



# CELEBRITY DUMMIES

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Ventriloquist Doll

# HOW TO BE A VENTRILOQUIST

A STEP BY STEP BEGINNER'S GUIDE.



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## PREFACE

Ventriloquism is almost as old as the world, or at least as old as intelligible spoken language, but just when and where in the dim and misty ages of the past it had its origin will forever remain unknown. Unlike other arts it was not brought to perfection through the slow development and accretion of years. From its very nature it must have sprung into existence full grown, like Venus from the sea. Under various guises its practice may be traced by the student in those venerable chronicles which faintly echo the long-vanished life of antiquity.

Although proof positive is wanting of the fact, it is fair to assume that many of the occurrences involving the assistance of an apparently supernatural voice, by which many of the old superstitions were fostered among the early races, were feats of ventriloquism. Such marvels are inexplicable, if they are not pure fiction, except as the work of deception through the aid of ventriloquism.

So common indeed at one time was this belief in a "second voice", or "familiar spirit", as it was often called, that it took the form of divination by which the supposed spirit was evoked and consulted as to the right course of conduct on important occasions; and this divination, which was practiced in a variety of ways among the different semi-barbaric races of the ancient world, can be traced through a long period of time.

By the Mosaic Law, which was given about fifteen hundred years before Christ, the Jews were forbidden from consulting those having familiar spirits. So accustomed, however, were the Hebrews, who had evidently become acquainted with the voice during their captivity in Egypt, with this mode of divination that one of their prophets compares it to the power of sanctified utterance where he says (Isaiah 29:4): "And thy voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust."

Just where the Egyptians obtained their knowledge of the art is uncertain, but in the performance of the "mysteries" which accompanied their worship of Osiris, the judge of the dead in the lower world, a seemingly unearthly voice, proceeding either from the earth or from overhead, played no unimportant part. Inasmuch as the voices described were such as having always been peculiarly identified with ventriloquism, the practice of this art by unscrupulous priests would seem to afford a natural solution of the mystery. This explanation might also be applied to the phenomenon attending the dawning of a new day upon the colossal statue of Memnon, which stood near Thebes in Egypt on the bank of the Nile, and became renowned as the "Vocal Memnon". According to ancient tradition, this statue when first touched by the rays of the rising sun emitted a musical tone, like the snapping of a harp string, which the imaginative Greeks conceived to be the voice of Memnon greeting his mother Eos (the dawn). Although the particular cause and character of the sounds have never been satisfactorily explained, the state of expectancy with which the silent and probably awe-struck worshipers awaited the sunrise, and their sublime faith in the reality of the phenomenon, were distinctly favorable to the production of a ventriloquial illusion by an attendant priest. Mention is made in the Acts of the Apostles (16:16), of a young woman with a familiar spirit meeting the Apostles in the city of Philippi in Macedonia. Such divination is also referred to by St. Chrysostom and other early Christian fathers; and in the East, where it has been practiced for upward of three thousand years, it is still not uncommon.

If there is any doubt as to the part ventriloquism played in this divination by a familiar spirit, there can be none in the method employed by the Greeks, which was termed gastromancy. In this the voice of the "spirit" made its oracular replies apparently from the priest's belly, the diviner himself

standing in the meanwhile with impassive countenance and immovable lips.

Coming down to modern times, we find that Louis Brabant, valet de chambre of Francis I, won for himself a rich and beautiful heiress by aid of his wonderful talent as a ventriloquist; and the works of M. L'Abbe La Chappelle, published in 1772, contain references to the astonishing ventriloquial achievements of Baron Menge at Vienna, and those of M. St. Gille, a grocer living near Paris. Another famous performer, M. Alexandre, was also so great an adept at changing his countenance, that at one time he completely deceived a sculptor, before whom he sat five times in the borrowed character of a famous clergyman of Abbotsford, with whom the sculptor was well acquainted.

Undoubtedly in ages past the art was practiced secretly by a corrupt priesthood to strengthen its power over ignorant and superstitious peoples, and only in modern times has ventriloquism emerged from the veil of mystery which enshrouded it. But even in these latter days, professional ventriloquists have taken care to carefully foster the idea that only to a favored few is vouchsafed the so-called power of "throwing the voice." With rare exceptions they have zealously guarded the methods used by them in the production of ventriloquial effects, and have usually tried to discourage eager inquirers with the assertion that "one must be born that way."

Therefore, in presenting a reliable and comprehensive treatise on ventriloquism and its allied art polyphony, I feel that I am meeting a genuine need. Handbooks on ventriloquism have been published before, but few of those published in this country have attempted anything more than a superficial treatment of the subject, and are therefore of little use to the general public.

For many years I have studied and practiced ventriloquism, and from the experience thus gained, have endeavored to write a genuine working manual, not only for the beginner, but for the professional performer as well. If those interested at all in ventriloquism will give to this book the amount of thought and attention which I myself have devoted to its preparation, I shall feel repaid for my attempt to shed illumination upon a subject about which little of practical value has hitherto been published.

## **HOW TO BECOME A VENTRILOQUIST - INTRODUCTION**

Unlike the poet the ventriloquist is not born, but is evolved by persistent practice. This is contrary to the notion held by many persons even in these enlightened days, who believe that the ventriloquist comes into the world with a vocal apparatus differing from that possessed by humanity in general – in fact, with a "double throat" by which he is enabled to project his voice into space and have it explode anywhere at will, much as a dynamite bomb explodes away from the source from which it is hurled. In other words, a large part of the otherwise intelligent public still labor under the delusion that the ventriloquist is endowed by nature with the power of throwing his voice wherever and whenever he pleases and causing it mysteriously to return to him; and that it is as easy to ventriloquize in the midst of a crowd or in the street as it is from a theatre stage or in a large hall where the audience is some distance from the performer.

If the commonly accepted theory of the vocal bomb were correct, it would undoubtedly be as easy to ventriloquize in one place as in another; but, as a matter of fact, there is nothing peculiar about the formation of the throats of the professors of this art, even of the most adept, to distinguish them from the rest of humanity, and as for actual voice throwing—there is no such thing.

The absurdity of such belief is shown by the fact that persons who practice ventriloquism in mature

years show no indications in infancy of possessing abnormal vocal powers. If they were born ventriloquists they would undoubtedly cry and talk ventriloquially in childhood, but this they naturally decline to do. When a pin pricks them or they feel the pangs of hunger they indicate that fact in the unmistakable manner of all infants—that is, by cries which clearly emanate from their own small persons—and not by throwing their infantile voices into different parts of the house to the consternation of the family and the wonder of the neighborhood. A born poet babbles in verse, crude though it may be, from babyhood; but ventriloquism is not bred in the bone and its practice made inevitable by a peculiar structure of the child's throat.

Ventriloquism does require, however, the possession of certain qualities of voice, such as strength, clearness, flexibility and ready ability to change at will; ordinary strength in the cartilaginous membrane of the throat and the muscles of the abdominal regions, and some aptitude for mimicry, which of course is dependent upon a combination of qualities connected with the ear and the voice. A person having a defective ear can neither sing in tune nor imitate sounds correctly, simply because not being able to hear correctly he has nothing to guide him in his own efforts. He may be endowed with every other requisite for the musical or the mimetic art, but through his inability to accurately sense the niceties of tone or pitch he neither sings correctly nor deceives by his attempted imitations.

There are very few persons, however, whose ear is so imperfect that they cannot sing a little or imitate something, and it is safe to say that eight out of every ten could, with practice and perseverance, become acceptable if not great ventriloquists. There is nothing really wonderful about the art, although the effects produced by the successful performer may seem so, and if one has the qualities mentioned, or at least can develop, by intelligently directed exercise, those which he does not already possess, he can soon become a ventriloquist. The progress made will depend of course upon the fitness of the student and the faithfulness with which he pursues the study.

The feminine voice does not so readily lend itself to the uses of ventriloquy as does the masculine, but it is not impossible for a woman to become a fair amateur or even a professional performer. A few years ago a female ventriloquist presented an excellent act with four or five mechanical figures in the vaudeville theatres of the country, and once I met an old lady who informed me that in her younger days she possessed natural ventriloquial ability which had more than once enabled her to completely deceive her brothers. Someone, however, has had the audacity to remark that ladies should not learn, "as their voices are heard in too many places already." Of course this is a base libel on fair womanhood, and ought not to deter any lady from taking up the subject if she feels a desire to do so.

After taking a few lessons the student may find that he has a hitherto unsuspected talent for the art, which only needs proper cultivation to be made a source of amusement and profit. As in music, there is a certain technique which must be thoroughly mastered before one can become proficient, and certain exercises conducing to voice production and culture which must be faithfully gone through with before one can give an efficient exhibition before the public. One must learn how to use the mouth and tongue to achieve certain results, how to speak interiorly with entirely motionless and almost closed lips, and how to make each of the sounds or voices used distinctive in tone, pitch and character.

The successful ventriloquist must also be cool, confident and something of an actor. The voices to him present no illusion, and he can judge of his success only by their effect upon his audience. I say

no illusion, but this is not quite true; for though he knows that he is creating the sounds, if he is thoroughly proficient, there seems a sort of isolation between himself and the voice which discourses with him. If he is talking with “a man on the roof” and his performance is perfect, the voice almost seems even to him to be that of another person and he enters into argument with it with as much earnestness as if this were so.

In one respect his work is more difficult than that of an actor. An actor impersonates only one role at a time, but the ventriloquist who uses figures must speak the lines of several different characters in as many different voices, and must at the same time be ready to question, argue, reprove or interrupt in his natural voice. In fact, he assumes the attitude of an interested spectator to whom everything said by the figures is as new and unexpected as to the audience itself; and although he is carrying on the whole conversation and constantly changing from one voice to another, he must be so thoroughly trained that no effort is apparent and no confusion results. The tyro is likely to make some amusing mistakes such as making Tommy talk with the voice which has been associated with Jerry, or interrupting with his natural voice when he should have done so ventriloquially. Because of the fact, however, that this branch of the art is more easily learned and not so difficult to practice, most professional exhibitors confine themselves strictly to it, but a more interesting entertainment can be given by combining figure working with feats of natural ventriloquism.

The farther removed a ventriloquist is from his audience, the greater the illusion he creates, and yet it is remarkable how near the auditor can stand to the performer without being disillusioned. During a performance given at a fair in Masonic Temple, Boston, several years ago, I had for my stage only a round dais at one end of the hall, raised scarcely two feet above the floor. The audience stood so close to the platform that I could almost touch the foremost persons, and I felt that under such conditions I could have very little success. But even here, a bright young lady who stood among those in the first rank of the crowd and directed her attention entirely to my face and lips in order to test the matter, afterward assured me that the illusion of “the man under the floor” was perfect, and that the voice did not seem to proceed at all from myself. This may sound egotistical, but I simply relate the incident to show the perfection which may be obtained, and for the encouragement of those among my readers who desire to take up the art.

Unlike the magician, who requires an elaborate “fit-up” to properly perform his illusions, the ventriloquist always has the mysterious at his command. From a haystack by the country roadside or from behind the closed portals of an empty store or the depths of an open sewer in the city, he can evoke “spirits” to amaze and mystify the hearers, which yet exist in nothing more substantial than his own voice. The art is an old one, and there is no doubt that in earlier times it was used by unscrupulous priests to terrify ignorant people and keep them in subjection. It has been practiced on the banks of the Nile and among the Esquimaux in the Arctic Circle, and probably has its exponents in those regions today. Among civilized races it has long since ceased to be anything except a source of entertainment, and for that purpose it has a legitimate mission. In this strenuous age of money-getting, public amusements are necessary, as they afford welcome relief and relaxation from the constant hurly-burly of modern conditions. So long as the entertainer, whether he be an actor, a ventriloquist, a magician, a monologue comedian or what not, amuses his audience without corrupting them, so long is his mission a beneficent one and his place in the world of men as important in its way as that of him who devotes all his attention to more serious affairs.

Merely as a source of amusement, however, a practical knowledge of ventriloquism pays well for

the time and effort spent in acquiring it in the amount of fun and glory one gets out of it, the relaxation it affords from the sterner duties of life, and the welcome pocket money which it brings to its successful exponent, which in a city, where one can be in touch with amusement agents, often amounts to considerable. Even though the ventriloquist has daily employment of a clerical or mechanical nature, there are always remunerative evening and holiday engagements to be obtained, especially if he is a little energetic in “drumming up trade” by keeping himself constantly in the minds of the agents, by sending out circulars and doing some advertising on his own account, and by watching the columns of the daily papers for announcements of future entertainments where outside talent might be wanted.

A half-hour’s exhibition of ventriloquism with the aid of mechanical figures, which carry on a bright and amusing dialogue with the performer and possibly contribute a song or two, varied by conversation with invisible people or imitations of various tools and musical instruments after methods which will be explained later, will often be eagerly accepted as an agreeable departure from the monotony of readings and vocal and instrumental music usually given at local entertainments.

In concluding this introductory chapter, I do not hesitate to say that if you possess a voice of at least moderate range and power, and an ear that is fairly accurate in sensing sound impressions, you will have no difficulty in becoming expert enough in the art to give an exhibition similar to that mentioned above—just when, will of course depend entirely upon the amount of attention you give to it and the degree of aptitude you display. Time and experience are all that you then require to become perfect. The road lies before you and is not especially hard to travel; follow it faithfully and the goal will soon be reached.

**PART I**  
**“NEAR” VENTRILOQUISM**

## CHAPTER I VOICE PRODUCTION

THE word “ventriloquism” is made up from two Latin terms, “venter,” the belly, and “loquor,” to speak—literally speaking from the belly; but in a sense the word is not well chosen. The sounds evoked by the ventriloquist have their origin in the back part of the throat, and of course cannot by any manner be forced below the vocal cords which create them. By compressing these cords, however, and by shutting off the sound by means of different positions of the tongue and jaws, or by forcing it explosively against the hard palate, the voice is given the peculiar characteristics necessary for all distant effects. But the work of those who use mechanical figures is done almost entirely in the forward part of the mouth, just behind the teeth, and in the nasal passages. The ventriloquial voice has its own modifications, such as “near distant,” “farther distant,” “u above to level,” “level to below,” etc., all of which have their distinctive qualities of pitch and character. In the second part of this work the method of forming the ventriloquial voice and of lending to it these modifications will be fully explained.

Before proceeding further, however, it is well for the student to have some knowledge of the structure of the vocal organs as directly related to voice production and preservation.

Passing from the known to the less known we will first consider the mouth which, aided by the lips, shapes the sounds originating in the throat into words. It has a fixed roof formed by what is known as the hard palate, and a movable floor made up of the tongue and lower jaw. When the mouth is closed the tongue comes in close contact with the roof; and back of the hard palate, communication with the nasal cavity (leading to the nose) and the pharynx (back part of the mouth) is further impeded by a curtain of flesh, the soft palate. At the rear of the base of the tongue is a lid, or valve, the epiglottis, which covers the windpipe and protects it in the act of swallowing, the food passing down at the back of the throat. Below this valve is the glottis, composed of two semicircular membranes, forming a small oblong aperture which can be dilated or contracted at pleasure, and by the various vibratory motions of which the tones of the voice are modified. Below this, and at the upper part of the windpipe, is the larynx (commonly known as Adam’s apple). This is composed of four pieces which have the power of playing into each other or of moving together.

Like the bellows of an organ, the lungs furnish the air which is forced up the windpipe and through a chink in the larynx where the sound is produced, the vocal cords vibrating in much the same manner as the reed of a musical instrument to which the larynx may be compared. The tone then passes up into the pharynx, where it is modified at will, and, arriving at the mouth and lips, is shaped into intelligible language.

There are also various cavities in the head and cheek bones which connect with the back part of the throat, or pharynx, and serve as a kind of sounding-board for the tone. This is the reason the voice is changed from its usual resonant quality when a person has a cold. All these cavities are covered by a sensitive membrane which, when swollen and inflamed, diminish the space of the cavities, thus altering the character of the tone.

Of course the pitch is regulated by the tension of the vocal cords. The tighter they are stretched the more rapidly they vibrate and the higher and more shrill the sound; and, per contra, the more they are relaxed, the slower the rate of vibration and the lower the pitch. The different positions of the cords are determined entirely by muscular actions under the control of the will. In the ordinary act of respiration, the air passes through the larynx and vocal tubes without a sound, because they are

relaxed and at rest and their relations to each other are not therefore favorable to tonal production.

The quality of the voice depends on the structure of the larynx and the size and form of the vocal tube. The ventriloquist alters the natural quality of his voice by dilating or contracting the mouth; by contracting the passage between the back part of the throat and the mouth so as to separate them into almost distinct chambers or by widening the opening so as to throw them into one, this being done by means of the soft palate; and by altering the form of the cavity of the mouth by means of different positions of the tongue.

In taking up ventriloquism, the student should be careful not, in his eagerness to get ahead, to strain or overwork the vocal organ in any way, for he will only delay his progress by so doing, and perhaps might permanently injure his voice. Especially, should this caution be observed by boys who have reached the period of their lives where the voice changes and finally takes on a deeper and manlier tone than the childish treble which has hitherto distinguished it.

Occurring usually at about fifteen years of age, sometimes a little before, this period, which is a critical one for the voice, lasts from one to three years, during which the vocal organs should not be overtaxed in any way. While the physiological changes are taking place in the throat which brings about this alteration of tone, the voice often breaks badly or is accompanied by great hoarseness and is sometimes lost entirely for days and even weeks at a time. The alterations chiefly affect the larynx, or so-called Adam's apple, which often becomes noticeably prominent.

