TREWEYISM.

BY HENRY RIDGELY EVANS.

"Le mime-comédien Trewey est un prestidigitateur merveilleux, créateur vraiment surprenant d'ombres chinoises avec l'unique secours de ses mains. On peut dire que Trewey est de ceux qui ont agrandi le cercle de la fantasmagorie et en ont fait un des astres les plus vagabonds de la fantaisie."

DOM BLASIEUS, L'Intransigeant.

MY favorite character in French fiction is Alexander Dumas's inimitable D'Artagnan, le mousquetaire par excellence, who comes out of Gascony with nothing but a rusty suit of clothes on his back, an ancestral sword at his side, his father's blessing, and a bony sorrel horse under him, to seek his fortune in the world. Aided by his good rapier, his wonderful sang froid, splendid audacity, and versatile talents, he elbows his way to the foot of a throne, to become Captain of the Grand Monarque's body-guard, and eventually a marshal of France.

In the world of magic we have a similar character, not a mere figment, however, of a novelist's imagination, but a living, breathing personality. I refer to Félicien Trewey, the eminent French fantaisiste, whose life reads like a romance. M. Trewey possesses all of the qualities of heart and mind of Dumas's hero: audacity, versatility, tireless energy in the pursuit of his profession, bonhomie, and what not. Had he lived in the seventeenth century, he doubtless would have been a soldier of fortune like D'Artagnan, fought duels, made love to duchesses, and outwitted a cardinal, but having been born in an age of steam and electricity, and fully realizing the fact that science has reduced the art of war to mere mechanics, he sought out a career that promised the most romance and adventure, and became a mousquetaire of magic, wielding the wand instead of the sword. It is a long, long way from the half-starved mounte-
bank of a wandering caravan to an Officier de l'Academie and landed proprietor living at ease in one's old age. But Trewey has accomplished all this.

II.

One evening when strolling along the Boulevard, I saw outside of the Concert des Ambassadeurs a bill-board with the following announcement: "Le Grand Trewey! Equilibre, Jonglerie, Prestidigitation.—Le Chapeau Multiforme ou 25 Têtes sous un Chapeau.—Mime.—Musique.—Silhouettes et Ombres des Mains, etc. Amusements Scientifiques et Récréatifs."

My interest was at once aroused. Here was no ordinary artist, but a man of versatility. I bought a ticket, and was soon seated in the theatre. After the usual infliction of skirt-dancers, acrobats, and eccentric singers with raspy voices, the curtain rose on M. Trewey's act. I sighed with relief. Ah, here was an oasis in the vast Sahara of vaudeville claptrap and mediocrity. I was not disappointed. The stage was elegantly set with gilt tables. The scene was boxed in with rich silk curtains à la Pinetti. A burst of applause (not confined to the claque either), and the great Trewey appeared. A long black cloak enveloped him. Throwing this off,
he appeared in full court costume—a gentleman of the reign of Louis XVI. I felt like asking him, “When did you see last the Chevalier Pinetti?” After a very superior exhibition of juggling, and sleight-of-hand with cards and coins, he passed on to ombromanie, or hand-made shadows, among them being portraits of

**PROGRAMME**

**PREMIÈRE PARTIE**

**TREWÉY**

*Dans ses créations.*

Ouverture. — Equilibres et Jongleries.

**DEUXIÈME PARTIE**


ENTR'ACTE

**TROISIÈME PARTIE**

**LES OMBRES DES MAINS**

PAR

**TREWÉY**

Ouverture.


2^e Série. — Le Batelier. — Le Pêcheur. — Le Jockey. La Danseuse de corde.

3^e Série. — Les Amours du Policeman, pantomime.

4^e Série. — Silhouettes et Profils illustres.

5^e Série. — Le Clown et l’Ane savant.

6^e Série. — Le Buveur normand et le Rigolo. — Au Revoir..., galop final.

*Le piano sera tenu par M. Henri DEVIENNE.*

Tous les dimanches et jeudis, à 2 heures.

