes; others are selected from the poets; and a few are suggested by rare engravings.

The author, in his endeavors to impart and explain many things, has been obliged to sacrifice show and style upon the altar of simplicity; at least, such has been his constant aim. For all imperfections and defects he invokes the charity of a candid public. If this volume should in any degree satisfy a want that has been long felt, or add one devotee to the shrine of beauty, the author will consider his endeavors amply repaid.

JAMES H. HEAD.

PORTSMOUTH, September 2, 1859.



INTRODUCTION.

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THE Tableaux Vivants may be new to many of our readers, although they have been produced and have been quite popular in Europe, and to some extent in this country. For public or private entertainment, there is nothing which is so interesting and instructive as the tableau. The person most fitted to take charge of a tableau-company is one who is

expert at drawing and painting: any one who can paint a fine picture can produce a good tableau.

The individual who makes all of the necessary arrangements for a series of tableaux is generally called the *stage manager*. His first work is to select a programme of tableaux; and in this list there should be a variety of designs, comprising the grave, the comic, and the beautiful. A manuscript should be used in which to write the names of the tableaux, directions for forming each, the names of the performers, the parts which they personate, the styles of the costumes, and the quantity and kind of scenery and furniture used in each design.

The following diagram will illustrate the manner in which the manuscript should be arranged:—

NAME OF TABLEAU.				NO. —
Directions for forming costumes, &c.	Ladies.	Personation.	Gentlemen.	Personation.
	Scenery, furniture, &c.			

After the manuscript is completed, it will be necessary to select the company and assign the parts. The number of persons required in a first-class tableau-company is forty. It will be necessary to have that number to produce large pictures; fifteen or twenty-five persons will be sufficient for smaller representations. In forming the company, the following persons should be selected: six young ladies, of

good form and features, varying in styles and sizes; six young gentlemen, of good figure, and of various heights; two small misses; two small lads; two gentlemen for stage assistants; one painter, one joiner, one lady's wardrobe attendant, one gentleman's wardrobe attendant, one curtain attendant, one announcer. If a large piece is to be performed, such as the Reception of Queen Victoria, it will be necessary to have fifteen or twenty young gentlemen, varying from four to five feet in height, to personate military and other figures. Each person should have written instructions in regard to the scenes in which they take a part, giving full descriptions of the costumes, position, expression, and character which they are to personate; after which they should meet in a large room, and go through a private rehearsal. It will be necessary, previously to appearing before the public, to have three rehearsals—two private ones, and one dress rehearsal on the stage. It will be well to have a few friends witness the dress rehearsal, which will give confidence to the performers, previous to their *début* before a large audience. As soon as the company has been organized, and each performer has received his several programmes, it will be the duty of the stage manager to see that the various branches of the profession are progressing in unison with the rehearsals. Each tableau should be carefully examined, and a list of the machinery, scenery, wardrobe, and furniture of each piece noted down, and competent persons immediately set to work on their completion. The selection of appropriate music, the drafting and erecting of the stage, and many other minor matters,

should all be completed, before the tableaux can be produced.

But before proceeding farther, we will give directions in reference to the size and formation of *the stage*. It should be strongly framed of joist, and covered with smooth boards, and placed at the end of the hall, at equal distances between the side walls. It should be twelve feet square, and six feet in height. The front of the stage should be made to represent a large picture frame; it can be easily made of boards ten inches wide, fastened together in a bevelled manner, and covered with buff cambric, ornamented with gold paper. Oval frames are frequently used, but they are not so easy to arrange and manage as a square frame. Cover the floor of the stage with a dark woollen carpet, drape the ceiling with light blue cambric, the background with black cambric; the sides should be arranged in the same style as the side scenes of a theatrical stage. Stout frames of wood, two feet wide, reaching to the ceiling, and covered with black cambric, should be placed on the extreme edge of the stage, in such a manner that lamps from the ante-rooms will throw a light upon the stage and not be seen by the audience. Make the drop-curtain of stout blue cambric; fasten a slim piece of wood at the top and the bottom; and, at intervals of one foot on both of the poles, fasten loops of thick leather, containing iron rings one inch in diameter, and between the bottom and top rings, at intervals of one foot, fasten small brass rings; these should be attached to the cambric on the inside of the curtain; then fasten the top pole to the inside of the top of the frame, and attach strong lines to the bottom rings; pass the cords

through the brass rings and the iron rings at the top; then gather them together, and pass them through a ship's block fastened in the ante-room. As the lines will be quite likely to run off of the wheel, a piece of hard wood, with a circle at one end, fastened on the inside of the frame, will answer a better purpose for the cords to pass through. After passing them over the block, tie them together, and the curtain will be ready for use. When the ropes are drawn, the curtain will rise up in folds to the top of the frame. The floor of the stage should be built out on the front twelve inches, for the placing of a row of gas-burners with tin reflectors, painted black on the outside; this row of lights should be furnished with a stopcock, which can be placed in the gentleman's dressing-room. A row of strong lights should also be placed on each side of the stage, within three feet of the ceiling; these also should have reflectors and separate stopcocks, for the purpose of casting the proper lights and shades on the stage.