In the light of these facts, it need hardly be reiterated that boys who take up the practice of ventriloquism at this period should be extremely careful, as the efforts required tend to bring about an unusual degree of sensitiveness in the throat and lungs. For this reason the chest should be kept warmly covered to guard against sudden variations in temperature. A traveling ventriloquist whom I once saw kept a band of flannel constantly around his throat, except when on the stage, but this is neither necessary nor desirable, and would indeed be very likely to make the lower part of the neck unduly susceptible to changes in the weather.

A half hour's practice a day, taken in ten or fifteen minute installments, especially at first, is sufficient to begin with, and if the student should become hoarse before that time is up, he should stop at once or he might forever ruin his chance of becoming a good ventriloquist.

It might be well for the beginner whose voice is changing to defer the practice until later, but if he experiences no special inconvenience at this time and is so strongly attracted toward the art that he is impatient to begin, he should proceed very carefully and discontinue the practice upon the least sign of vocal strain or weariness. In some boys the change from youth to manhood is so gradual as to be hardly perceptible, in which case the voice is not so easily injured; but it is always best to err on the side of extreme care in the use of so delicate and perfect an instrument than to carry vocal exercise of any kind to excess. In my own case, although my voice retained its clearness and strength during this period of change, I did not begin the study of ventriloquism until I was at least seventeen, and it was two or three years later before I gained confidence enough to give exhibitions in public.

Adult students whose voices are already fixed need not be so careful, although even to them the advice about stopping upon the first sign of hoarseness is applicable. Loud conversation, loud reading, immoderate laughter, rapid walking and running causing the breathing to be much accelerated, tend to fatigue the vocal organ and are therefore imprudent actions to any one pursuing

a course of training directly dependent upon this organ for its ultimate success, like singing, oratory and ventriloquism.

Now just a word as to the care of the throat before passing on to the actual work of ventriloquizing. A gargle of tepid or cold water, beginning with tepid, aids and strengthens the voice, while hot water will take out any soreness that may result from the exercises. A cold compress applied to the neck overnight works wonders.

This may be made by dipping a piece of cotton cloth into cold water, wringing it, and after folding into a convenient size, binding it around the throat under a strip of flannel. All so called cough drops should be avoided. If the throat feels dry and harsh, half a teaspoonful of glycerine a few minutes before beginning will lubricate it, and any hoarseness before beginning may be broken up by sucking a lemon.

It is also a good thing to daily massage the throat by bending the neck back until the space between the shoulders is touched by the back of the head. Resuming the natural position, turn the head and touch the top of the right shoulder with the chin and do the same with the left shoulder. Then beginning in the notch just above the breast bone rub or knead from below up to the lower jaw with a light pressure, yet firm enough not to slip on the skin.

Of course I need hardly add a word as to the importance of keeping the teeth clean by brushing them at least once a day, after every meal if convenient, to preserve them and keep the mouth sweet and wholesome. I would also recommend a daily lung bath in order to strengthen and develop the lungs, which will not only give one added power for vocal elicits of any kind, but will also improve the general health.

Standing in the open air, or in a room before an open window, take a long, deep breath through the nostrils until the lungs are well filled, then open the mouth and slowly expel the air. After a few seconds' interval repeat the process and continue in this manner for ten minutes. By extending the arms straight out before the body and raising them above the head as breath is taken, the exercise is made more effective. It is also a good idea, after filling the lungs, to hold the breath for an instant and lightly slap the chest four or five times to quicken the circulation of the blood in that region.

Now we are ready for the actual beginning, which we will take up in the next chapter. Many students start out bravely, but soon tire of the practice and give it up; others practice incessantly and their ill-considered efforts cause an uncomfortable feeling in the throat in a short time which compels them to desist; others, again, are easily discouraged before they have fairly begun, and because they do not succeed almost immediately in obtaining the effects desired, they think they never will be able to learn; but those who go about it in the right way, using intelligence and discretion in the frequency and amount of their practice and remaining patiently content to become perfect in one thing before taking up the next, invariably succeed. According to the old Irish saying, "Patience and perseverance got a wife for His Rev'rence" and so it is with ventriloquism or in fact with anything worth learning, either for amusement or profit; and this art is productive of both, whether one takes it up simply as a hobby or avocation or with the determination to make it a means of livelihood.

## CHAPTER II EXPLANATION

As I have already stated, ventriloquism is not a gift; it is an acquirement. It is based upon the difficulty the ear experiences in judging correctly the direction of sound, and the ease with which it may be misled in this respect. A little experiment will illustrate my meaning.

In a company of people let a willingly disposed person be blindfolded and seated in the middle of the room. Then let him try to determine the direction from which emanates the sound made by striking a coin—say a quarter or a half dollar—with a key or other hard object, by someone who is eight or ten feet from him. The subject of the experiment also has to guess the distance at which the sound seems to have been made. Try it first with nothing between the coin and the subject, then have the person who holds the money piece vary the position of his hand in such a way as to form a screen between the silver and the subject, without, however, altering his position in the room. Almost invariably the subject will answer incorrectly, and no doubt when his bandage is removed will be greatly surprised at the gross errors in auditory perception that he has just committed. The illusion that is produced by simply varying the position of the hand in which the coin is jingled, is a good illustration of that obtained through ventriloquism.

Have a child and a man placed in the same angle with reference to the auditor and near together. If the man then speaks in the accents of a child without moving his lips or the muscles of his face in any way, the auditors will believe that the voice comes from the child. Even if the man is some distance away from the child the illusion will still be effective, if the latter accommodates its features and gestures to the words spoken by the former.

Were it not for this tendency to self-deception, there would be no such thing as ventriloquism, which the dictionary defines as being the art of making the voice appear to come from various points or distances, and not from the actual speaker. So far as it goes, the definition is a good one.

By a look or a gesture the ventriloquist leads his audience to expect a voice from a certain direction, then by speaking ventriloquially—that is, without moving his lips or jaws, with teeth closed or almost closed and lips only slightly parted, he tricks his auditors into believing that the voice heard actually proceeds from the point indicated. Of course unless his imitation of a distant voice is good; that is, unless in faintness, tone, body, etc., it seems to come from a distance, the effect will be imperfect, although it may still be deceptive and therefore partly successful.

Ventriloquism is divided into two classes: Mimicry, or “Near”; and Natural or “Distant”

Ventriloquism. There are many successful ventriloquists who make no pretense whatever at using anything except “near” in their performances. This is so when mechanical figures are used, and the wit and humor of the dialogue— together with the comical appearance of the figures—are alone relied upon to hold the attention of the audience.

These puppets are so constructed that by placing the hand at the back of the neck or within the hollow body and moving a lever with the thumb, the mouth will open and shut, thus making a movement very much like that of a person in speaking. Sometimes the eyes and arms are also made to move, and if the voices used are characteristic of the people represented by the figures, a very enjoyable entertainment, running from fifteen minutes or less to a half hour, can be given without resort to anything more difficult than mimicry. A large variety of characters can be used in a performance of this kind, such as Irish, negro, old man and old woman, little girl, etc., although of

course there is a limit to the number which can be used advantageously by a single performer at one time.

As practical working ability in this branch of the art is easier to acquire than facility in natural ventriloquism, we will in the next chapter give definite instructions for becoming a successful figure worker.

## CHAPTER III NEAR VENTRILOQUISM

The chief difficulty presented to the learner of Near Ventriloquism is caused by the necessity of keeping the muscles of the lips and face immovable. While carrying on a dialogue with his "dummies," the ventriloquist usually addresses his questions to them in the ordinary voice; but when the figures seem to answer there is no movement discernible of the face and lips, the mouth remaining nearly, but not quite, closed and the lips parted in the natural manner of an interested listener.

The acquirement of this ability to speak without moving the lips is the first thing to be accomplished, and although it may seem impossible at first, if the student is faithful in his practice it will not prove to be so difficult a matter after all. Now to begin.

Standing before a mirror, close the lips until they are from one-eighth to one-quarter of an inch apart, and while keeping the jaws rigid try to say the letter "A." The teeth may touch each other or they may be slightly parted. You will find that you can make the letter clearly without trouble. Then try in succession "E," "I," "O" and "U." You will be gratified to find that these also present no difficulty. This is so because, as you know, they constitute the vowels, or unobstructed sounds, of the English language, and thus require no movement of the lips. They may be indefinitely prolonged as in a-a-a-a-a-a-a, e-e-e-e-e-e-e, etc. There are a greater number of vowels than are usually admitted in writing; in fact, it is possible to considerably add to them by giving to some of the letters ordinarily classed as consonants, or obstructed sounds, a slightly more closed or more open sound.

When you attempt "B" however, you will meet with difficulty; the same will be the case with "P." Words in which these two letters occur must therefore be used as little as possible. When it is impossible to avoid such words, substitute some sound closely approximating that required. For instance, "Vhee," which can be pronounced without movement of the lips after a little practice, may be used in place of "B"; and "Fee" for "P." "A big piano" would be spoken a A vig fiano." Being combined with other letters in words occurring in sentences the meaning of which is perfectly clear, such substitutions are hardly perceptible to the listeners, and the ventriloquist arranges his dialogue in such manner that where there is danger of being misunderstood or not understood at all, the same words may be immediately repeated in the questions which he asks his figures. This accounts for much of the unnecessary repetition noticeable in dialogues intended for ventriloquial use, and it also accounts for the fact that low comedy characters are nearly always represented by the figures. Fine enunciation and perfect pronunciation are not expected from such persons, and on hearing the doubtful words repeated the auditor at once jumps to the conclusion that they were rightly pronounced in the first place. Considerable latitude is also allowed the performer in his use of grammar, as the figures do not represent people who are supposed to be educated. In his own questions his grammar should, of course, be faultless, but he may use ungrammatical expressions in the speeches of his figures with impunity, as such expressions are not at all "out of character," and are indeed necessary to make the dialogue realistic.

In the dialogues given further on, the ventriloquial method of pronouncing words containing troublesome letters will be indicated where necessary, but before leaving this topic it may be stated that some of the letters which appear hard at first may be very closely imitated with immovable lips by assiduous practice. Examples are "H" and "N." "M," on the contrary, can never be given

perfectly without moving the upper lip, and “Eng” or its modifications can be substituted. For instance, the word “amusing” would be pronounced ventriloquially as if spelled “angyuzing.” The “n” being reinforced by the “y” gives a sound very close to the right one.

“C” and “D” are easy, as are most words containing these letters, provided they are not in combinations which are themselves difficult to pronounce.

“F” makes a sound of the breath striking the teeth, but if slightly prolonged the difference is hardly noticeable.

“G,” “I,” “K” and “L” offer no difficulty, and “Q,” “R,” “S” and “T” give little trouble.

“V” should be slightly prolonged as in the case of “F,” and be well practiced.

“W” is pronounced as “duggle-you,” while “X,” “Y” and “Z” can be readily spoken.

This exercise should be gone through with over and over again before a mirror, until every letter can be pronounced, in accordance with these instructions, without movement of the lips. Watch yourself carefully, and should you detect any movement at any time while pronouncing, stop at once and give extra attention to the letter until the movement is no longer perceptible.

The student is now ready for actual work with the throat in the production of the different voices required in figure working.

First comes the “Punch” voice which, as its name indicates, is a close imitation of that used for the puppet Punch in “Punch and Judy” shows. A Punch and Judy performer uses a little instrument (made by winding a narrow piece of cloth or tape over and between two curved pieces of tin) to produce this voice, but this is not allowable for a ventriloquist who stands in full view, and the voice must therefore be produced naturally.

To do this, recall just how the Punch voice sounds or take the first opportunity to listen to a good Punch and Judy performer; or think of the higher notes of a clarinet or the sound of a squeaking door. Then bring the teeth together and stretch the tongue until it touches the roof of the mouth near the back of the front upper teeth. Then say, “Judy, Judy, where are you, Judy?” in as high a tone as you can command. The position of the tongue throws the sound into the cavity of the nose, thus imparting to the voice the strong nasal quality which is needed. It also has the sound of a high-pitched reed instrument, and the more reedy and metallic you can make it the better.

If the student has difficulty in getting just the right tone, place the tongue as before and say “Th-e-e-e-k,” prolonging the “e’s” and thinking of the punch voice or the sound made by a clarinet, as before.

This voice is utilized for the speech of a querulous old woman and for the imitation of ordinary instruments, the crowing of a bantam, the talk of a parrot, the sound of a mandolin string, the voice of a young child, the mewling of a cat, the bleating of a lamb, etc.

In a little lower key, and less nasal in quality, it may be used for either the Irish or the Negro figure. If you can produce it easier than you can the graver voices, adopt it for the figure which carries on most of the dialogue, and vice versa if the deeper voices are more easily made. Always favor yourself in little ways like this as much as possible, as you can do best that which requires the least effort.

When once you have acquired facility with the Punch voice, repeat the easy letters of the alphabet

in that voice slowly and carefully. Then, after a few minutes' rest, run them over again, first saying the letter in your natural voice and then in the Punch voice, and so on—alternating each letter in your ordinary tone with the same one in that of Punch. By this means you accustom your throat to instant change from one voice to another.

When you can go through this exercise with ease you may try the following dialogue at a curtain or a Japanese screen :

Vent. "You may not be aware of it, ladies and gentlemen, but I have reason to believe that there is an old woman behind this curtain (or screen)." (*You say this with your face turned squarely toward the imaginary audience, then turning toward the screen say quickly in the Punch voice.*) "What do ye call me?"

Vent. "An old lady, I should have said. I beg pardon."

O. L. "Ye can't beg ennything uv me."

Yent. "Oh, you misunderstand me."

O. L. "No, I understand ye too well."

Yent. "Well, never mind, can you sing?"

O. L. "I dunno."

Yent. "Will you try?"

O. L. "No. I was tried once and didn't like it."

Yent. "Why, who tried you?"

O. L. "Judge——" (*Name of some well known local judge.*)

Yent. "I didn't mean that."

O. L. "He did."

Yent. "What did he try you for?"

O. L. "Cuz I made a speech."

Yent. "What, you make a speech! What did you say?"

O. L. "I said, < Not guilty."

Yent. "That was a very short speech."

O. L. "Yes, but he guv me ten days for saying that."

Yent. (*laughing*). "I see you will have your joke. But comenow, I want you to sing," (*Puts hand behind curtain.*)

O. L. "Take your arm away. I know you."

Yent. "I was only ——"

O. L. "Yes, I know all erbout it, so don't do it again."

Yent. "Will you sing?"

O. L. "Yes, I'll sing out if you put your arm around my—eh? — (*as Vent .puts his head quickly behind curtain as if to expostulate*) "oh, I didn't know there was enny one there. Yes, I'll sing." (*Sings.*)

"I dreamt I dwelt in marbil'alls  
With tassels and scarfs by my side—"

Vent. "Vassals and serfs."

O. L. "Tassels and scarfs."

Vent. "Vassals and ——"

O. L. "If you know so much you'd better sing it yerself."

Now this dialogue may not seem very brilliant in cold type, but if it is rightly done it will have a good effect and prove amusing. After learning it thoroughly and giving it considerable practice, the student may venture to try it before his own family and if they aver that it is “not so bad” he can begin to astonish his friends and acquaintances, and thus make a start toward acquiring fame as a ventriloquist even while he is learning.

In order to be successful he should choose a large room for his exhibition and seat the audience as far from the screen or curtain as he can — the farther the better, for in ventriloquism “Distance lends enchantment” to the illusion. It is for this reason that a performer succeeds in deceiving and amusing his listeners with much better effect in a large hall or theatre than in a room, although it can be done in the latter, provided it is not too small.

Never have the audience less than six feet away, and eight or ten would be better. Where two rooms can be thrown into one by means of folding-doors, insist that this be done and have one of the rooms entirely to yourself, the audience being seated in the other. Ventriloquists dislike to perform in small, crowded rooms, and it is often difficult to persuade even the best of them to do so.

Assume an air of perfect self-possession, and having seated the audience as described, stand within a foot or two of the screen and make your first bow as a ventriloquist. Put your whole heart into your work and try to imagine that there is really an old lady behind the screen whose personality is wholly distinct from yours. Act as you naturally would if you were talking to such a person, and do not rush through the dialogue as if you were in a hurry to catch a train. Stand in an easy attitude with your face partly turned toward the audience, and let your eyes dwell upon the screen whenever the fictitious old lady is speaking.

Probably the first desire of the student of “Near” after he has begun to ventriloquize will be to possess a mechanical figure, for the use of such a puppet tends to give added interest to his practice and also a greater self-confidence in his early performances. With such a figure on his knee he can make his early essays in the art of entertaining with fewer misgivings than would otherwise be the case.

But all students perhaps cannot afford to purchase a figure at the outset, and to such I would recommend the “talking hand,” one which can be arranged in a few moments’ time and at no expense whatever.

In Figure 1 is shown the method of arranging the fingers so as to form the doll’s head with the hand. With the palm of the right hand toward the ground the thumb is doubled at the first joint and hidden under the fingers, which are bent at the second joint and curved as in “A.” Then by coloring the upper part of the thumb and the lower part of the first finger with deep red, the lips are formed, the thumb being moved up and down to give the motion of the lower jaw. A few charcoal lines for the nose and eyes above the mouth and the figure is complete. If placed behind a small square frame with a round opening in the centre, the illusion is almost perfect a short distance away. The circle of the frame, which may be made of pasteboard, should be just large enough to allow the thumb to work and conceal the ends of the fingers.