**TREWÉY**

MATINÉE DE FAMILLE

Thiers, Gladstone, Czar Alexander III, Emile Zola, Gambetta, Bismarck, Crispi, and Lord Salisbury. The art of casting silhouettes of animals, such as the dog, the cat, and the rabbit, upon an illuminated wall is very ancient. The Italian painter Campi was one of the first to add new types to the collection of figures. Trewey
raised the art to the dignity of a stage performance and endowed it with movement and life. I shall quote as follows from an article on Trewey contributed by me to the Cosmopolitan Magazine some years ago:

"He stands behind a screen, which is brilliantly illuminated by an oxyhydrogen light, and with his hands projects the silhouettes—pictures of soldiers, peasants, abbés, etc., to say nothing of animals. To form the headgear of his men and women, such as the grotesque bonnets of Norman bonnes, the képis of the little piou-pious, and the mortar-boards of the English scholastics, he has recourse to small pieces of cardboard cut to resemble the respective cranial coverings. Trewey is not content with the 'cold profiles,' as he calls them, of living creatures, but endows his shadows with animation. His old peasants, for example, smoke, imbibe liquor from large jugs, inhale snuff, roll their eyes, open their mouths, gesticulate; his animals are exceedingly mobile. Besides this, he makes his characters enact charming little pantomimic scenes. One he calls the 'serenade.' A piece of cardboard fashioned to represent the side of a house, constitutes the scenery. A gendarme (supposed to be violently in love with the servant girl) knocks at the door of the mansion, whereupon his fair inamorata appears at the upstairs window. After an exchange of compliments, she withdraws from the window and reappears at the door. She gives to her lover a drink from a suspicious bottle, and he, after wiping his beard, kisses her and retires. Then comes the strolling musician, playing a lugubrious melody on the clarinet. The owner of the house rushes to the bedroom window and motions the player away, but the musician derisively strikes up a lively tune. The irate proprietor now makes his appearance armed with a long broom, with which he thrashes the clarinettist. The musician still persisting, paterfamilias next produces the water-jug, and from the upstairs window pours the contents upon the head of the luckless serenade, who quickly makes his exit.

"The little accessories used in this act, such as the helmet for the policeman, the broom, bottle, etc., are cut from pasteboard and, where necessary, attached to the fingers of the performer by means of india-rubber rings. The water-jug, however, is an actual little vessel, which is filled with sand. When this is poured out, it simulates a flow of water in the most natural manner.

"The pulpit orator' is a clever silhouette. About the left arm of the performer is tied a small box, which represents the pulpit; the bent fingers make a canopy. Between the fingers of the right
TREWEYISM.

TREWEY'S SHADOW SILHOUETTES.
hand is held a bit of pasteboard, cut in the shape of a mortar-board cap. The paraphernalia is very simple. You see the learned divine ascend the pulpit, bend forward in prayer, then begin to exhort an imaginary congregation. He thumps the pulpit-rail vehemently, twists himself into all sorts of grotesque positions, and wipes his perspiring brow. After having blessed the people, he descends from his elevated perch."

I learned from him many interesting things about shadow-
graphy and sleight-of-hand generally. To excell in the art of ombromanie requires long practice. The fingers have to be exercised continuously in certain peculiar movements, such as are depicted in the accompanying illustration. Dexterity is largely dependent upon the formation of the hand, one of particular characteristics of skilfulness being "the faculty of reversing the metacarpal phalanges of the fingers, so that when the hand is extended it is convex." Trewey possesses this faculty. Another peculiarity of his hands is the formation of the fingers; they differ very much in length. The middle finger exceeds the ring-finger by nearly an inch.

III.

I met Trewey some weeks later in London at the Empire Theatre, and we struck up a great friendship which has lasted to this day. The story of his life is full of interest, and is a typical example of the folly of setting any one to a vocation for which he has no particular taste. Intended at first for the priesthood by his parents and subsequently for a mechanical trade, Trewey followed his own inclinations—conjuring and juggling. I will quote again from my paper in the *Cosmopolitan*:

"Like most artists who have risen to eminence on the French stage, Trewey has known hardships and bitter poverty. His youth was a struggle against adverse conditions. But he had in him, in its truest sense, the soul of old Gaul—that joyous insouciance, that sardonic humor, which laughs at fortune and snaps its finger at the world. Natural vivacity will often keep a Frenchman alive, though his body is clothed in rags and his stomach is empty. Trewey was born at Angoulême, France, during the Revolution of 1848. His father was an engineer in a paper-mill. Trewey père was ambitious for his son to enter the Church, so he sent him to the Seminary of the Holy Trinity at Marseilles to study for the priesthood. But fate had willed otherwise. When quite a young boy, Trewey had been taken to see a circus at Marseilles. Among the mountebanks was a conjuror, who gave a very interesting exhibition. The feats of magic of this strolling Merlin so fascinated the little Trewey that he forthwith secretly vowed to become a professional prestidigitator, as soon as he grew up. The studies pursued at the Jesuit college did not cure the boy of his love for the stage. He divided his time between Latin verbs and juggling, mathematics and the art of palmistry. Soon he was able to give little exhibitions, private, of course, for the amusement of his com-
rades. The good fathers must have thought him a very eccentric youth, for he was continually trying to balance his slate on the tip of his nose. Many a well-deserved cat-o' nine-tails he got for his improvised feats of equilibration. Lying awake at night in the silent dormitory, he invented tricks, then fell asleep to dream of the wild delights of the mountebank's life—wandering like a gipsy over the country in a caravan, and performing at the little French villages and towns before crowds of rustics. He pictured himself dressed in gorgeous raiment, exhibiting magic tricks for the amusement of gaping yokels—pulling rabbits from hats, turning omelets into doves and producing bowls of gold-fish from shawls. The boom, boom, of the bass drum, calling the spectators together, resounded in his ears. The boy had in him the spirit of adventure; the blood of some old strolling player of an ancestor ran in his veins. He longed to escape from under the watchful domination of the 'black-robes,' as he designated the good priests of the seminary. Three years passed. One day during the Christmas holidays, Trewey refused to return to his studies, so his father placed him in the engine-room of the paper-mill to learn machinery. Cog-wheels and oil-cans possessed no more fascination for him than Latin and Greek. One fine summer day he ran away from home in company with an acrobat.

"Trewey at this period of his career was not over fifteen years of age, and had but little experience of men and manners. The quiet cloisters of a Jesuit seminary are not conducive to knowledge of the world. Life now became hard for Trewey and his companion, the youthful tumbler. They exhibited in market-places, cafés, and in inn yards. The life they led was next door to starvation. Soon Trewey left the acrobat and obtained an engagement at one of the small music-halls of Marseilles. The munificent sum of six francs per week (one dollar and twenty cents) was the salary he received for his services. In addition to his juggling exhibition, given several times a day, he was obliged to appear in a pantomime performance at night. In this troupe was the famous Plessis, who eventually became one of the foremost comedians of France, rivaling even the great Coquelin.

"In those days it was the custom for people to throw money on the stage to favorite performers. Applauding with the hands being monopolized by a paid claque, there was no better way for enthusiastic spectators, in French places of amusement, to show their appreciation of the talents of an artist, than by showering upon him gold, silver, or copper coins. The vaudeville artists did not
consider it beneath their dignity to stoop and gather up these sub-
stantial evidences of public favor.

"Said Trewey to me: 'I saved these coins until I was able to 
purchase two fine costumes. Then I secured an engagement at the 
Alcazar at Marseilles.'

"Other engagements followed this, and Trewey became the 
most popular performer in the south of France. The desire for a 
roving life led him to become the proprietor of a traveling panto-
mime and vaudeville company. His versatility was shown here. 
He juggled, conjured, played Pierrot in the pantomime, danced in 
the clodoche, and managed the finances of the troupe. After two 
years of this life, he got an engagement at Bordeaux. It was here 
that he invented his ombromanics, and straightway became famous. 
From Bordeaux he migrated to Paris. His success was instant-
aneous."

The journalists rallied to his aid. He became the lion of the 
hour. *L'Illustration* named his art Treweyism. His reputation was 
established.

IV.