The Dressing-rooms are on each side, and beneath the stage. The floor of the stage should extend out on each side, making small rooms for the placing of the scenery, furniture, &c. A trap-door should be cut in the floor of each room, and flights of steps reaching down into the rooms below, which are used for dressing-rooms. A partition placed under the stage divides the ladies' from the gentlemen's room; these rooms are covered on the front with strong cloth, and decorated with flags.

A stage for tableaux in a private dwelling-house should be formed similarly to a hall stage, but so constructed that it can be put together in a few minutes. The platform should

be fourteen feet square, made in three sections, so that it can be handled easily, and should rest on a frame of small joist, which can be mortised together at the corners; place the frame on four boxes, two feet square; at the corners of the platform mortise four square holes, in which insert pieces of joist which will reach to the ceiling; around the top fasten strips of board, by means of screws. Make the frame in three pieces, cover them with cambric, and fasten them to the front joist, and on the top board with long screws; arrange the curtain and scenery similar to the hall stage. The wardrobes and furniture can be furnished by the members of the company, and with a little ingenuity and taste, many suits can be gotten up with little expense. As the view of the tableaux is but momentary, the quality of the costumes will not be noticed.

For a single evening's entertainment, the following arrangement will suffice, providing there be a long entry or a large parlor, separated by folding doors. If the entry is used, let the performers form their tableaux at the lower end; and when all is ready, the audience can be called from the parlors to witness the scene. A parlor with folding doors is undoubtedly the best place, as the doors can be slowly opened, which will give a better effect to the scene. Cover the wall back of the tableaux with black shawls, place the lights on a table at one side of the picture, and hide them from the view of the audience by placing a screen of thick cloth in front of them.

In forming up a tableau, lights and shades should be studied; in fact, this is the main secret of producing effects, and by managing the lights about the stage correctly, you

can throw parts of your picture in shadow, while other portions are light. Care should also be taken not to have too great a variety of colors in a picture. The showy costumes should be intermingled with those of modest appearance, and the lightest characters, as a general rule, should be placed in the background to relieve the dark ones; those in the background should be placed on platforms. If there are many figures in the piece, it will be necessary to have a number of forms, of various heights, placed in the background—in this manner all of the figures will be seen.

The scenery, furniture, and machinery of each piece should be arranged previous to the entrance of the performers on the stage. Each performer should be called on separately, and placed in position. By adopting this plan, every tableau can be formed without noise or confusion. When the position is once taken, it should be kept, unless it is a very difficult one.

The stage manager should take his position at the front of the stage, and see that each one is in his proper place. He should prohibit laughter or conversation among the performers, unless any one wishes explanations in regard to the piece. He should be strictly obeyed in all matters referring to the tableaux; and when he has properly adjusted every thing on the stage, he should remove to the ante-rooms, and see that the lights, music, &c., are ready. He should then ring a small bell, and the announcer in the hall will have a programme of the tableaux, and will announce the piece; and if there is any accompanying poem to be read, it will be his duty to read it. The manager will then ring the second bell; this will be a signal for the

performers on the stage to take their positions, and for the lights to be turned down in the hall. In thirty seconds after the second bell, the manager will ring a third time, which will be a signal for the curtain attendant to draw up the curtain, which should rise slowly to the top of the frame, and be kept up about thirty seconds. Each tableau should be exhibited twice, and in some cases three times. After the last exhibition, the performers should quietly proceed to the ante-rooms, and immediately dress for the next tableau. The manager and assistants will see that the stage is cleared of the scenery, and new scenery adjusted for the next piece. It will be necessary to work with rapidity, as there are many things to perform which in the aggregate will take much time. Large programmes should be placed in each dressing-room, so that the performers will be able to tell in which tableau they are to perform, without inquiring of the manager. Each performer should be furnished with a large trunk to keep his wardrobe in; and when a change of costume is made, care should be taken that each one places his costumes in his own trunk. If this plan is not followed, before the exhibition is through, many articles will be missing, which will retard the performance.