A still better effect may be produced by wrap ping a handkerchief or napkin around it in the form of a hood or cloak, or a stiffly-starched frill may be sewn to a wire ring, to the back of which (and at right angles to it) is a loop just large enough to-go around the hand. The front of the hand, with its face and cap, would then appear as shown in “B,” Figure 1.

With this easily made substitute for a genuine figure, the student may give the dialogue for the old lady behind the screen, which may be changed by the addition of suitable material of his own or by appropriating some of the matter given in the various dialogues further on.

## CHAPTER IV CARICATURE VOICES

The study of Near ventriloquism and the acquirement of the Punch voice leads to the conclusion that the attainment of this branch of the art is not merely the employment of natural speech with still lips, but is in fact the use of a more accentuated speech than that ordinarily employed in the portrayal of eccentric character on the stage.

Like the actor who exaggerates seemingly unimportant actions to add effectiveness to his performance, or the artist who, in his cartoons, distorts the features and general appearance of his subjects for comic purposes, it is legitimate for the ventriloquist to lend as much contrast between the voices used as possible by caricaturing what might actually be the voices of persons similar to those represented by his figures. The puppets themselves are exaggerated in face, coloring and expression while suggestive of the class of people represented, so why not their voices?

In using a number of figures, however, it is inevitable that some of the voices should resemble the performer's natural voice to a more or less remote degree, the more remote of course the better, but even then they may be made distinct by accent and appropriate dialect. And it is surprising how much individuality one may give the different voices by care and attention.

We will now consider the methods used for the production of some of the other voices employed in Near ventriloquism. In direct contrast to the Punch voice is that which is sometimes called the "Grunt" voice. To produce this, the tongue should be allowed to lie flat with its tip almost touching the back of the front lower teeth where they enter the flesh. In this position, and with the whole of the vocal cords relaxed, the words are simply grunted at the back of the mouth, with the lips still and only slightly apart, as when using the Punch voice. In other words, make less effort to speak than you would naturally, using only the back part of the tongue, so that the sound is made in the lower part of the throat.

This voice is a caricature of that used by old men who no longer have command over tongue and lips and speak with open mouths. In figure working it is used to supply speech for the Old Man without whom no ventriloquial family is complete, in contrast to the sharp, reedy voice of the Old Woman who is usually his companion, and the less shrill tones of the Irish or the Negro figure. It may also be used for the same purpose when the couple are supposed to be behind a screen.

Given the Old Man, Old Woman, Irish and Negro figures, it naturally follows that there should be a little girl to make the family complete, and for this we revert to the Punch voice, only it should be made less reedy and more like a child's. The young of all animals, including the human animal, uses a high key to speak or make the sound peculiar to itself.

There is a certain kind of very reedy-voiced little girl that ventriloquists employ with one set of jokes and humorous business which you may either copy or by proceeding in a more artistic way imitate direct from nature. The conventional kind is usually asked to sing and complies, after more or less urging, with that hoary old chestnut,

"Father, dear father, come home with me now,  
The dock in the tower strikes twelve—"

when the Irish boy or the Negro interrupts with "Get out, it is half-past eight," or whatever time it is, which breaks up the song and the audience, too.

The unconventional way is well illustrated by a latter-day ventriloquist who, at the close of his act produces a beautifully dressed doll representing a little girl with golden hair. In response to a request she sings a popular ditty in a perfect childish treble, the ventriloquist holding her while standing effectively posed with his right foot resting on the topmost rung of a chair. Before the last verse is finished, a lady enters from, the wings and touches the performer on the shoulder. Apparently relieved at the interruption, he hands her the little girl and she retires to the back of the stage with it while it is still apparently singing. As she does so the ventriloquist turns his back to the audience in a natural manner and the voice of the little girl grows fainter until, as the woman with a single backward glance and smile passes from view, the performer leisurely follows and, standing at the rear of the stage, looks after them until the voice dies away in the distance.

The voice and dialect most appropriate for the Negro figure should be studied from nature or from close imitations of the real thing as given by burnt-cork comedians. The characteristic “e-yah” laugh is often the principal use of this figure, being given occasionally as an interruption at amusing points in the dialogue.

As to others, of course there is no limit to those which an ambitious ventriloquist may adopt at different times and only a few suggestive hints can be given here concerning the principal ones.

The Yankee farmer often proves amusing if brightly done. The accepted Yankee, as he is ordinarily depicted, has the twang he inherits from his early ancestors ; he “guesses” and “calculates,” and indulges in exaggerated humor in which allusions to death and physical injury are relied upon to provoke mirth. In case of a farmer, pure and simple, his tribulations in the city, usually New York, are the theme of his conversation, and a good song for him is “Reuben Haskins of Skowhegan, Maine.”

It perhaps may as well be mentioned here that appropriate songs play no small part in a ventriloquial entertainment, although in some exhibitions of the kind too many are used. One for the Irish boy or Negro and one for the Old Man or Old Woman are none too many, however, but where three or four are used in a twenty or twenty-live-minute performance, the audience may think it is getting too much of a good thing. Two old standbys for the Old Man figure are “The Old Turnkey” and “If I Were as Young as I Used to Be.” Something more modern, however, always bearing in mind that the song chosen should be written for a bass voice and in slow time, would be better. A familiar one for the Old Lady is “Darling I am Growing Old.” A very good effect may be obtained by having this song rendered as a trio by the Old Lady and the Irish and Negro figures, each taking an alternate line or two. Such a feat requires considerable practice to make perfect, because of the constant change of voice. One ventriloquist makes a specialty of “Roll On, Silver Moon” for his Irish boy, the chorus of which he sings with a yodle effect. Usually, however, this figure sings a popular humorous ditty.

If you should have occasion to imitate a Frenchman don’t fail to remember that the Parisian lacks in aspirates what he makes up in r’s; gives a sex to everything, and introduces a little Punch quality into the terminations ending in “n.”

The German puts a “b” where he should use a “p” and vice versa, and a “v” for a “w.”

Among the characters which you may care to imitate, either for figure working or for Natural ventriloquism are fleshy people, who never have deep or big voices. Use a little voice with moderate pitch for a fat man, and a falsetto voice for a fat old lady.

The voice of a jocular young man is hard, loud and thin, and is produced explosively against the front of the palate, immediately above the upper row of teeth.

The loafer or tramp whose voice has been destroyed by chronic hoarseness and drink speaks in a sort of harsh whisper. The only hint that can be given for its production is the statement that it is the Grunt voice without the grunt. On account of its character it is hardly suitable for figures, but with a little appropriate dialogue it may be used at a partly opened door to suggest to the people in a room that there is such a person outside who is trying to beg a "handout" or cast off clothing. Of course the door must be partly opened, not shut, as otherwise the sound would not, in the nature of things, be heard, for it is quite impossible to ventriloquize a whisper.

This voice is usually the product of large cities and does not belong to a countryman. A fair imitation of this voice is often given by so-called "tramp comedians" of the variety stage.

**PART II**  
**NATURAL VENTRILOQUISM**

## CHAPTER V THE VENTRILOQUIAL DRONE

As has already been stated in Chapter II of this work, the illusion produced by ventriloquists is the result, primarily, of an acoustic phenomenon—the uncertainty of the sound’s direction; and, secondarily, of a habit acquired of speaking without moving the facial muscles.

Those ventriloquists who, without accessories, seem to possess the power of throwing their voice almost anywhere, succeed therein by utilizing the principle of acoustics that has already been explained. As to the exact spot whence the sound proceeds, the ventriloquist usually takes care to show that by an expressive motion and by looking in that direction, or designating it with his finger while his face expresses fear, interest or surprise. The spectator then easily persuades himself that the sound does really come from the exact spot thus pointed out to him in a seemingly unintentional manner.

Regarding the possibilities of voice throwing, there is a good deal of misconception. To those who have little knowledge of the subject and who are more than half deluded into a belief in the actuality of a voice-throwing power with which the ventriloquist is especially endowed from birth, there seems to be, judging from the absurd requests they sometimes make of performers, no limit to the exercise of the art. The ventriloquist is looked upon with surprise and suspicion by such persons when he naturally refuses to grant their request to perform some utterly impossible vocal feat, and he is usually set down as a rank fraud or as an unaccommodating person who could easily do as they desire if he only would. It is not an unusual experience in private-house entertainments for a doting father or grandfather to take one of the knee figures from the entertainer while he is getting ready to pack them away and, after placing it in the arms of one of the children of the family, calmly ask the ventriloquist to “make it talk”—an attempt which would only result in disappointment.

Then again some wiseacre who thinks “he knows all about it” and discourses learnedly of the “double throat,” will walk confidently up to the performer and ask him to throw his voice to the back part of the room over the heads of the audience or to some other utterly impossible place. I have never yet heard of a ventriloquist being requested to throw his voice into the next county, but undoubtedly there are persons who think that he might do so if he wished, though just how it could be made to return to him from so long a distance they might be rather hard put to it to say. Apropos of this :

“Did you know,” asks Jerry, the Irish boy, in one of my dialogues, “that I was down to a party the other night?”

Vent. “No, were you?”

Jerry. “Yes, and there was a ventrisquealer there.”

Vent. “No, no, Jerry, you mean a ventriloquist, a man who throws his voice.”

Jerry. “Yes, that’s it, but this feller threw his voice so far it didn’t get back again.”

Vent. “Is it possible?”

Jerry. “I dunno, but he did it all th’ same.”

This is probably the attitude which would be taken by the knowing ones who, while they might not believe that the voice could be heard from such a distance, might still maintain that it could be sent there and allowed to go off according to schedule, even if no one heard it.

The truth is that, with the exception of a few-feet toward the listener where the audience is well

removed from the performer, the ventriloquist must always come between the sound he imitates and the auditor. The following diagram (Fig. 8) illustrates the limits of voice throwing. “V” represents the ventriloquist, while “A” is the auditor, and the figures 1 to 16 the extent to which the art of voice throwing is possible.

From 1 to 12 the voice can be thrown until it becomes inaudible, from 13 to 16 it creates no illusion because of the fact that to throw the voice forward and not suggest a reason therefor would be unnatural, as any voice nearer to the audience than your own would be louder. The figures 1 to 12, therefore, define the real limits of the ventriloquial art, and within this field the voice may be thrown with propriety and effect.

It is obvious, however, that if you use a distant voice, it must either be subdued by the effect of distance—say as it would sound when proceeding from the points 5 to 8—or muffled as if coming from a box or trunk, from behind a wall, above a ceiling or underneath a floor. The voice may be thrown forward into a box standing between the performer and the audience if the box is nearer the ventriloquist than it is to the audience, as on a stage, for instance; in that case, the hollow, muffled quality of the sound is precisely the same as it would be if the trunk were farther back, and the illusion or effect is therefore the same.

In order to produce a muffled sound that seems to come from afar or from an enclosed place, the ventriloquist arranges his tongue in such a way that its base, upon bearing against the soft palate, shall form a sort of diaphragm that allows but very little of the voice to pass. If, then, the ventriloquist articulates his words with a strong guttural voice, the sound will seem to come from the earth, from a grotto or cavern, or from a box, cask or closet. If, on the contrary, the tongue being in the same position, the ventriloquist speaks with a sharp voice, he will produce the illusion of a voice coming from the ceiling, or from some high place, such as the top of a tree or the roof of a neighboring house. But, in both cases, in order to affect the emission of this muffled, somewhat indistinct voice, the ventriloquist keeps his lungs distended, and emits as little breath as possible in pronouncing.

I know of no better way to attain the proper position of the vocal organs than by the ventriloquial drone practice recommended by Robert Ganthony.

To acquire the ability to make this drone, take a deep breath and, while holding it, make a retching sound at the back of the throat as if (to put it delicately) trying to be sick. As you do this utter a prolonged “Ah,” exhaling slowly.

At first the “ah” will very likely be little more than a grunt, but by trying again and prolonging the sound as you make a greater effort, the exclamation will begin to sound like an uncertain drone, finally settling down to a clear, sustained hum like that of a distant bee drone, from which it derives its name.

The farther back in the throat the sound is made the more distant will it appear to the listener, and the more forward in the throat the nearer will it seem.

You may not get the ventriloquial drone at once, but a little practice will enable you to do so. When once you hear that clear, distant-sounding drone you may know that you have your mouth as it should be for ventriloquism, but until you do produce that you must hark back because, unless this foundation is laid properly, all that follows is unsatisfactory and your ventriloquism will lack that distant quality, to obtain which is to be a ventriloquist. Practice on the bee drone enables you to

sustain the vocal cords in position and familiarize them with their novel and unnatural duties. When once the drone is obtained with “ah,” all the other vowels should be droned, until they become equally easy to produce and sustain.

When, in an exhibition of ventriloquism, the voice wavers about, the effect is unnatural and shows that the performer has gained his knowledge in a haphazard manner, for by the foregoing practice the requisite command is obtained and this uncertainty avoided, as well as that visible straining which results from ignorance of how to produce the distant quality of sound required.

The acquirement of the drone is the acquirement of all distant sound, but it is well to begin first with the droning of a bee, which is a continued sound only altering as the insect approaches or recedes, and is produced by prolonging the “ah” as long as you possibly can. In making the bee apparently approach from a distance, the increase in the sound must be made gradually, in fact, at the rate a bee progresses.

If you can make the sound of a dog barking near at hand you have only to assume the “drone” position to make it appear outside, and the same is true of the imitation of a cock crowing.

The next step is to obtain a sudden transition from the drone to the natural voice. Commence by saying “Ah” in the natural voice and follow with the ventriloquial “Ah,” not as a prolonged drone, but staccato fashion, and practice this with all the vowels, as in the lip practice in Part I.

By this practice you will be enabled to give with ease a conversation with some one apparently outside a window, where you speak in your natural voice and the reply is made in the distant voice. The change from one voice to the other must be rapidly and constantly made, and the required facility is obtained by the practice de-soribed above.

## CHAPTER VI VOICE-THROWING POSSIBILITIES

HAVING succeeded in attaining the proficiency necessary to make the ventriloquial drone properly, it is essential, in order to proceed intelligently, to consider the effect produced upon sound by its transmission from a distance.

As we have already seen, ventriloquism is little more than the imitation of sounds, not as heard at their source but as they are finally sensed by the ear ; and the more accurately one can analyze the characteristics of these auditory impressions the more nearly can he come to a correct reproduction.

In listening carefully to any sound coming from a remote point as it falls upon the ear, the student will notice at least six things:

1. That its strength is reduced in inverse ratio to its distance;
2. That its pitch remains the same;
3. That its tonal quality is somewhat altered;
4. That its duration remains unaltered;
5. That human speech proceeding from a place considerably removed from the auditor is obscured, especially in its consonant sounds;
6. That this obscurity increases with the increase in distance until the language becomes unintelligible and the voice finally inaudible.

From a knowledge of these facts, the ventriloquist produces his effects by forming sounds that in faintness, body and tone closely approximate those which would actually come from the points to which, by word or gesture, he skillfully directs attention. As almost every sound with which the ear is familiar can be successfully imitated by the human voice, it follows that the success of the student's imitations will be limited only by his incapacity to fully determine the nature of the sounds he desires to reproduce, and lack of sufficient training. The first can, of course, be remedied by close observation and attention, and the second by perseverance and constant practice.

All seemingly distant voices are formed in the pharynx just above "Adam's apple," and if you are able to make such sounds at this particular spot, which is the location of the subdued "cluck" heard in the act of swallowing, you will be able to ventriloquize when you have learned by practice to articulate distinctly.

After you have obtained the bee-drone spoken of in the preceding chapter, and can make the transition from the ventriloquial voice to the natural voice, and vice versa, while repeating the word "Ah," practice on the other vowel sounds, enunciating each one regularly and distinctly by itself, as: Ah-a-e-i-o-u. Then follow with the consonants, thus: dah, day, dee, die, doe, du; gah, gay, gee, gi, go, gu; ha, hay, hee, hi, ho, hu; jah, jay, jee, ji, jo, ju, and so on with the rest.

The principle is one used in the familiar do, re, mi, practice for beginners in singing, which enables the mind to be wholly concentrated upon the attainment of the proper tones before songs are attempted. By avoiding words at first, all the faculties are centred upon obtaining proper contrast, and the vocal cords learn their duties and acquire the necessary facility at quick change from one voice to the other before the attention is divided between the necessity of obtaining the right contrast and at the same time uttering words.

This “echo” practice with sounds renders the result much more satisfactory, because when once the vocal organ has become trained to these rapid changes, the transition from one voice to another becomes mechanical and the attention can then be given almost wholly to the pronunciation, of words and the formation of sentences. The effect is heightened when words are used, but they only deceive the student in regard to his progress if used at first. As an artist must learn to draw before he can paint creditably, so the student of ventriloquism should secure the ventriloquial effect before he uses vocabulary.

When you have secured the distant effect with the vowels and consonants in close contrast with your natural voice, try the word “ Hello “ and the effect of an echo is increased, not because your ventriloquism has suddenly improved, but because this word is the natural way of testing an echo. If attempted at an earlier stage, there might be danger of your remaining satisfied with the effect thus obtained, even if it were imperfect, because to your untrained ear the sound of the word as given by the drone would seem good enough and might deter you from further effort, without which you cannot hope to excel in this branch of the art.

First call out the word in the natural voice, and try to imagine, when you repeat it ventriloquially, that the latter instead of requiring a separate attempt is merely the echo of an effect already finished.