Trewey is a mimic *par excellence*. He is past master in the art 
of pantomime and facial expression. One of his particular acts 
which has given rise to numerous imitations is entitled "Tabarin, 
or Twenty-five Heads Under One Chapeau." Thanks to a piece 
of black felt cloth, circular in shape, with a hole cut in the center, 
Trewey is able to manufacture in a few minutes all the varieties 
of head gear required for the Tabarin. For example: Napoleon— 
A couple of twists of the cloth, and lo! you have a representation of 
le chapeau de Marengo, the little cocked hat which Napoleon made 
famous, and about which so many legends cluster. With this hastily 
 improvised hat on his head, Trewey assumes the Napoleonic atti-
tude—one hand thrust into his vest, the other behind his back. His 
physiognomy is that of the great Emperor, as depicted by the 
painters of the Imperial régime. The likeness is perfect. And so 
with fat French priests, soldiers, bonnes, landladies, artists, dip-
lomats, etc. It is a portrait gallery of French types; Gavarni lives 
for us again. And just here let me digress a moment to explain the 
origin of the curious word *Tabarin*, which, as all lovers of French 
comedy know, has passed into the repertory of the national theatre. 
Some two hundred and fifty years ago that bridge of memories, 
the old Pont Neuf of Paris, was the rendezvous of quacksalvers 
and mountebanks. Booths for the sale of various articles lined
the sides of the bridge. People flocked there to see the sights, to laugh, chat, make love, and enjoy life as only Parisians can. Students and grisettes from the Quartier Latin elbowed ladies and gentlemen of fashion from the Faubourg St. Germain. Bourgeois families came to study the flippanter manners of their superiors. Poodle-clippers plied their trade; jugglers amused the quid nuncs with feats of dexterity; traveling dentists pulled teeth and sold balsams; clowns tumbled; and last, but not least, pickpockets lifted purses and silk mouchoirs with impunity. One of the principal venders of quack nostrums of the Pont Neuf was Montdor. He was aided by a buffoon named Tabarin who made facetious replies to questions asked by his master, accompanied with laughable grimaces and grotesque gestures. The modern ringmaster and clown of the circus have similar scenes together, minus the selling of medicines. Tabarin was celebrated for his wit. Some of his bon mots have descended to our time. He performed the feat of making some ten different hats out of the brim of a felt hat, giving appropriate facial portraits beneath each, and using wigs and beards to enhance the effect. Such, in brief, is the story of the famous Merry Andrew whose name has become a by-word in France for buffoonery and broad humor. The history of such men would make interesting reading for the student of sociology. But Dame Clio has eyes only for tremendous battles, diplomatic intrigues, the doings of royalty and great folk. The little world of every day life, that busy ant hill where the human comedy is so ardently played, is beneath her notice. The life and adventures of quacksalvers, minor poets, wandering jugglers, faugh!—that is asking too much of the Muse of History. Says Guizot: "History has no room for all those who throng about her gates without succeeding in getting in and leaving traces of their stay."

But occasionally a man or woman rises from the dregs of the people and compels recognition; and sad to relate, nine times out of ten, through the commission of crimes. Have we not Cagliostro and Madame de la Motte, thorough paced scoundrels and charlatans, but nevertheless very delightful folk, who have added a tinge of romance to history? I for one confess a weakness for the tittle-tattle of court gossip and backstairs diplomacy. Behind the scenes with Louis XV and XVI, Frederick the Great and Catherine II is far more entertaining than the battles of the period. Casanova gives one a better picture of eighteenth century morals and manners than any of the great historians of the time. History is the dry
THE TABARIN.
bones of an epoch; the memoir writers are the Ezekiels who behold
the bones clothed with flesh and thrilling with life-blood.

Wandering across the old Pont Neuf, gazing over the parapet
at the sunshine rippling in the flowing waters of the Seine, all
these thoughts came to my mind. Once again, as in the days of
long ago, I saw in my imagination, the bridge crowded with people.
There came to me the faint rustling of silk skirts, the clatter of
high-heeled shoes upon the paving stones. Boom! boom! goes the
drum. I hear the strident voice of Montdor shouting out his wares,
and the unctuous notes of the comical Tabarin uttering a bon mot.