Each piece of machinery, furniture, scenery, &c., should have a proper place where it should be left when not in use. Nails, pins, hammers, and other articles which come in constant use, should be kept in a large box near the stage. By working systematically, every thing will move on with clockwork nicety, and all confusion be avoided. Colored fires should be burnt in the ante-rooms at the sides of the stage; smoke and clouds should be produced at the back, or in the

centre of the stage. The preparation can be ignited by fastening a lighted fuse to a long rod. Large tableaux require all the light than can be produced. Medium pictures should be shaded in different parts. Statuary tableaux require a soft and mellow light. Night scenes require but little light, which should be partially produced by the burning of green fire. The following articles are indispensable to a well-arranged tableaux stage:—

One melodeon, six common chairs, four ditto of better quality, two small tables, two sinks, two sets of pitchers and ewers; two mirrors, combs, hair brushes, pins, tumblers, twine and rope; napkins, nails, tacks, buckets, hammers, brooms, cloth brushes, small bell, large bell, scissors; one large table, one large chair, one set damask curtains, four boxes, four feet long and eighteen inches wide, six ditto eighteen inches square; two pieces black cambric, six feet square; four pieces white cotton cloth, six feet square; (these boxes and cloths are to be used in forming up the groundwork of almost every tableau;) two red damask table covers, (very handy things to use in decorating showy pictures;) one circular platform, four feet in diameter, (much used to form the top of pedestals to group statuary tableaux on;) two steel bars, for producing sounds to represent alarm bells; one bass drum, one tenor drum, one flask of powder, one box of material for colored fires, one set of water-colors, one case containing pink saucer, chalk balls, pencil-brushes, and burnt cork.

It would be almost impossible to furnish a complete list of the articles necessary. Those we have omitted will suggest themselves, or the occasion will suggest them. By closely

studying the plans we have outlined, we are certain that no person with tact and taste could assume the directorship of a tableau-company without success.



THE TABLEAU VIVANT.

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WALK with the Beautiful and with the Grand;
Let nothing on the earth thy feet deter;
Sorrow may lead thee weeping by the hand,
But give not all thy bosom-thoughts to her;
Walk with the Beautiful.

I hear thee say, "The Beautiful! what is it?"
O, thou art darkly ignorant! Be sure
'Tis no long, weary road its form to visit,
For thou canst make it smile beside thy door;
Then love the Beautiful.

Ay, love it; 'tis a sister that will bless,
And teach thee patience when the heart is
lonely;
The angels love it, for they wear its dress,
And thou art made a little lower—only;
Then love the Beautiful.
BURRINGTON.



THE WREATH OF BEAUTY.

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While Beauty comes to every human heart,
And lingers there, unwilling to depart,
Too many own her not, nor heed her claim,

But blindly follow some ignoble aim.
LAIGHTON.

Ten Female Figures.

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THIS elegant design is one of the finest of this series of tableaux, and is composed of ten young and beautiful ladies, grouped so as to represent a magnificent wreath. The bottom of the wreath rests on the front of the stage; the top reaches up to the ceiling, forming a complete circle of beautiful forms and fair faces, among which are entwined festoons of flowers. Inside of this circle is a large wreath six feet in diameter, and five inches in thickness; this rests on a pink ground, and is composed of spruce, ornamented with artificial flowers.

The first work in the construction of this tableau is to erect a circle of seats reaching from the front of the stage to the ceiling, in the background. This can be easily accomplished by using boxes of various sizes. The wreath should be ten feet in diameter; the boxes should be entirely covered with white cloth, the space in the centre with pink cambric.

The costume of the ladies consists of a white dress, cut very low in the neck; skirt quite long, and worn with few under skirts; sleeves four inches long, trimmed with white satin ribbon; waist encircled with a white satin sash; feet encased in white slippers; hair arranged to suit the performer's taste, and encircled with a wreath of white artificial flowers. The lady at the top of the wreath should first take her position. She should be the lightest in weight

of the group, and should recline in an easy position, resting her head upon her hand, the elbow touching the box, and the body slightly inclined to the right. The second lady will then take her position at the right of the first, on the seat below, her arm resting on the form of the lady above, the right hand supporting her head, the face turned in to the centre of the circle, the eyes raised to those of the figure above. The remaining figures should take similar positions, until one half of the circle is complete. The other side of the circle is arranged in a similar manner,—the figures facing inward.

The wreath of spruce and flowers is to be placed within the circle of ladies. The stage and the back scene should be hung with green backing, and care must be exercised in the forming of the circle, so that it shall appear perfectly round. The small festoons of flowers should be entwined among the figures, after they have taken their position. The expression of the countenances should be pleasant and animated. The light for this piece should come from the foot of the stage, and should be quite brilliant. Music soft, and of a secular character. The tableau, when finished, at a distance appears like an immense wreath resting against a grassy bank.



THE MARBLE MAIDEN.

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Paulina. As she lived peerless,
So her dead likeness, I do well believe,
Excels whatever yet you looked upon
Or hand of man done; therefore I kept it