When you have faithfully pursued this practice for a few days you may take up the imitation of a person talking from behind a door, which is one of the simplest and surest acquirements in ventriloquism. First, you must form a correct estimate of how such a voice would sound, and if you are not entirely clear in your own mind regarding this point, persuade a friend to actually carry on a conversation with you while shut up in another room.

While as a matter of fact there is only one distant voice—that produced by the so-called bee drone—this is modified in various ways for the purpose of giving added effect to whatever imitations are attempted. A voice from behind a door near at hand is louder and more distinct and has a peculiar hollow, muffled tone which distinguishes it somewhat from one coming from a place more remote. These characteristics can be produced by pressing the tongue against the teeth while the latter are set well together and the lips are slightly apart. Before speaking in the ventriloquial voice fill the lungs and keep the breath under good control. Of course in forming some of the words it will be found impossible to keep the tongue entirely still, but so long as it retains a position well forward in the mouth, the effect can be obtained.

When the student has assured himself that he is successful in his imitation of the voice, let him approach a door and apparently try to open it. Struggle a minute with the knob as if some one were holding it on the other side and then call out, “Will you kindly release your hold and allow me to pass through.” As quickly as possible reply in the ventriloquial voice, “No, you can’t come out this way.”

Student. “This is the only way out, so please do as I request.”

Voice. “I don’t care if it is the only way, you can’t come through.”

Student. “Why not?”

Voice. “That’s my business” (ghizness).

Student. “Oh, is it ? Well, I’ll make it my business.”

Voice. “Oh, no you won’t!”

Student. “Why not?”

Voice. “ ‘Cause what’s your business is my business, and what’s my business is my own.”

Student. "Oh, come now, you beg the question."

Voice. "No, I'm no beggar."

Student. "Well, what are you, then?"

Voice. "If I tell you, will you keep it quiet?"

Student. "Yes, certainly."

Voice. "I won't tell you then."

Student. "What do you mean?"

Voice. "Just what I say."

Student. "I see you are as impudent as you are unreasonable. Now let me through."

Voice. "Not to-night."

Student. "Why not to-night?"

Voice. " 'Cause I don't choose to."

Student. "Well, I shall get out this way."

Voice. "No you don't, not if I know it."

Student. "Well here goes for an attempt."

At this point act as if strongly exasperated and apparently push and struggle against an op. posing force with all your might. Finally by seemingly a greater effort you cause the door to fly back suddenly and at the same time give utterance to a loud "ha, ha, ha," in the ventrilo-quial voice, as if some one were laughing at you in the room or hallway beyond.

Always bear in mind that the eye helps to deceive the ear, and make the action of pushing the door, etc., as natural as possible. The more realistic the ventriloquist makes his part the more effect his performance will have upon the public. As far as voice alone goes, there are ventriloquists who can manipulate ventriloquism perfectly, but who, on account of lack of necessary actions, do not succeed in impressing their hearers very strongly. As a rule, between a good actor who is a poor ventriloquist and a good ventriloquist who is a poor actor, the former will be more successful. This topic will be more fully gone into in the paragraphs about ventrilo-quial acting and entertaining further on.

The foregoing dialogue is merely suggested and intended for preliminary rehearsals rather than for use in public, although of course if the performer is unable to write a better one there can be no objection to such use. The chances are however, that he can obtain suitable material of a more witty and amusing character from other sources and make it ventriloquially effective. One month's daily practice should be sufficient to enable him, by proper emphasis on a tone or syllable, to illustrate and bring out the salient points of any dialogues he may use, and to surprise and astonish those among his friends not familiar with the capabilities of the art, with the strange voices within him. There should be no straining after effect, but the student will find that what he has practiced much he can do well, and by perseverance alone can perfection be obtained.

To become a really great ventriloquist, it is especially important that the learner should have an accurate knowledge of the nice distinctions in sound, and this can only be obtained by a careful study of its several manifestations and differences. It is as necessary to judge nicely the effects of distance and direction on audible impressions, or sounds, as it is to acquire the power of speaking ventriloquially.

The sense of hearing is easily deceived—in fact, more easily than any other of the five senses—and in its judgment of sound of any kind relies largely upon the memory of past experiences, although

such memory may be exercised involuntarily and sub-consciously. The student should therefore strive to acquire a just discrimination of the pitch and strength of sounds, no matter of what nature, for everything audible comes under the category of tone or noise, the latter being usually the most difficult to account for.

As an aid to such acquirement, let him place his hands closely and firmly over the ears, when he will experience a curious impression of confused humming, caused by the pressure of the air internally, the sound being something like that heard when, in childhood days, a convoluted sea-shell was placed over our ears and we were told the sound was the roaring of the ocean.

External sounds will now be much modified as regards strength and quality, for the vibrations are prevented from directly acting on the ear-drum. Now if a few words are spoken with the ears thus closed, the sound will reach the auric nerves interiorally by way of the Eustach-ian tube at the back of the mouth, which conveys the vibration to the aural cavity immediately behind the drum of the ear. By carefully noting and remembering the sound heard under these conditions the ventriloquist is able to judge whether his voice is so pitched and modified as to resemble one from a distance.

Note how the same sound differs when the hands are removed and observe how it is obscured when the ears are again stopped. Then with open ears try to imitate the sound which was heard when they were muffled. In this manner try all kinds of tones and noises, and accurately observe their several characteristics. This exercise will bring to the ventriloquist a realization of the range, modulations and capabilities of the human voice such as he has never had before. The principal difficulty with the beginner is lack of knowledge concerning the latent possibilities of his own vocal powers, but this can be obviated by practice and the use of the method herein suggested. Because of the fact that ventriloquial effects are produced by using the voice in an unnatural manner, such efforts require greater attention and energy than in ordinary speaking, where the mind is intent upon the subject of the conversation, and the words are uttered without conscious effort.

Some one has said that, "As perspective is to the eye, so is ventriloquism to the ear," meaning that as the eye is deceived by the skill of the artist in so painting a landscape as to give the effect of distance, although the whole composition is limned on a perfectly flat surface, so the ventriloquist deludes the ear by speaking in such a manner that the voice appears in the distance, although created close at hand.

## CHAPTER VII THE TRUNK OR CLOSET VOICE

IF the student has faithfully practiced the exercises given in the foregoing instructions, he should by this time have acquired considerable facility in the actual work of ventriloquizing, and no doubt will be eager to add to his accomplishments the power of fetching a voice from a box or trunk and through the walls or ceiling of a room, and even from the cellar. Having already obtained the ability to make the ventrilo-quial drone—which is the foundation of all distant sounds—the attainment of these desired effects presents no special difficulty.

For the box or trunk, the voice and method of production are identically the same as for the imitation of a person behind a door. The sound should be hollow and quite loud, though somewhat obscure. Additional realism is given this voice when using it in public by occasionally lifting the cover of the box while speaking ventrilo-quially, the movement being accompanied by a corresponding change in tonal quality or strength, This greatly helps to make the illusion effective. In other words, as the lid is gradually lifted, the sound must be heard more distinctly, until when the cover is raised to its full extent the voice should come out full and strong, although still retaining its distinguishing characteristics.

To affect this, it is necessary to cause the tones to gradually roll forward, as it were, from the middle of the throat to the extreme forward part of the mouth, where confined by the closed teeth and the partly closed lips it will still retain enough of its muffled, hollow quality to preserve the deception. In closing the box the method is reversed, the tones being gradually forced backward to their first position.

At first you will find it hard to use other than the ventriloquial voice from the time the cover is raised until it is closed, but this difficulty can be overcome by practice. You can hold a conversation with the fictitious person inside before you open the box, or even with it open if you allow the lid to remain up while doing so; but as there is a constant change in tone while the lid is in motion it is evident that the introduction of your natural voice renders the feat rather formidable. In fact, most performers are content to let well enough alone and not attempt the interruption while the movement is in progress, and I am not so sure but that the effect is more impressive with this mode of procedure than might otherwise be the case.

Below is given a very effective dialogue for use in this connection, and in the department devoted exclusively to dialogues there is still another.

Vent. (*knocking on the trunk*). Hello! (*No response.*) Hello! (*Louder.*)

Voice. Hello. What do you want ? (*Suppressed.*)

Vent. What is the matter? Are you asleep? (*Takes hold of cover preparatory to raising it.*)

Voice. Yes, what is it?

Vent. Nothing—only I thought you might like a dollar.

Voice. Oh, no, I'm not asleep. (*This answer is made loudly and quickly in the forward part of the mouth while the lid is being raised, as if the person were coming out. Then suddenly let go the lid, and say in the ventriloquial voice.*) Oh, my finger, my finger!

Vent. What is the matter, Jack ?

Voice. My finger is caught. Oh ! Oh!

Vent. (*raising the lid*). I beg your pardon, sir. Is it much hurt?

Voice. I should say it was. Lend me your handkerchief, will you?

Vent. I am sorry you put your finger in such a dangerous place. (*Throws handkerchief into the trunk and lowers the lid.*)

Voice. Yes, so am I.

Vent. What prompted you to get into the trunk?

Voice. I was playing {flaying) hide and seek.

Vent. Oh, I see. Some one came along and locked you in.

Voice. Yes, let me out, I am nearly suffocated.

Vent. Don't be in a hurry.

Voice. Say, I'll knock out that fellow in one round when I catch him.

Vent. Now, Jack, where did you get all those parcels I saw you with the other night ? (*Raises lid.*)

Voice. Hello, little girl!

Vent. Keep quiet, sir.

Voice. That's my Sarah Jane out there.

Vent. Silence, sir (*impatiently*). Now I want you to give me your attention, and keep so quiet that you can hear a pin drop.

Voice. All right, let her drop (*drock or drot*).

Vent. What is that?

Voice. I say, all right.

Vent. Now, tell me where you got all those parcels the other night.

Voice. I got them at—(*mention some well known grocery firm*).

Vent. Oh, indeed ?

Voice. Yes, you know that tall clerk there?

Vent. Yes.

Voice. Well, I asked him for one pound of canary seed.

Vent. What did he say?

Voice. He said, "What do you want one pound of canary seed for?"

Vent. And whom did you want it for?

Voice. I said, "I want it for the canary bird, of course."

Vent. Did you buy anything else ?

Voice. Yes, I got five cents' worth of carra-way seed.

Vent. What answer did he give you when you asked for that ?

Voice. He said, "What do you want five cents' worth of carraway seed for ? "

Vent. And what did you tell him you wanted it for ?

Voice. Why, I told him I wanted it for five cents.

Vent. Did you buy anything else?

Voice. Well, when I was half way home I noticed I had no lard.

Vent. Oh, you forgot the lard, I suppose; what made you forget it ?

Voice. I don't know, but I suppose it was so slippery that it slipped my memory. (*This is a hard sentence to pronounce, hut usually it may be understood if rendered "suffose it was so slickery it slicked my memory." If you can't make it intelligible, leave it out.*) Say ...

Vent. Well, sir!

Voice. Where were you last Sunday?

Vent. Why, I was at home.

Voice. If you had been (*ghin*) where you ought to have been you'd have heard my father preach (*reach*).

Vent. Oh, at church I suppose.

Voice. No, in jail!

Vent. You rascal. I will thrash you for your continued impudence. *(Throughout the dialogue the lid of the trunk should be raised and lowered frequently; the voice changing with the action. At this point in the conversation proceed in the following manner: Raise the cover and hit at the imaginary man with a cane or stick. Have him. ' cry out as if hurt. Then say, "There, will you behave yourself now f" Have him laugh, changing the volume of sound in time with the movement of the cover, laughing louder when it is raised and in subdued tones when lowered. This will produce a fine effect. Conclude as follows.)*

Vent. I see it is useless to try to make you behave yourself.

Voice. Say ...

Vent. Well?

Voice. Shake hands before *(ghefore)* you go and I'll sing you a song.

Vent. All right. *(Puts hand in trunk and shakes it vigorously.)* Now go ahead.

Voice. What shall I sing ?

Vent. Oh, sing "The Soldier's Farewell."

Voice. All right. *(Sings.)*

How can I bear to leave thee,  
One parting kiss I give thee;  
And then whate'er befalls me,  
I go where honor calls me.

CHORUS.

Farewell, farewell, my own true love,  
Farewell, farewell, my own true love.

During the course of the singing, raise and lower the lid several times, modifying the sound as you do so, which will make a very good climax.

## CHAPTER VIII OTHER VOICES

FROM the box or closet illusion it is an easy step to the production of the voice overhead, from through a wall or under the floor, although in attempting either of these effects there are several striking points or essentials to be carefully observed.

For the voice on the roof you do not use the drone pure and simple, although you retain the same formation of the vocal organs. This gives the distant effect, but instead of retaining the voice in the back of the throat, as it were, you force it against the back of the hard palate, or roof of the mouth. The quality of the voice should be a kind of gruff falsetto, elevated to a high pitch.

By rolling back the tongue and keeping the jaws rigid, with the lips slightly apart, the palate will be elevated and drawn nearer to the pharynx, thereby forming a cavity in the back part of the mouth and throat. The consonant sounds need not be articulated plainly, all words being formed in the pharynx and exploded, as it were, against the roof of the mouth by sudden expulsions of the breath clear from the lungs at every word.

When you are ready to try this voice in public, take your position as far from the audience as possible, because, as already stated, the more removed you are from the listeners the better the effect will seem to them. If you are not entirely sure of yourself, deliberately turn your back on the company and direct their attention to the ceiling, either by looking upward or by pointing while calling loudly, as if you have reason to believe some one is concealed above. Make your own voice very distinct and loud and as close to the lips as possible to give further contrast between the natural and the ventriloquial voice. In fact, almost shout, and then in exactly the same tone and pitch, but as faint as possible consistent with audibility, answer in the manner already described.

Careful attention must be paid to the manner of breathing in order properly to get the right effect.

When using the ventriloquial voice the breath must be allowed to escape from the lungs very slowly, when the sound will come in a subdued and muffled manner, hardly louder than a whisper, but still containing body enough to be well distinguished. As a beginning try the following brief dialogue:

Vent. I say, is there any one up there?

Voice. Yes, I am.

Vent. What do you want?

Voice. I want to get down.

Vent. Well, why don't you come down?

Voice. 'Cause I can't.

Vent. How did you get up there?

Voice. I came up a ladder.

Vent. Why don't you come down the ladder?

Voice. Some one took it away.

Vent. Well, open the skylight and drop to the floor beneath; you can then easily find your way down by the stairs.

Voice. All right, much obliged to you, sir.

Vent. Oh, don't mention it!

Voice. All right, I won't. Good-night.

Vent. Good-night.

If the voice is made to repeat the words “goodnight” several times, each time fainter than before, ending with an almost inaudible “ha, ha, ha!” the climax is made much more effective if skilfully done. A more elaborate dialogue for this voice will be found in Section IV.

While you are talking with the imaginary man, speak and act earnestly as if you had completely forgotten your audience. With your face away from the listeners all necessity for concealing the movement of the lips is dispensed with, and the only things to attend to are the character and tone of the ventriloquial voice. Before you are quite ready to turn your face to the auditors again, be careful to graduate the assumed voice until it is well under command at the spot where the “cluck” is made in swallowing. Practice to shut off the sound at that spot and gradually raise the pitch as the voice becomes suppressed. Extending the stomach at each “good-night” will help the effect.

The more artistic plan, however, is to keep your face toward the audience all the time, or at least in profile, and this should always be done on a stage. Stand with your left side to the audience and, throwing your head back, look directly upward toward the spot from which you wish the voice to sound. This pose carries conviction to the spectators, because it is the one that would naturally be taken when talking with some one overhead.

The two voices which have already been elucidated form the basis for nearly every effect possible in ventriloquism. For instance, the first voice (which we will call No. 1) may be used for a box, closet or door effect, as already explained; while if you wish to imitate the sound of a person shouting from the opposite side of a river or roadway, you would use the voice for the “man on the roof,” which we will label No. 2. In this case, however, it should be made a little louder than when apparently heard through an intervening obstacle like a ceiling or a wall.

These two voices may, in fact, be used in various ways, and formed into many apparently dissimilar voices by contraction and expansion of the glottis and by shortening or lengthening the cavities of the mouth and the throat. By making contortions of the mouth and voice in a room alone, the student will get a better idea than any description can give him of the many peculiarities of sound and effect which may be created while holding the jaws and tongue in the manner necessary to produce the drone.

We will now take up the best method for producing the illusion of the “man under the floor,” which is somewhat different than that used for either of the voices mentioned; and also show the student how he may merge one effect into another, so that he may cause the man above to descend to a level and finally to the cellar.

It sometimes happens that otherwise capable ventriloquists force the poor man on the roof to stay there for all time under the flimsy excuse that there is no ladder and no convenient skylight. The real reason is because they themselves do not know how to bring him down without danger of destroying the deception; and for the same reason their man in the closet or in the basement is left in either place to get out as best he may after the audience has dispersed. Like the self-taught violin player, such ventriloquists have never got beyond the first position, as they very easily could do by a little intelligent practice, which would not only add to the technique of their art, but to the finish of their exhibitions as well.

The voice of the “man under the floor” is chiefly distinguished from voices No.1 and No.2 by its tonal quality. Instead of being a near voice muffled or a high-pitched falsetto, it is a guttural voice made as far down the throat as possible. To produce it forget all about No.1 and No.2, and shorten

your neck until your chin touches your chest. This compresses the vocal cords and draws up your stomach in such a manner that when you speak the sound is prevented from rising and is forced down the throat. Of course you would not in public sink your chin to your chest any more than you would make the retching sound when using the drone, but it is necessary to do so in your preliminary practice in order to obtain the right result. When once you have accustomed your ear to the sound and your vocal organs to the right formation, it can be made naturally without difficulty.

The idea is to make the sound as far back in the pharynx as possible, and to prevent it from rising into the cavity of the mouth by compressing the vocal mechanism. Note well that this voice is low-pitched and is not exploded against the palate as in voice No.2, or simply muffled as in voice No.1.

In other words, you always send the sound originating in the larynx in the direction from which you desire it to come—if from above you pitch it high and force it against the roof of the mouth, or hard palate; if from near at hand you make it near by confining it in the cavity of the mouth; and if from below you pitch it low and send it downward. From this it follows that the ordinary drone effect represents distance, while the method used in the projection of that sound suggests direction. In developing these voices, use the vowel and consonant exercise already recommended before taking up the vocabulary.

Some ventriloquists use one distance voice for every effect, and in justification of this plan explain that it is so difficult to execute the distant voice in different keys that, where it is desirable to introduce a number of characters, it is best to do it by transition. That is, they alter the natural tones of the voice so as to make a very apparent distinction between it and the mimetic voice. This, they aver, can be done so skillfully that the audience will not realize the change, and enthusiastically declare this to be one of the greatest secrets of the art.

According to this method, if your mimetic voice is to be low, you must raise the natural tone of your voice in your announcement relative to where the voice is to come from. By making the reply in the ventriloquial voice in a tone only a trifle lower than the natural one, the difference or transition will be so great that the mimetic voice will be very deep in comparison. If the dialogue is to be continued, and the next voice is to be high, the natural tone should be only a trifle higher than the one just given as the low voice, which will make another marked difference. The whole secret is in making these jumps or transitions without their being apparent to the audience. The transition idea may be used moderately to heighten the effect of the different ventriloquial voices, even if the whole procedure cannot be commended. It is undoubtedly a fact that an expert ventriloquist could successfully deceive an audience by the use of one voice alone, but it is doubtful if he could do this so effectively as by having a somewhat different method for each effect.

## CHAPTER IX

### APPROACHING AND RECEDING VOICES

ANY of the voices already mentioned may be merged into one another, thus enabling the man on the roof to climb down, the man in the closet to go away on a level, and the man in the cellar to ascend to warmer and more comfortable quarters.

The roof voice, you remember, is pitched high and exploded against the hard palate. To make it have the effect of gradually descending, you so project it against the top and back of the mouth that it merges by successive steps into the ordinary unreverberated drone at the back of the throat, when it will seem to be on the same level as the performer. By commencing with “Ah” reverberated against the palate, and from that location rolling it gradually backward and downward until you sound the drone, you will find that you have a diapason of from five notes to an octave, ranging usually from high “d” of the treble clef down to low “d,” though rarely more than five notes are satisfactory, say from “d” to “g” Of course the range may be a note or two either one side or the other of that given, according to the natural character of the voice possessed by the ventriloquist.

After you have practiced on the scale exercise for a while, you may try actual speech, beginning with a simple dialogue like the following:

Vent. I say, Jack, are you up there?

Jack. Hullo! (*Roof voice.*) Yes, I’m here.

Vent. When are you coming down?

Jack. When I get good and ready.

Vent. Well, please get ready now, I want to talk to you.

Jack. Oh, you do. All right, I’m ready.

Vent. Very good. Come along.

Jack. Say guv’nor, the ladder’s gone.

Vent, (*impatiently*). Look around you, you can find it.

Jack. All right, keep your hair on; I’ve got it.

Vent. Now then, look what you’re about.

Jack. I’m lookin’.

Vent. And step lively.

Jack. Lively it is.

Vent. Have you started?

Jack. Yes, I’m coming down now (*louder and reverberated*).

Vent. That’s right, come nearer still.

Jack. Sure, I’m comin’. (*Louder.*)

Vent. Make it even closer.

Jack. Closer it is. (*Still louder.*)

Vent. How near are you now?

Jack. Why, I be down now. (*Drone.*)

Vent. Very good, that is where I want you.

As a rule be more loquacious in your natural voice than in the ventriloquial voice. This will cause you less fatigue and the audience appreciates most that which it gets the least.

When you have got the man down from the roof you may send him away on a level by compressing the vocal cords and throwing the voice backward, as it were, speaking neither against the palate nor

down the throat. “Good-night” are the best words for this effect, “Good-morning,” “Good-evening” or “Good-bye” being im-practicable. Close your dialogue in some such manner as follows:

Vent. That is all I want of you, and you may go now. Good-night.

Jack. Good-night. (*A little fainter.*)

Vent. Good-night. (*Loud natural.*)

Jack. Good-night. (*Still fainter*)

Vent. Good-night. (*Almost shouting.*)

Jack. Good-night, ha, ha, ha! (*Very faint indeed.*)

As your own voice becomes louder and the ventriloquial voice fainter, the pauses between the salutations are longer, as would naturally happen were you really calling to a departing caller or workman when, after the last faint, far-away cry you would yell and the answer would be inaudible. Besides giving, by contrast, greater effectiveness to the ventriloquial voice in this manner, it is necessary in order to fully carry out the deception, as it must be made to appear that the man could not hear your own calls unless you uttered them in an increasingly louder voice as he went away.

If instead of apparently going away on a level, you desire to have Jack descend to the cellar, you simply compress the larynx still more and force the sound downward instead of backward. If you cannot, while facing the audience when entertaining in public, easily change the position of the vocal organs to get the effect of the man downstairs, you can cover the effort by suitable business at a door or window, if you are giving your exhibition near one in a private house, or by turning and walking to the back part of the stage, on some pretense or other, if you are performing in a hall or theatre.

In using any of these voices, do not attempt to articulate the consonant sounds plainly; to be particular in this regard would very likely cause the disarrangement of the lips and cavity of the mouth. This caution is especially to be observed where the ventriloquist faces his audience, as of course he should do, at least most of the time. It sometimes happens, however, that it is unnecessary to face the audience, as when you are talking to some one outside a window with your back to the people in a room. On such occasions you can move the lips without interfering with the illusion and thus articulate any word distinctly.

Sometimes ventriloquists have a heavy moustache to screen the lips so that slight movements cannot be detected, but it matters little to a good performer whether his mouth be covered or not, and it always creates a better impression not to rely upon such aids to hide movements which might, with a little additional practice, be prevented.

Frequent reference has been made to the falsetto voice, but it should be understood that this voice in ventriloquism is somewhat different from the falsetto voice in singing. The singer produces it by contracting the larynx; the more this is contracted the shriller the note. The ventriloquist not only contracts the larynx, but directs the sound to that part of the mouth which communicates with the nose.

In Shakespeare’s play, “The Tempest,” there is an excellent dialogue for ventriloquial study, in the second scene of Act III. For such a hateful character as Caliban the guttural voice, which is the natural vocal expression of malignity and hate, should be used; while the “Thou liest!” and other short phrases of the “invisible Ariel” can be given with great effect in the ventriloquial falsetto voice.

## CHAPTER X ENTERTAINING

IF the student has faithfully followed the preceding instructions he should by this time have attained considerable facility in the imitation of near articulate sounds as employed with figures, and have developed considerable capacity for creating the distant sounds that form the art to which was originally applied the term Ventriloquism. In fact, he should now be able not only to imitate near voices in caricature, but also to “throw” his voice into a box or closet, to the room above and the cellar below, and to cause it to appear gradually to ascend from a level or the basement to the floor or roof above (by simply reversing the method given for making it seem to descend), and even to approach from a distant point on a level until it sounds close at hand, or recede until it is heard no more.

He is therefore now ready to amalgamate these accomplishments to produce a natural effect, or what is a humorous travesty of nature, for entertainment purposes. The utterance of sounds with an unmoved countenance is one step toward this end, and the requisite subtlety and device necessary to ventriloquial acting, is again another, as is also the proper selection of a ventriloquial vocabulary.

The importance of a right vocabulary can easily be seen by trying to say without moving the lips a sentence containing a number of “p’s” or “b’s” like “the persistent pertinacity of the priesthood,” and though you try for a century the effort will not be fully satisfactory. If, on the other hand, you attempt such phrases as “Hullo, down there,” “Yes, I’m here,” “Goodnight to you,” you will find no difficulty. Avoid, therefore, as much as possible those words in which occur labial sounds, or letters which can only properly be pronounced by aid of the lips. By substituting for such sentences as trouble you those which may be pronounced without aid of the lips, you have the key to the prevention of any difficulty of this kind which you may experience. Arrange such sentences as do not require labial pronunciation and practice these before a mirror until you can employ ventriloquism, either “Near” or “Distant” without change of countenance.

A nice little point of procedure which may be taken advantage of to help conceal the limitations of the art may be mentioned here, to wit: when you speak in your natural voice, employ, if you can without rendering your speech stilted and absurd, words that are impracticable in ventriloquism; also make your utterance as far forward in the mouth as possible, and exaggerate a little the unrestrained motion of your lips. When you cease to speak naturally, your countenance changes as if you had really ceased, although you are still sustaining a conversation. After a time, when you drop the natural voice the face changes by habit from animation to repose, and the vocal organs mechanically adjust themselves for the effect required.

In speaking ventriloquially it is not necessary to close the teeth, unless you find, as I do, that this helps you to better control the facial muscles; but it is always best nearly to do so, as this gives a natural and pleased expression to the face. If you close them, do not press them together in a manner that will give you the appearance of a Russian Cossack in a cavalry charge at Liaoyang, and above all things don’t grin like the fierce villain of the play when he hisses through his set teeth, “Ha, ha, I have you now!” If the mouth and teeth are too much open the movements of the tongue are likely to be seen; if the lips are closed the sound cannot leave the mouth, so a middle course must be adopted. At times during the entertainment the “business” may allow you to turn your head away from the audience, and your dialogue should be so arranged that these occasions may be seized upon for the vigorous utterance of any proscribed words you are obliged to use.

Although the characters are many which the ventriloquist may imitate, they are after all limited as to kind. You cannot, for instance, ventriloquize with a woman's voice nor with that of a little girl. In fact, even in near ventriloquism the old woman's speech must be common, and the child's will not be the voice of an aristocrat, although it is the least vulgar of all the Voices. It is impossible successfully to imitate the voice of the aristocrat or man of culture, for such a person habitually uses the front of his mouth and speaks with refined accents, whereas the ventriloquist must speak at the back of his mouth as the so-called lower classes do. The man who affects a super-refinement of speech forces his words almost against the front teeth and in the salutation, "Howdy-do?" screws up the upper lip and contracts his lower until he could say "plum" very easily. The laborer's "How are you?" is uttered with loose tongue and lips. The former is therefore not for the ventriloquist, while the latter is.

In bidding your oral friend farewell always say "Good-night" even if you are performing at a matinee, for, as already stated, the other forms, including "Good-bye," must be tabooed on account of their difficulty. "What do you say?" is a useful form of enquiry, and it arrests and secures attention for your ventriloquy. "I have got a ladder" is good, for "ladder" is very easily made clear. "All right," "I'm here," "He is down below," and "Have you got a quarter?" are all useful. Long conversation in the ventriloquial voice is exhausting and not so effective as short remarks; your natural speech should take up most of the time. Break up the dialogue as much as possible with amusing side remarks, changes from one voice to another, grotesque noises, such as coughing, sneezing, etc., if you can do them well, which allow no time for criticism and amuse much more than a sustained dialogue, which may become tiresome.

People do not look for great thoughts, pretty phrasing and literary finish in a ventriloquial entertainment, and the dialogue has to be written for special requirements and to fit special limitations. Don't use three words where the same effect can be conveyed in one, as ventriloquial dialogue must be brief and interruption should form a strong part of it. The wit and humor of the vaudeville theatre is sometimes criticised and ridiculed by the more discriminating theatregoers, but variety performers aim to supply what experience has taught them will succeed with the masses, and so with ventriloquism you must use such dialogue as you have found to be most effective and amusing.

It has been stated in a previous chapter that the better actor the entertainer is the greater will be his success as a ventriloquist. This is true because, like the negative adjunct of speaking with still lips, the histrionic art is an important aid to the real work of entertaining and the sustaining of an illusion while carrying on a conversation with an imaginary person. Although the ventriloquist is the real speaker, the listener's thoughts and emotions are the only ones he is permitted to give outward expression to.

It is ventriloquial acting when the performer places Tommy in the chair he has just vacated and, after putting Jerry in a box at the back of the stage, apparently forgets all about Tommy and sits down upon him, whereupon Tommy cries out indignantly just as a real negro boy would do under like circumstances. Another instance is when the ventriloquist, with a worried expression of nervous enquiry, examines the mechanical arrangements of his figures, while the old man follows his movements by turning his head, and apparently catching the entertainer's anxiety, says in a low voice—yet sufficiently loud to be heard all over the house—"Is my string broke, guv'nor?" or when the exhibitor while acknowledging the applause by a bow, causes the old man gravely to

inform the audience that the figures are only made of wood.

Always listen to your figures or to the voices of invisible persons as if their remarks were heard by you for the first time. At appropriate points assume an air of anger, surprise, pleasure or consternation in response to your ventriloquy, in order to accentuate and bring out its full significance.

In using figures you should imagine that they speak and you furnish them with characters and humor them, reprimand them, and think, hear and see for them. Do not imitate the performer who comes on to the stage, bows and explains that he intends to give a ventriloquial entertainment, but try to have a more artistic introduction. Acting as if the figures were real to you, appear surprised or pleased to find the stage already occupied, shake hands with the old man if his arm moves, and have him give an amusing recital of his troubles on the train or elsewhere, then mix yourself with the other automata and get to work.

Voice throwing may be effectively introduced by letting the old man call to his pal on the roof, or by having the performer, at the old man's request, give a few illustrations of ventriloquism, when the old man interrupts, praises, and criticises the performance.

Where figures are not used, due care must be taken to make the effects you produce possible to the eye. It would be sufficiently illusory to carry on a conversation with a little girl supposed to be back of a piano, as she would be too short to be seen if she were there, but it would be absurd to do so with a man, who would naturally be too tall to be hidden. Never attempt ventriloquism unless you have such surroundings as will make it effective ; after a time you can tell at a glance just how to throw your voice to suit the place in which you are performing.

All rooms are not suitable for ventriloquial effect. Rich draperies kill the sounds as they do in singing, the position of the doors, windows, etc., the irregular seating of the audience and their proximity make drawing-room ventriloquism very difficult and more of an improvised character, as the dialogue and business must sometimes be altered to a great extent to suit existing conditions. Under such circumstances it is better to rely almost wholly upon figures, which make one independent of the surroundings.

Any unforeseen incident that happens during an entertainment may be taken advantage of by the ventriloquist and commented upon if he is quick witted enough. For instance, if an umbrella is dropped or a chair knocked over the performer may stop his set dialogue and make the most of the occurrence in some such manner as this;

Old Man. I say, Guv'nor, that feller's broke one of the chairs.

Vent. Silence!

Old Man. Yes—and then you'll take it out of my salary the way you always does.

Old Lady. He is picking it up now.

Vent. Will you go on with the entertainment?

Old Man. Not while the brokers—I mean the breakers—are in.

If you are good at polyphony, ventriloquism may be effectively amalgamated with it by causing an imaginary mosquito or bluebottle fly to buzz around the old man's head, and considerable amusement can be raised by your efforts to capture it. Or you can cause the old man to say: "I say, can you crow like a cock?"

Vent. Yes, sir. Old Man. So can I.

Vent. I should be delighted to hear you.

Old Man. You have never heard me?

Vent. No.

Old Man. I thought not, or you wouldn't ask me to. Here's mine. (*Crows.*)

Vent. And here is mine. (*Crows.*)

Old Man. (*Crows again.*)

Vent. When are you going to stop?

Old Man. Not afore you does. (*Crows.*)

**PART III**  
**POLYPHONY**

## CHAPTER XI

### VOCAL IMITATIONS

POLYPHONISM, in its entertainment sense, is the imitation of sounds other than speech, such as the humming of bees, the bleating of sheep, the lowing of cattle, the braying of a donkey, or the noise made by planing, sawing, the drawing of a glass of soda, etc., many of which cannot be made ventriloquially, and so form no deception as to the source from which they emanate. A few general hints will aid you in making a beginning, and with practice you can produce most of the imitations with sufficient accuracy simply by following the instructions given.

*The Mosquito.*—Beginning first with the simpler sounds try that made by a mosquito. For this you hold your throat and mouth in exactly the same position as for the ventriloquial drone, only you make the sound very shrill—in fact, at the very highest pitch you can reach—while at the same time straining with the chest.

*A Bee.*—With the vocal organs in the drone position use considerable pressure upon the chest and make the pitch lower than for the mosquito. Produce a handkerchief, and as you sound the drone chase the imaginary bee about the room. After pretending to catch it, put the handkerchief containing the bee (?) into the pocket. Then, apparently forgetting that it is there, produce the handkerchief and appear to allow the bee to escape.

*Bluebottle.*—The sound of this fly is made by blowing through the lips until they vibrate rapidly while you are uttering a droning sound—not the ventriloquial drone, however, but a near moan about the pitch of the hum of a bluebottle. The vibration of the lips gives the sound made by the vibration of the wings, which, reinforced by the added moan, forms a realistic though rather exaggerated imitation of the insect. Chase this also about the room and when you want to take breath cause it to rest for a moment on the curtains or on the wall. Having gained your breath start the fly again by a flip of your handkerchief and chase it until you either capture it or it gets away. Your first attempts at getting the near hum of a bluebottle will result in a good deal of spluttering, and its attainment will be accelerated or retarded according to the formation of your lips.

*Parrot.*—For this bird and his talk use the Punch voice, but you must carefully avoid all labials as the bird does. By going to a cage and giving the imitation boldly no one could tell it was not the parrot speaking.

*Ducks.*—Don't say "Quack," because a duck, having no lips, does not say "quack," though he is generally credited with doing so. If you don't use your lips and try to say "Uack," opening your mouth as wide as you can, as the duck does his bill, and make the exaggerated action of the throat which he does also, you will get the imitation right. The first "uack" must be loud and the following ones quick and fainter. Visit a duck pond with a loaf of bread, and the ducks themselves will instruct you as long as the bread lasts.

*Cat.*—The household pet does not say "me-iow" as generally believed, but "eiow," which may be imitated with little difficulty with the Punch voice.

*Donkey.*—The donkey makes his preliminary squeak by drawing in his breath, and this may be imitated with the Punch voice also. Practice the braying from nature, and do the whole imitation, while exhaling.

*House Fly.*—Close the lips tightly except at one corner and, after filling the cheek full of wind force the latter to escape through the aperture.

*Cock Crowing.*—Almost any one can make some shift at crowing like a cock, but there are as many varieties of crowing as there are spiders. For the Bantam's crow use the Punch voice, and you will get it at once.. For other kinds you partly assume the ventriloquial position as regards the chest. Crowing is usually heard at a distance, not close at hand, so a slightly ventriloquial effect is the most truthful.

*Circular Saw.*—The revolving hum of a circular saw has the sound of a grossly exaggerated bluebottle. By protruding the lips, closing them and blowing through them without making any vocal sound, you will soon be reminded of a sawmill in full operation. Slightly alter the position of the lips to simulate the difference of tone made from the initial incision of the saw into the timber to its exit. Exhale more slowly as the saw is supposed to slow down, and use more breath to get its regular hum when revolving rapidly. The pitch grows higher as the saw is supposed to revolve faster.

*Wood Saw.*—This imitation has the sound of a harsh hiss, made by forcing the air out between the teeth at one corner of the mouth, which gives the downward movement of the saw, while the air is drawn in to represent the upward movement. Imitate the motion of the saw with your hands while placing one knee on a chair-seat as if holding a stick of wood. The sound of sawing may also be made by breathing through saliva at the roof of the mouth. It should be jerky and not continuous, and each advancing cut is suggested by making the imitation more and more at the back of the palate. It is also a sort of "hawking" sound, and by pressing the lips together and forcing them open with expelled air you will seem to strike a knot in the wood, which will cause a laugh. A meat or small hand-saw can be imitated by the "hawking" method in a higher key, with the addition of a hissing sound.

*Planing.*—By forcing the air against the tongue and teeth and dwelling on the syllable "sh" or "tsh" you will get the sound right. Take a book and, holding it so that it does not quite touch the table, use it as you would a plane, making the sound in perfect time with the movement, so that it will cease abruptly the instant your hands leave the table; then repeat.

*Drawing Soda.*—This is a milder form of the sound used in imitating planing. Take a tumbler and pretend to draw a glass of soda from an imaginary fountain, at the same time forcing the air between the teeth at one corner of the mouth. Raise the tumbler to your mouth and get the fizzing of the soda by prolonging the sound made in a whispered "s," changing to "z" when your mouth is covered by the glass, and back again to "s" while pretending to drink, gradually lessening the sound until the liquid has apparently disappeared.

*Water Boiling.*—Repeat the liquid consonants "ll" as in the Welsh name "Langollen," which will give you the same sound as made by water boiling or hissing. By using "s-z" alternately you can produce the sound of something frying or stewing. Take two empty plates and, using one as a cover to the other, pretend to cook a chop or steak. By modulating the hissing sounds of these consonants, the fancied meat will apparently be stewing or frying. If the top plate is raised a little the sound will suitably be made louder by a well-timed guttural effort simulated by gurgling.

*Wind.*—Listen to the various sounds made by the wind and try to make them by saying "huzz" in a prolonged fashion against the front of the teeth. For a high wind use a high pitch.

*Tearing Linen.*—After you have chased the bee with the handkerchief pretend to tear the latter by passing it quickly between the thumb and forefinger and forcing air between your lips, which

should be lightly pressed together.

*Squeaking Door or Gate.*—Easily imitated with the Punch voice in its highest key.

## MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

As a rule the imitation of musical instruments becomes tiresome, as any imitation will, if continued too long. Many performers, however, have brought this sort of polyphonism to a high state of development.

*Banjo.*—Say “Pang” in the same fashion as you say “uack” for a duck, with the difference that the “P” is articulated. By substituting “Tang” you can use your tongue more and give the sound of the old-fashioned roll by saying “Trrr-ang.”

*Xylophone.*—Fix your mouth in position by saying “Oh.” Then take your open hands and, holding them so that the right thumb comes a little below the left, hollow the hand slightly so as to leave a triangular opening above the latter. Separate the hands and bring them sharply together, which will force the air collected between the palms through the triangular opening. This should be brought opposite the opening formed by the lips, which are in the “oh” position described. The result will be a note. By making the opening of the lips smaller the notes become lower; by making it larger, the notes become higher. The percussion of the air against the lips may cause the latter to swell, so it is well to practice this imitation moderately.

*Cornet.*—This is made by saying “ta” in the Punch voice. It should not be attempted with the lips, but at the top of the palate, “Ta-ta-ta,” the reality of which may be increased by holding the hand half clinched and making the sound through it. By the use of the saliva you can produce the burr that often precedes the clear-blown note.

*Clarionet.*—Practice on the syllables “tul-le” at the lower back of the mouth, making the sound toward the top as the higher notes are produced. I remember seeing a perfect imitation of this instrument made by a vaudeville performer who used a real clarionet upon which he apparently gave a solo. The illusion was only dispelled when he turned the instrument upside down and showed that it was full of sand.

*‘Cello.*—To imitate a ‘cello correctly avoid labial production and make the sound at the bottom of the mouth; that is, a sort of near ventriloquial bee, and grunt on “ah.” If you essay this effect on the low notes, the grunt gives the touch of a rosined bow on the string when making a “down bow.” As the bow is drawn across the string, the vibration is increased until it becomes a clear note. “When making the low notes the tongue lies low in the mouth, but raises as you produce the higher notes. The grunt represents the “down bow “and should be absent from the” up bow.”

*Cymbals.*—The imitation of the clash and clang of these brass discs is made by a sneeze, not the “ah-ah-tish-shoo” of the scrub woman, but a short, sharp sneeze sent up through the nose at the back of the mouth.

*Drums.*—The snare drum is suggested by a roll of the tongue, “perr-rrup” “perr-rrup tut tut” or “tat tat.” “Boom, perr-rrup” gives the bass drum followed by the snare drum.

**PART IV**  
**VENTRILOQUIAL DIALOGUES**

## DIALOGUES

THE following dialogues present a variety of suitable matter for ventriloquial use and for all occasions. Of course it is always best to have fresh material, but very few ventriloquists are able to originate what is required for the purpose, and the student especially is usually at a loss to know what to use and where to obtain it.

Ventriloquial dialogue, like the “patter” of a magician, seems to be common property, and I make no claim for originality except in the matter of arrangement and combination, where I have brought together parts of different dialogues to make a complete entertainment, as in the last dialogue in the book which, when given in full, will run from twenty-five to thirty minutes. By reading the humorous columns of the daily and weekly journals and making use of odd or witty turns of phrase or thought, the student may write dialogues for himself after he has had some experience as an entertainer. In the meantime, let him choose what matter appeals to him and best suits his ability from that given here, learn it by heart, and as experience teaches him what is needed, introduce any modifications or alterations which occur to him as being practical.

### DIALOGUE No.I

*(Between the Knee Dolls, Tommy and Joe)*

Vent. Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to introduce to you my two boys, Tommy and Joe.

Tommy. Hillo! *(Turns his face up to speaker.)* Did you say I was a boy?

Vent. Yes, Tommy.

Joe. No, you didn't.

Tommy. Hillo! Joe's awake.

Vent. Why, I am certain I did.

Tommy. Yes, you did, I should like to know what you mean. I am a full grown doll.

Vent. Of course you are, Tommy; I didn't mean to offend you when I said you were a boy.

Joe. No, you didn't, you said we were two boys.

Vent. So I did; but it means the same, you know.

Joe. No, it doesn't.

Tommy. There he goes, always growling and contradicting.

Joe. No, I don't

Vent. Well, Tommy, you say you are full grown; how old are you?

Tommy. He! he! I'm not old at all, I'm old-fashioned.

Vent. Yes, very old-fashioned and sly, too. I have heard of your goings on.

Joe. No, you've not.

Vent. Didn't you and Joe have a high old time the other night?

Tommy. Yes, such a high old time we had.

Vent. Such a high old time who had?

Tommy. Me and him. *(Turning his head toward Joe.)*

Joe. No, it was not you and me, it was me and you.

Vent. Well, never mind that. Tell me about the time you had. I hope it was nothing wrong.

Tommy. Oh, no, it was not wrong; it was right tu looral looral ladady, right tu looral ley!

Joe. No, we was not right, we was left.

Tommy. Oh, ho! Joe's trying to make a joke.

Vent. Well, I wish you would explain.

Tommy. Well, Joe's right; we were left at the house. Don't you know the other day you made us up into a parcel and you called at Mr. ...'s house? (*Mention the name of some well-known gentleman who happens to be present.*)

Vent. Yes, I remember. I put you down in a chair behind me and got so interested and charmed with Mr. ...'s conversation that I forgot all about you, and I left you both there tied up, poor fellows!

Tommy. Oh, you needn't say "poor fellows!" We were all right.

Joe. No we wasn't, we were both left.

Vent. Never mind about that now, tell me what happened.

Tommy. Well, you know, we lay there tied up in that parcel and I wondered when you were going to take us.

Joe. So did I.

Vent, (*sympathetically*). Did you, Joe?

Joe. No, I didn't.

Tommy. There goes Joe contradicting again.

Joe. No, I wasn't.

Tommy. Shut up, Joe, or I will ...

Vent. Now, don't quarrel. Joe, please be quiet while Tommy tells me all about this. When I left you in Mr. ...'s house ...

Tommy. Well, you know.

Joe. No, he doesn't know till you tell him.

Vent. Be quiet, Joe, you are always interrupting.

Joe. No, I'm not.

Vent. Now, Tommy, never mind Joe, but just go on with the story.

Tommy. Well, you know

Joe. No he ... (*Here a good effect may be obtained by taking hold of Joe's nose or ear and appearing to pull it vigorously, and at the same time imitating the voice of Joe in pain, after which say: "There, now, I think you will be quiet" If Joe is made to whine or moan occasionally through the following part of the dialogue, as (he were having a long suppressed childish cry, the comical effect is enhanced.)*)

Vent. Now, Tommy, go on with your story.

Tommy. Well, at last I says to myself, why, the gov'nor's left us here and forgot all about us, so I untied the rope and got out.

Vent. What did you do then?

Tommy. We went about the room, me and Joe, and I looks round, and Joe looks round, and we both sees two china figures on the mantelpiece. One was a shepherdess and the other was a duchess.

Vent. Why how did you know the difference —at least how could you tell a duchess?

Tommy. Oh! The aristocracy is more lovely outside, you know.

Vent. You mean they are better dressed.

Tommy. Yes. Well, Joe and me looks at 'em and I says "Lovely" and Joe says "Stunning ..."

Joe. You're a liar, I said "Lovely" and you said "Stunning."

Tommy. Well, we both fell in love.

Vent. Did you? Which did you fall in love with, Tommy, the shepherdess or the duchess?

Tommy. Ask Joe.

Vent. Well, Joe, which did you fall in love with?

Joe. Ask Tommy.

Tommy. Well, we both fell in love with both.

Joe. And so did I.

Tommy. Well, I climbed up to the shepherdess and was just goin' to give her a kiss when I sees a young man looking daggers at me.

Vent. Oh, I see—another china figure on the mantelpiece.

Tommy. Yes. He was there all his life and offering his heart and his crook to the shepherdess.

Joe. And there was a marquis doing the same thing to the duchess.

Vent. But the marquis hadn't a crook, Joe.

Joe. Yes he had.

Tommy (*excitedly*). He had a crook in his back.

Vent. Tell me, what did you do?

Tommy. Well, we chucked 'em both off the mantelpiece on to the carpet. He! he!

Joe. We smashed 'em.

Vent. Well, go on.

Tommy. So we did go on.

Vent. Well now, Tommy, I think the ladies and gentlemen have heard enough of your pranks, so now bid them good-night in a nice little speech.

Tommy. Let Joe begin.

Vent. Joe, will you?

Joe. Will I what?

Vent. Bid the ladies and gentlemen good-night and say you are glad to see them, and so on.

Joe. Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you all good-night, and I'm glad to see you're goin'.

Vent. No, no, Joe, I didn't tell you to say that.

Joe. Yes, you did.

Vent. Now, Tommy, it is your turn, let us hear how you do it.

Tommy. Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you are all pleased and if any of you isn't why you can ask for your money back and you—won't get it. So I wish you all good-night.

## DIALOGUE No.II

(*For Old Man and Old Woman Figures*)

Vent. Ladies and gentlemen ...

Old Man. And youngsters.

Vent. Silence, sir. I have come here this evening for the purpose of ...

Old Man. Making yourself ridiculous.

Vent. Will you be silent, sir!

Old Man. Here, here! You said that once before.

Vent. (*looking at figure and stamping his foot*). I hope and trust ...

Old Man. Don't trust, get cash down.

Old Woman. Don't mind him.

Vent. Look here, sir, I will stand no more of this nonsense.

Old Man. Hear, hear I

Vent. Ladies and gentlemen, I have been ...

Old Man. And you can go again.

Old Woman. Oh, do make him be quiet.

Vent. That I certainly will. My respected audience, I was just saying ...

Old Man (*singing*). "There's life in the old boy yet."

Old Woman. Oh, hain't he awful. He seems excited to-night.

Old Man (*turning to Old Woman*). Don't get to nagging, you old scarecrow!

Vent. That is no way to speak to a lady, sir I

Old Man. She ain't a lady.

Old Woman. What am I then ?

Old Man. My old gal, bless her heart.

Old Woman (*singing*). "I cannot sing the old songs ..."

Old Man. No, nor the new ones either, so chuck it, old gal, chuck it!

Vent. (*to audience*). You will, I feel sure, excuse this dummy ...

Old Man. So are you and worse.

Vent. I was just remarking that in the case of these two automatons the illusions are produced by one man and ...

Old Man. A donkey.

Old Woman. Do, sir, make him behave himself.

Vent. That I certainly will.

Old Man (*sneezes*). Gentlemen of the jury

Vent. You have a cold, it seems.

Old Man. Yes, the Old Woman's tongue made an awful breeze last night, and I sat in the draft.

Vent. (*laughing*). Well, I see it hasn't dulled your wit any. Come now, if you will sing a song I will let you off.

Old Man. All right, I will sing you "If I was as Young as I Used to Be." (*Sings.*)

### DIALOGUE No. III

(*Irish Figure on chair; Negro Figure in box back of chair. Performer picks up Irish Figure and sits down in the chair.*)

Vent. Well, my little boy, can you talk?

Jerry. Av coorse I kin talk.

Vent. Since you can talk, will you please tell me your name.

Jerry. Sure Oi will.

Vent. Well, what is it?

Jerry. Do you mane the name me father guv me or that me mither guv me or that be which I was christened?

Vent. (*in perplexity*). Why, I'm sure I do not know. What did your father call you?

Jerry. Sure, he called me Jerry.

Vent. And what did your mother call you?

Jerry. She called me a sad skaliwag.

Vent. Well, I guess you are all of that; but what did the priest call you at the christening?

Jerry. Sure he called me after some saint whose name I forgot afore I heard it.

Vent. I shall have to call you Jerry, then. Do you go to school?

Jerry. I do that.

Vent. And can you spell ?

Jerry. Av oorse I kin spell.

Vent. All right I will try you, but first I am going to introduce a little friend I brought along with me, and I want you to sit in this chair while I get him.

Jerry. All right, perfessor. (*Ventriloquist places Jerry on chair and goes to box, returns with Tommy in his arms, forgets Jerry and sits down upon him, whereupon Jerry cries out*) Get off av me leg!

Vent. Oh, excuse me, Jerry. I had forgotten that you were there.

Jerry (*as performer picks him up with the right hand' and sits down, Tommy being held by the left hand*). Well, I didn't.

Vent, (*to Tommy*). Your name is Tommy, isn't it?

Tommy. Dat's just my name, boss (*ghoss*).

Jerry (*as he turns his head toward Tommy*). Say, did he come out of a blacking box (*ghox*).

Vent. Keep quiet, will you? Now then, Tommy, how are you feeling this evening?

Tommy. Oh, I'se all right, boss.

Vent. And you, Jerry V

Jerry. I ain't feeling very well, perfessor.

Vent. Why, what's the matter?

Jerry. Well, you see I stayed out in the rain last night and got wet.

Tommy (*suddenly*). Guess dat's what makes his hair so red, he forgot to dry it and it got rusty.

Jerry. Nigger, nigger, nigger!

Tommy. Irish, Irish, Irish.

Vent. Now, boys, don't quarrel. Jerry, spell the word "milk."

Jerry. You must show me how.

Vent. I will soon do that. M-i-l-k, milk.

Jerry (*pronouncing, but not spelling*). Milk.

Vent. No, no! I want you to spell it.

Jerry. Oh, all right. M-i-l-k.

Vent. I will try you on another. Spell "Constantinople."

Jerry. Oh, Jerusha, what a hard un!

Vent. Well, Jerry, I will help you. Now right after me, C-o-n, con,

Jerry. C-o-n, con,

Vent. S-t-a-n, stan, Constan,

Jerry. S-t-a-n, stan, Constan,

Vent. T-i, ti, Constanti,

Jerry. T-i, ti, Constanti,

Vent. N-o, no, Constantino,

Jerry. N-o, no, Constantino,

Vent. P-l-e, pie, Constantinople.

Jerry. Constable.

Vent. That was wrong. Constantinople, not constable.

Jerry. Well, that ain't the way we spell it in school.

Vent. How do you spell it there ?

Jerry. We spell it this way: Con, with a stan, with a "t," with a "ti," with a tippie, with a topple, with a Constantinople.<sup>1</sup>

Vent. Good, Mr. Jerry!

Tommy. Say, boss, how much brains has a hog in his head?

Vent. Why, I don't know. How much brains has a hog in his head, Tommy?

Tommy. A hogshead full, of course.

Vent. Well, Tommy, how would you like to be rich?

Tommy. I'd like that fust rate.  
 Vent. But you know they say riches sometimes take wings and fly away.  
 Tommy. Them must be ostriches.  
 Vent. Now, Jerry, can you sing?  
 Jerry. Yes, only I'm a little horse this evening.  
 Vent. No, no! You mean you are a little hoarse.  
 Jerry. Sure, that's wot I said.  
 Vent. I misunderstood you then. I thought you said horse.  
 Jerry. Well, that's a horse on you.  
 Vent. Let it go at that. Do the best you can.  
 Jerry. Oi will that. (Sings.)  
 Vent. Very good, Jerry. That is enough for to-night. I will place you in the box now. (*Goes to back of stage or room and places figures in box. A. hushed voice—Punch 'Voice with distant quality—is heard complaining that there is not room enough. Ventriloquist raises cover of box and says.*) Why, Jerry, you have got half the box.  
 Jerry. Well, I want the other half.  
 (*Ventriloquist closes box. Jerry's voice is heard in subdued tone, but it becomes more and more indistinct until it finally ceases. Ventriloquist bows and leaves the stage.*)

<sup>1</sup> For another way of spelling Constantinople see last dialogue.

#### DIALOGUE No.IV

(*For "Near" Mimetic Voice Behind a Screen*)

Vent. (*on side of screen nearest audience*). Who is there?  
 Old Man's Voice. Ahem!  
 Vent. (*louder*). Who is there, I say?  
 Old Man. Eh, a little louder, I am nearly deaf.  
 Vent. What is your name?  
 Old Man. Eh?  
 Vent I say, what is your name?  
 Old Man. Near half-past eight?  
 Vent. I asked your name.  
 Old Man. Toby Tickle-twister.  
 Vent. Toby what?  
 Old Man. No, not Toby what? Toby Tickle-twister.  
 Vent. What is your age?  
 Old Man. Five feet, six inches.  
 Vent. (*louder*). I said, what is your age?  
 Old Man. Age, oh! Eleventy seven.  
 Vent. Sir, none of your nonsense. What is your age?  
 Old Man. I told you, seventy-seven.  
 Vent. Where were you born ?  
 Old Man. I was born in Ballysloughguttery.  
 Vent. I can't pronounce that. Where is it?  
 Old Man. In Ould Oirland, av coorse.

Vent. What is your business?  
 Old Man. Come behind here and I'll tell you.  
 Vent. (*goes behind*). Oh, I see.  
 Old Man (*as Vent reappears*). Yes, you see I'm a tinker.  
 Vent. What have you come here for?  
 Old Man. To hear the antiquated locust.  
 Vent. The what?  
 Old Man. The antiquated locust.  
 Vent. I think you mean the ventriloquist; I'm the ventriloquist.  
 Old man. Ha, ha, ha! A nice exhibition you're making of yourself.

## DIALOGUE No.V

(*Between the Ventriloquist and "Jack" in the Chimney*)

(The words "increase" and "diminish" indicate where a change in the volume of sound should be made.)

Vent. (*in a loud voice look-in g toward the chimney*). Hello! Jack!  
 Jack. Hello-o-o! (*Suppressed and prolonged?*)  
 Vent. Where are you?  
 Jack. I'm up the chimney. (*Pronounced, Ing uk the chingney.*)  
 Vent. Well, come down, I want to have a chat with you.  
 Jack. All right, I'm coming (*kuning*). (*Increase.*)  
 Vent. Well, hurry, please.  
 Jack. Yes, I'll be (*ve*) there in a minute (*ghinit*). (*Increase.*)  
 Vent. Oh! do hurry (*impatiently*); one would think you were a policeman.  
 Jack. So I am. (*Increase.*)  
 Vent. Are you here, now?  
 Jack. Yes, here I am. (*Loud.*)  
 Vent. Oh! you startled me. What's your name?  
 Jack. John Sullivan.  
 Vent. Well, please move a little farther away.  
 Jack. Ha! ha! how will that do? (*Diminish.*)  
 Vent. A little farther, please.  
 Jack. Will that do? (*Diminish.*)  
 Vent. That will do.  
 Jack. Say ...  
 Vent. Well, sir!  
 Jack. What do you do for a living?  
 Vent. I'm a bank cashier.  
 Jack. When do you leave the city?  
 Vent. What do you mean?  
 Jack. Why, I heard you were going to South America.  
 Vent. Oh, I see what you are at; but you must remember that there are a few honest bank cashiers left in this country.  
 Jack. You're a liar.  
 Vent. What's that?

Jack. I said you're a lawyer.  
Vent. That's better. Now, then, what is your business?  
Jack. I attend school.  
Vent. You told me you were a policeman. What do you mean?  
Jack. I was only fooling.  
Vent. I don't want any fooling. Do you spell, read and write?  
Jack. Oh, yes.  
Vent. Can you spell hen?  
Jack. What kind of a hen?  
Vent. It makes no difference. Spell hen.  
Jack. Is it a black (*dlack*) hen or a white hen?  
Vent. I say it does not matter what kind of a hen it is.  
Jack. Is it an old rooster or a spring (*sfring*) chicken?  
Vent. Oh, come now, no more prevaricating.  
Jack. What did you say? (*Say this slowly?*)  
Vent. Will you spell hen?  
Jack. Hen. Say?  
Vent. Well, sir?  
Jack. Can you tell me the difference between a ventriloquist and a jackass?  
Vent. Why, no, what is the difference?  
Jack. There ain't any.  
Vent. What do you mean, sir? Go home immediately.  
Jack. Yes, I'm going. Good-night. (*Decrease.*)  
Vent. Don't say good-night to me.  
Jack. It's all right. Good-night. (*Decrease.*)  
Vent. I suppose we might as well part on good terms. Good-night.  
Jack. Good-night, (*fiepeat several times until voice dies away.*)

## DIALOGUE No. VI

(*Between the Ventriloquist and the Invisible Ghost*)

Ghost. Ho! Who goes there?  
Vent. (surprised). Who's that? (*To the audience.*)  
Ghost. Who goes there?  
Vent. 'Tis I, do you know me?  
Ghost. As a friend, nay.  
Vent. Why, what does this mean? (*To the audience.*)  
Ghost. I have come to make known thy fate.  
Vent. What have I done? Will you kindly leave the room?  
Ghost. Often have I gazed upon thy face at midnight.  
Vent. (*startled*). Is it so?  
Ghost. Thy doom is sealed.  
Vent. Sir!  
Ghost. I have come to make known thy fate.

Vent. You said that before. Where are you, sir? (*Looking around* )

Ghost. I live in the air.

Vent. Yes, so it seems. Have you any objection to taking a seat on the roof?

Ghost. I never sit.

Vent. Well, please move to the roof.

Ghost. I will.

Vent. Oh! what a relief. Are you on the roof now?

Ghost. Yes, I'm on the roof. (*Suppressed.*)

Vent. Thank you, don't be in any hurry to return.

Ghost. Oh, yes I will. (*Say this forward in the mouth as if the Ghost were hear you.*)

Vent. (*startled*). He has returned to torment me. Please move to the cellar.

Ghost. I go.

Vent. Are you there?

Ghost. Yes, I'm in the cellar. (*Suppressed.*)

Vent. Well, please stay there.

Ghost. I don't stay anywhere. (*Forward in the mouth as if near.*)

Vent. No, so it appears. You won't remain on the roof or in the cellar.

Ghost. You must die!

Vent. Certainly, some day. Please move into the wall.

Ghost. I will revisit thee at midnight. (*Diminish.*)

Vent. Then it's all up with me.

Ghost. Till then, farewell. (*Diminish.*)

I have never used the above dialogue, but have it on the authority of Charles Guillet that when spoken properly in a theatre or large hall, it will produce an excellent effect, as I should think it might.

## DIALOGUE No. VII

(*The Suffocated Victim*)

Use a large box or closet for this illusion, as may be most convenient. The student should rap or kick the box apparently by accident, at the same time uttering, ventriloquially, a hoarse and subdued groan.

Vent. (*pointing to the box with an air of astonishment*). What is that?

Voice. I won't do so any more. I am nearly dead.

Vent. Who are you? How came you there?

Voice. I only wanted to see what was going on. Let me out, do.

Vent. But I don't know who you are.

Voice. Oh, yes, you do.

Vent. Who are you?

Voice. Your old schoolfellow, Tom ...

You know me.

Vent. Why, he's in Canada.

Voice. (*sharply*). No, he ain't, he's here; but be quick.

Vent. Perhaps he's come by the underground railroad. (*Opens box.*) Hello!

Voice (*less muffled*). Now then, give us a hand.  
 Vent. (*closing lid sharply*). No, I won't.  
 Voice. Have pity, or I shall be choked.  
 Vent. I don't believe you are what you say.  
 Voice. Why don't you let me out and see before I am dead?  
 Vent. (*opening and shutting the lid and varying the voice accordingly when the voice next answers*).  
 Dead! not you.  
 Voice. I soon will be.  
 Vent. When did you leave Canada?  
 Voice. Last week. Oh! I am choking.  
 Vent. Shall I let him out? (*Raises the cover.*) Why, there's no one here.

### DIALOGUE No. VIII

(*The Man on the Roof*)

Vent. Are you up there, Jem?  
 Voice. Hallo ! who's that ?  
 Vent. It is I. Are you nearly finished?  
 Voice. Only three more slates to put on, master.  
 Vent. I want you here, Jem.  
 Voice. All right, I am coming directly.  
 Vent. Which way, Jem?  
 Voice. Over the roof and down the trap. (*A little louder.*)  
 Vent. Which way?  
 Voice. (*nearer*). Through the trap and down the stairs.  
 Vent. How long will you be?  
 Voice. Only a few minutes. I am coming as fast as I can.  
 The voice now approaches the door, and is produced as in the suffocated victim.

### DIALOGUE No. IX

(*The Invisible Sweep*)

This is a striking example of the distant voice. Let the student pretend to look up the chimney, and rehearse the following or some similar colloquy:

Yent. Are you up there?  
 Voice. Yes, chimley want sweep?  
 Vent. Really, it is extraordinary. What are you doing?  
 Voice. Looking for birds' nests.  
 Vent. Birds' nests! There are none there.  
 Voice. Dick says there be.  
 Vent. Come down!  
 Voice. I shan't.  
 Vent. (*stirring the fire in fireplace*). I'll make you show yourself.  
 Voice. I say, don't, it's so hot.  
 Vent. Come down, then.  
 Voice. Don't be so stupid. Let I alone.

Vent. Will you come down?

Voice. Yes, I will.

Vent. What's your name?

Voice. (*much nearer*). Sam Lillyvite. I say, what do you want me for among company?

Vent. To show yourself.

Voice. (*nearer*). What for?

Vent. To let these ladies and gentlemen see that there are many strange things between heaven and earth, but not Sam Lillyvite, the sweep.

## DIALOGUE No.X

(*The Man in the Cellar*)

Vent. Thomas, are you coming?

Voice. (*below, gruffly*). I should think I was.

Vent. We are waiting for the beer.

Voice. (*partly aside*). The longer you wait, the greater our honor. Mary, have another drink.

Vent. Why, the scamp is drinking the beer. Thomas! Who's there with you?

Voice. Myself. (*Aside.*) Make haste with the pot, Mary, he's in such a hurry.

Vent. You drinking rascal, how dare you!

Voice. Coming, sir, the barrel's nearly empty.

Vent. I should think so, tipping as you are at it.

Voice. Don't get saucy.

Vent. The fellow is getting intoxicated. Thomas!

Voice. Wait till I come. I have waited for you many times.

Vent. I suppose it is of no use hurrying you?

Voice. No, it isn't. I'm coming! coming! coming!!!

## DIALOGUE No.XI

(*The Milkman at the Door*)

Voice. Milk below!

Vent. Is it not provoking that a milkman always comes when he is not wanted, and is absent when we are waiting for the cream. (*Voice sings a bar of "Shoo Fly"*) Oh, yes, always the broken-hearted milkman, as if he were not as happy as a king.

Voice (*nearer*). Milk below! Why, Sally, Where's the can?

Vent. Sally will be long in answering, I think.

Voice. Sally's gadding with the police. Milk below.

Vent. (*slightly opening the door*). We don't want any milk, my good man.

Voice. No skim milk for the cat, or cream for tea?

Another voice. Watercresses!

Vent. Really this is too bad. Go away.

Voice. You owe me ten cents for last week's milk; I was to wait, and I've been waiting ever since.

Vent. This is intolerable. I'll send for the police.

Voice. (*ironically*). Send for Sally and p'lice, I'll foller.

Vent. Impudent rascal!

Voice. Keep your compliments at home, Master Idlebones.

Vent. (*opening door*). I'll report you to your master.

Voice. (*louder, as door is open*). Will you, young whipper-snapper, pay us the dime, and let us go? (*Performer offers to pay, while the voice gets weaker in the distance with "Milk below!" until it becomes inaudible.*)

## DIALOGUE No.XII

(*Amalgamation of "Above" and "Below"*)

Vent. Jack! (*Pause.*) Jack!

Jack. (*above*). Hullo! (*Prolonged as if shouting.*)

Vent. Are you up there?

Jack. Yes, I'm here.

Vent. Can you come down?

Jack. All right, I got a ladder.

Vent. (*impatiently*). Come along.

Jack. All right, but I ain't goin' to break my neck. I'm getting lower down.

Vent. (*looking up or away from the audience*). What is the matter?

Jack. There's a spoke out—or I wouldn't a spoke out.

Vent. (*turning to audience disgustedly*). Bucolic wit. (*Looking up.*) Come along.

Jack. All right, I'm coining (*kuning*). I'm coming—one more and I'm 'ere.

Vent. Where is here? (*At door.*)

Jack. No where ain't here. Where is where and here is here, and 'ere's where you can hear me.

Vent. You are witty.

Jack. Yes, it's raining and I am coming in to dry myself.

Vent. No, you must not come in.

Jack. Oi says I must.

Vent. No!

Jack. But I says yes. (*Vent, partly opens door and as he does so fixes his vocal organs for near grunt voice.*)

Vent. I say no, you can't come in.

Jack. Well, my say's good as your say.

Vent. (*closing door*). And I say no.

Jack. (*distant as commencing "Level" to "Below"*)----. What do you want to shut the door in my face for?

Vent. You go down below. You will find something there.

Jack. Down the steps, guv'nor?

Vent. Yes.

Jack. It's rather dark, but I think I can manage. One, two (*lowering voice*) three (*lower*).

Vent. Are you down?

Jack. What's that?

Vent. I said, are you down?

Jack. What do you say?

Vent. Don't say, what do you say?

Jack. All right, guv'nor, I won't say what do you say if you don't want me to say what do you say when I says what do you say (*change to below voice. If you can imitate a dog's bark in the distance introduce it here and have Jack say: "Hullo, guv'nor, there's a dog down here"*).

Vent. Yes, I told you you would find something.

### DIALOGUE No.XIII

*(For Little Girl, Either Imaginary Behind Screen or Figure)*

Vent. Why, hullo, little girl, how long have you been here?

Little Girl. Why, Mr. ..., I've been here all the evening.

Vent. Is it possible? I hadn't noticed you before. What is your name?

Little Girl. My name is Mary.

Vent. Well, Mary, can you do anything to amuse the company?

Little Girl. What's that?

Vent. Will you sing or recite?

Little Girl. I'll sing.

Vent. That's right, you'll sing.

Little Girl. Or recite.

Vent. Yes, or recite.

Little Girl. No, I'll sing.

Vent. All right, Mary, sing.

Little Girl. I said I'd recite.

Vent. Really, Mary, I don't know what you did say.

Little Girl. That's why I tell you, "Three little mouses ..."

Vent. Mice!

Little Girl. Mouses.

Vent. Mice, not mouses.

Little Girl. Mice.

Vent. Ah!

Little Girl. What did you say "Ah" for? There ain't no ahs. I must commence all over again.  
"Three little mouse ..."

Vent. Mice.

Little Girl. Is this your recitation or mine? If you say anything more I shan't do it. "Three little mice sat down to spin ..." don't waggle your fingers *(or any other remark)*.

Vent. I beg your pardon. *(Stopping movement.)*

Little Girl.

"Three little mice sat down to spin,  
Pussy passed by and she ..."

Vent. Peeped in, yes.

Little Girl. It isn't "Peeped in, yes." Am I reciting this or are you reciting it?

Vent. You are, of course.

Little Girl. Well, then, don't interrupt.

"Pussy passed by and she peeped in.  
What are you doing ..."

Vent. I wasn't doing anything. Little Girl. No, you ain't pussy; that is in the piece.

"What are you doing my little men?  
Making coats for gentlemen.

Shall I come in and bite off your threads?

Oh, no, Miss Puss, you'd bite off our heads."

and that is all of it, and am I to have a quarter or a cheese-cake?

If the above were recited without interruptions it would create no amusement, but as it is it will entertain an audience better than clever wit because, to a certain extent, it caricatures the natural behavior of a precocious child, and the remarks of the ventriloquist are received as humorous surprises.

## DIALOGUE No.XIV

*(Amalgamation of "Near" and "Distant" and Introducing Irish, Negro,  
Old Man and Old Woman Figures)*

Vent. Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to introduce two little Boston boys, Jerry and Tommy.

Tommy. Hello! Did you say I was a boy?

Vent. Yes, Tommy.

Jerry. No, you didn't.

Vent. Why, I'm sure I did.

Jerry. No, you didn't, you said we was two boys.

Vent. Well, Tommy, how are you this evening?

Tommy. I'm fust rate, boss.

Vent. And you, Jerry?

Jerry. I'm not feeling very well, professor.

Vent. Not feeling very well; what's the matter?

Jerry. I was at a party last night and I drank too much champagne.

Vent. You'll never get ahead in the world that way.

Jerry. No, but you'd ought to see the head I had on me this morning. Such a headache. Say ...

Vent. Well?

Jerry. Do you know, I think you're an awfully nice man?

Vent. *(laughing)*. Oh, you do? Well, I'm sorry I can't return the compliment.

Jerry. You could if you wanted to lie like I did.

Vent. That will do. By the way, I saw your house all lighted up the other night. Were you having a party?

Jerry. No, we had a wooden wedding.

Vent. A wooden wedding !

Jerry. Yes, my sister married a blockhead.

Tommy. Say, boss, did you hear about the accident my brother had the other day?

Vent. No, what was it?

Tommy. Well, a horse ran away with him and he's laid up for ten days.

Vent. That's too bad.

Jerry. Say, professor, my brother had an accident, too.

Vent. Did he, indeed? What happened him?

Jerry. A horse didn't run away with him.

Vent. No?

Jerry. No, he ran away with the horse and they've laid him up for sixty days. Say, did you know I

am working?

Vent. No, what are you doing?

Jerry. I'm holding down a skylight of a photograph saloon to keep the sun out.

Vent. What do you get for that?

Jerry. I gets two dollars on good days.

Vent. But what do you get on the wet ones?

Tommy (*suddenly*). He gets a soaking, boss.

Vent. Well, Jerry, can you spell?

Jerry. You jest bet I kin spell.

Vent. All right, spell the word "Needle."

Jerry. N-e-i-d-l-e, needle.

Vent. Oh, no, there's no "i" in needle.

Jerry. Well, then it ain't a good needle.

Vent. Try the word "Milk."

Jerry. What do you mean?

Vent. Don't you know what milk is? What is it we get from a cow?

Jerry. You'll get a kick if you ain't careful.

Vent. Spell the word "Sugar."

Jerry. "S-e-g-a-r."

Vent. That isn't the way I learned to spell it when I went to school.

Jerry. I guess you didn't go to the same school we do.

Vent. Well, spell "Ratification."

Jerry. Say, do you know how to spell that word

Vent. To be sure I do.

Jerry. Then what did you ask me for?

Vent. Why, to see if you know.

Jerry. Well, I don't know.

Vent. I thought as much, but spell it this way. R-a-t, rat,

Jerry. R-a-t, rat,

Vent. I, rat-i,

Jerry. U, rat-you.

Vent. I will give you one more chance. Spell "Constantinople."

Jerry. Oh, Gee-whillaker, what a word!

Vent. I'll help you out on that also. C-o-n, con ...

Jerry. C-o-n, con ...

Vent. S-t-a-n, Constan ...

Jerry. S-t-a-n, Constan ...

Vent. Ti, ti, Constanti ...

Jerry. Ti, ti, Necktie ...

Vent. I see you are incorrigible this evening.

Jerry. No I ain't, I'm in this room.

Vent. Well, finish the word. N-o, no, Constantino ...

Jerry. N-o, no, I don't know.

Vent. P-l-e, pie, Constantinople ...

Jerry. P-l-e, pie, Can't stand on an apple (*akle*).

Vent. (*to negro boy*). Tommy, if you had six dollars ...

Tommy. But I ain't got a cent, boss.

Vent. Supposing you did have, and I should ask you for three, how many would you have left?

Tommy. Six dollars, boss.

Vent. You don't catch my meaning.

Tommy. No, nor you don't catch my six dollars either.

Vent. Jerry, can you count?

Jerry. Yessir. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, Jack, Queen, King, Ace.

Vent. I'm afraid you've been playing poker.

Jerry. No, whist.

Vent. Do you know anything about fractions?

Jerry. Oh, I know something 'bout 'em.

Vent. If you had a piece of meat and should divide it eight times, what would you have?

Jerry. Eights.

Vent. Right. If you should divide those eights—

Jerry. You'd have sixteenths.

Vent. If divided once more?

Jerry. Thirty-seconds.

Vent. Still again?

Jerry. Sixty-fourths.

Vent. Very good. You have now got the meat down to pretty small pieces. If you should divide each of those again what would you have?

Jerry. Hash!

Vent. Well, Jerry, what is the shape of the earth?

Jerry. I don't know.

Vent. Oh, yes, you do. What is the shape of my cuff buttons?

Jerry. Square.

Vent. I mean those I wear on Sunday.

Jerry. Round.

Vent. That's right. Now what is the shape of the earth?

Jerry. Square on week days and round on Sundays.

Vent. Tommy, where is Java?

Tommy. I dunno.

Vent. Don't you know where coffee comes from?

Tommy. We gets ours in the next house.

Vent. Jerry, where is Africa?

Jerry. (*looking at Tommy*). On your other knee.

Tommy. Say, boss, what is the coldest country in the world?

Vent. I'm sure I don't know, which is the coldest ?

Tommy. Why, Chili, of course.

Vent. How is the earth divided, Jerry?

Jerry. Between the Standard Oil Company and the Sugar Trust.

Vent. What is a lake?

Jerry. Sure, a lake is a hole in a tin pail (*kail*).

Tommy. Say, boss, what is the equator?

Vent. The equator, my boy, is an imaginary line around the earth.

Tommy. What put it there?

Jerry. (*suddenly*). Russia! Now will you fight?

Vent. What is the river Rhine noted for?

Jerry. Rhinoceroses, av coorse.

Vent. Very smart. By the way, did the teacher give you a bad mark for staying away from school yesterday?

Jerry. No, but the old man did when I got home.

Vent. Well, Tommy, can you sing?

Tommy. You jest bet I kin sing, jest like a bird.

Jerry. Yes, a blackbird.

Vent. Keep quiet, Jerry. Now, then, Tommy, will you sing something?

Tommy. Yes, boss.

Jerry. I say, is Tommy goin' to sing?

Vent. Yes, and I want you to keep quiet.

Jerry. All right, I won't say a word.

Vent. Be sure you don't. (*Looks expectantly toward Tommy.*)

Jerry. (*mournfully*). Not another word.

Vent. Keep quiet.

Jerry. Of course I'll keep quiet.

Vent. Be sure you do.

Jerry. Say, do you want to do all the talking?

Vent. Well, what if I do ?

Jerry. When you quit we all quit.

Vent. Never mind.

Jerry. We're nothing but dummies anyway.

Vent. (*out of patience*). Look here, Jerry, I've got a bottle of chloroform in my pocket, if you don't keep still I'll have to use it.

Jerry. On Tommy?

Vent. No, on yourself. Go ahead, Tommy.

Tommy. (*singing*).

A new coon in town, a new coon in town,  
A new coon he came the other day;  
A new coon in town, a new coon in town,  
He's a regular lardy-dar the people say —

Jerry. For heaven's sake chloroform me, chloroform me.

Vent. I'll not chloroform you, but I'll put you in this box instead.

Jerry. Let me down easy, professor.

(Performer puts negro figure in chair, picks up Jerry and takes him to box at back of stage, putting him in and shutting down the cover. Jerry is heard hi a faint muffled voice calling out, "Let vie oat, let me out, I'm suffocating, I'm suffocating." As performer raises cover the voice comes out full and strong, "Now what did you do that for?" Performer takes him out, returns to chair and accidentally sits down on Tommy, who cries sharply that the professor is hurting him.)

Vent. I had forgotten that you were there, Tommy.

Tommy. Well, I hadn't.

Vent. Tommy, can you speak a piece?

Tommy. Don't know, boss.

Vent. Well, try it anyway.

Tommy. What will you give me if I does?

Vent. Well, I will give you a quarter.

Jerry. Yes, with a string tied to it.

Vent. No, there'll be no string tied to it.

Tommy. Do I gits the quarter now?

Vent. Not till after the show.

Tommy. Then I won't recite.

Jerry. He knows you.

Vent. I'll really give you the quarter after the show, Tommy.

Tommy. Well, all right. "How doth the little busy bee improve each shining hour; he gathers honey all the day—"

Jerry. (*interrupting*). And eats it up at night.

Tommy. Say, does Jerry get the quarter or does I?

Vent. You'll get it, but I'll give Jerry another if he'll also recite.

Jerry. It's a go, peffessor. "Jack and Jill went up the hill to get a pail of water; Jack fell down and broke a two-dollar bill and Jill got a dollar'n a quarter." Say ...

Vent. Well?

Jerry. What does the word "Ditto" mean?

Vent. The word "ditto" means "the same." That is when I say "John is a good boy and Willie is ditto," I mean that Willie is also a good boy.

Jerry. Oh, yes, I see.

Vent. Now then, Jerry, how many parts are there to grammar?

Jerry. Four.

Vent. How do you make that out?

Jerry. Inside, outside, the cover and the leaves.

Vent. In the sentence "Tom is a great man," what does Tom correspond with?

Jerry. If you mean Tom Green, he corresponds with my sister Mary Ann.

Vent. That's the way you evade the question, is it? Jerry, I think you are a fool.

Jerry. Ditto. Say, did you know I was to a party the other night ?

Vent. No, were you?

Jerry. Yes, and there was a ventrisqualor there.

Vent. No, no, you mean a ventriloquist, a man who throws his voice.

Jerry. That's it. This feller threw his voice so far it didn't get back agin.

Vent. Is it possible?

Jerry. I dunno, but he did it all the same. But I say, what is the difference between a ventriloquist and a donkey?

Vent. I'm sure I don't know, what is the difference?

Jerry. There ain't any.

Vent. What do you mean?

Jerry. Only that I'd rather be a fool than a donkey any day.

(Performer acts as if angry and brings hand round over Jerry's mouth. Jerry screams indistinctly and utters an angry exclamation as the hand is removed.)

Tommy. I say, boss, you do something.

Vent. I do something?

Jerry. Yes, you make us do all the work and don't give us a cent.

Vent. But I can't do anything.

Jerry. Well, we're not goin' to do another thing.

Vent. (*in alarm*). Oh, but you must; we're not through yet.

Jerry. I don't care.

(Performer whispers to Jerry and Jerry appears to whisper back, then slowly shakes his head. Vent, seems in despair and entreats Jerry again. Shows Jerry a dollar, but the figure shakes its head and says aloud, "No, I ain't goin' to do any more and that settles it.")

Vent. Well, then, I shall put you over here for punishment. (*Turns chair so that Jerry sits with back to the audience all through the remain'ing portion of the dialogue, and going to, the footlights begins to apologize to the audience when Jerry calls out.*) "Say, professor, there's a man down below, perhaps he'll help you out."

Vent. (*relieved*). In that case I'll call him up. (*Stamps foot and calls.*) I say, is there any one there?

Jerry. (*from chair*). You'll have to call him louder than that or he'll not hear you.

Vent. Why, is he deaf?

Jerry. No, he's hard o' hearing.

Vent. Oh, I'll make him hear me.

Jerry. Well, you'll have to call him loud.

Vent. Be quiet. (*Calling.*) I say down there.

Jerry. (*quietly*). He won't hear that.

Vent. Now you keep silent.

Jerry. I was only telling you—

Vent. If you tell me again I'll—

Jerry. I won't tell you any more.

Vent. Mind you don't.

Jerry. Well, he didn't hear that.

Vent. I will call him until he does hear.

Jerry. All right, go on

Vent. (*looking downward as if about to call*). I say ...

Jerry. I knew very well he wouldn't hear that.

Vent. Now you have had the last word, perhaps you will be quiet. (*Looks down.*) I say are you there?

Voice. (*faintly*). Yes, I'm here.

Vent. What are you doing?

Voice. I'm putting (*futting*) a clean collar on.

Vent. You've selected a peculiar place to put on a clean collar.

Voice. Oh, no, it's all right.

Vent. I am going to ask you a few questions. Will you answer them?

Voice. Will I what?

Vent. Will you answer my questions?  
Voice. I don't know, but I'll try.  
Vent. What is your name?  
Voice. What do you say?  
Vent. There now, why didn't you answer my question?  
Voice. What did you say?  
Vent. I said, what is your name?  
Voice. Oh, I didn't know you said that.  
Vent. Well?  
Voice. Well?  
Vent. You haven't told me yet.  
Voice. Told you what?  
Vent. I want to know your name.  
Voice. Do you mean my Christian name?  
Vent. Oh, I don't care.  
Voice. No more do I.  
Vent. Well, never mind, I'll call you Bill Will that do?  
Voice. That will do.  
Vent. Now, Bill.  
Voice. Well?  
Vent. Can you do anything to amuse the audience?  
Voice. What do you say?  
Vent. Don't say that.  
Voice. What shall I say?  
Vent. Repeat my words so that I shall know you have heard the question.  
Voice. I say what you say?  
Vent. Yes.  
Voice. All right, go on.  
Vent. Can you do anything?  
Voice. Can I do anything—  
Vent. Yes, to amuse—  
Voice. To amuse—  
Vent. Yes, the audience.  
Voice. The what ?  
Vent. The audience.  
Voice. What is that ?  
Vent. Now, Bill, I think you are prevaricating.  
Voice. No, I'm not, I'm sitting down.  
Vent. Well as the lawyers say, I will put the question in another form. Can you do anything that is amusing?  
Voice. Why of course I can.  
Vent. Well, what can you do?  
Voice. I can eat and drink and swear.  
Vent. Oh, we wouldn't be amused at that.  
Voice. I would.

Vent. I dare say you would. But I think you had better go now.

Voice. You want me to go ?

Vent. Yes, but I want to know you are safe, so you must shout good-night all the way.

Voice. (shouting). Good-night all the way.

Vent. No, I don't mean that.

Voice. You said that.

Vent. Yes, but I mean I want you to shout "good-night" and keep shouting until you are a long way off.

Voice. Oh, I know.

Vent. Well, good-night. (*Repeats two or three times, the voice being fainter each time until it dies away in a distant "ha, ha!" Performer bows and turns to Old Woman figure.*)

Jerry. What are you going to do now?

Vent. I am going to talk with the old lady here.

Jerry. Is that an old lady?

Vent. To be sure it is.

Jerry. I thought it was an old scarecrow.

Vent. Well, it isn't. Old lady, what might your name be?

Old Lady. It might be most anything, but it ain't.

Vent. Will you please tell us what it is?

Old Lady. Mary Ann O'Hoolighan, yer honor.

Jerry. Mary Ann, ten days.

Vent. That will do, Jerry. Well, Mary Ann, are you married or single?

Old Lady. Do you take me for an old maid, sir?

Jerry. She's no spring chicken.

Old Lady. I will have you understand I am a respectable widder.

Vent. When did your husband die ?

Old Lady. About three years ago, sir.

Vent. What was the complaint?

Old Lady. No complaint at all, sir, every one was satisfied. (*Performer turns to Old Man and is about to ask him a question when Jerry says, "He needs a hair cut, don't he?"*)

Vent. (*impatiently*). Keep quiet. (*To Old Man.*) What is your name?

Jerry. Yer honor, I object.

Vent. (*laughing*). Your objection is overruled. (*To Old Man.*) What did you say your name is?

Jerry. (*quietly*). He didn't say.

Old Man. My name is John Brown.

Jerry. Got a match about ye, Johnny?

Vent. Well, Mr. Brown, are you married or single?

Jerry. Here, here.

Vent. I object seriously to these interruptions.

Jerry. Objections sustained.

Old Man. Yes, sir, I've been married this many a year.

Vent. And have you any children?

Old Man. I have one daughter, seventeen.

Jerry. Her address, please.

Vent. Is she pretty ?

Old Man. They say she takes after me, sir.

Jerry. Never mind her address.

Vent. Well, Mr. Brown, can you sing?

Old Man. I could once, sir, but my voice is a little cracked now.

Jerry. Yes, and he's cracked himself. (*Performer appears to be out of patience with Jerry, takes him from the chair and puts him in the box.*)

Vent. Now, then, Jerry, if you don't keep quiet I shall put down the cover.

Jerry. Is the Old Man goin' to sing?

Vent. Yes, I think so.

Jerry. Put down the cover.

Vent. (*closes box*). Now, Mr. Brown, perhaps you will consent to sing a verse or two of some old-fashioned song.

Old Man. All right, I will sing you "The Old Turnkey" (*or any other song which the Vent, may care to use. Sing. Vent, bows and leaves the stage.*)

THE END