Trewey is the inventor of many clever card sleights and passes;
for example, a color change executed by taking cards from the back
of the pack with the fork of the thumb and forefinger and placing
them on the front. The origin of this clever sleight is not generally
known. I have seen him throw cards from the stage of the Al-
hambra Theatre, London, to the topmost gallery. This is a tre-
mendous feat, as the Alhambra is one of the largest theatres in the
world. He possesses the peculiar talent of writing in reverse, necessi-
tating the use of a mirror in order to read it. The artistic sentiment
was born in him. It seems to be a family characteristic. Rosa
Bordas, the celebrated French chanteuse patriotique, is his cousi-
german. A writer in L'Echo des Jeunes thus apostrophises him
in verse:

"Dans le monde artistique ou son étoile brille,
Trewey ne peut que ressortir,
Vraiment, cela tient le fanille,
Vu que bon sang ne peut mentir."

The most exclusive and aristocratic salons of Paris and Vienna
have engaged his services for private séances. In Spain, Belgium,
Austria, Russia, and England he was the sensation of the day. At
the present time he is living in retirement at Asnières, near Paris,
where he has purchased a charming home known as the Villa Tra-
versière au clair de la lune. During the Exposition of 1900 he was
the manager of the Theatre Phono-Cinéma. At his villa, he spends
his time inventing and improving devices to be used in moving-
picture apparatus; corresponding with his friends; meditating upon
the works of his favorite authors, Confucius and Epictetus; and
writing songs, farces, and dramatic articles. In the year 1903 he
was made an Officier de l'Academie by the French Government. He
married Miss Ixa of Trocadero fame.

Trewey relates many interesting anecdotes of contemporary
French magicians whom he has met on his travels. He is literally a man without envy. His admiration for Buatier de Kolta was unbounded. They were close friends.

MONS. TREWEY.
JUGGLER, SHADOWOGRAPHIST, AND—WELL, EVERYTHING.

FROM "THE ENTR'ACTE," LONDON, MAY 7, 1887.

He once toured the Continent with the Hungarian conjurer Velle, who was the first to give exhibitions within a marked circle
where the audience could gather on all sides. Velle impersonated Mephisto to perfection. Trewey and August Lassaigne were once partners. Lassaigne was born in Toulouse, in 1819. Besides being a magician he was an aeronaut, having made 347 ascensions. He died in Montpellier in the year 1887.

When Trewey first toured the United States, under the management of Alexander Herrmann, he was very much annoyed by impostors, who advertised themselves as Drewey, but their performances were only weak imitations of the original—the merest shadows of a shade. In the wake of the whale follow little fishes—"pikers"—who grab at the crumbs dropped by the monarch of the sea, being too lazy or indifferent to find hunting seas of their own.

"Many amateurs are more skilful than professionals," said Trewey to me. "I have in mind my friend Alexander Osso, who was born in Paris in the year 1828. While a student he once happened to be present at a soirée where M. Comte was giving an exhibition. He was so fascinated that he afterwards took lessons in legerdemain from the professor. When he finished his schooling, he entered the service of the Count de Nigra, then Ambassador to Italy, and remained with him for forty years, visiting London, St. Petersburg, Vienna, and other great capitals. Osso often entertained the Count and his friends with conjuring séances. In this way he amused society at nearly all the Courts of Europe, besides giving many entertainments for the benefit of the poor. In spite of his advanced age he still keeps in practice as a conjurer, at his home in Paris, where he retired from an active life in 1903.

"Then we have M. Pitau, a wine merchant, who studied legerdemain to amuse his friends and increase his custom. He was a capital guest at the hotel table. People loved to be seated near him, for he was not only skilful at hanky panky with glasses, plates, napkins, knives, corks, coins, etc., but he was a brilliant raconteur and a mimic. His most amusing trick was the following: He would place his hat over his plate which held perhaps a chop and potatoes. Passing his hand under the hat he would bring forth several five franc pieces. Then he would pass it a second time beneath the chapeau and bring out five or six gold one-hundred franc pieces. Now he would exclaim: 'Ladies and gentlemen, I will give what is left on the plate for ten centimes.' Lifting the hat, a child's sock or an old shoe would be seen, the chop and potatoes having vanished. This feat was always greeted with shouts of laughter. Pitau often gave entire performances for charitable purposes."

Behind the scenes in an Egyptian temple would doubtless have
revealed many curious secrets of natural magic to the uninitiated. Like all so-called sorcerers, the priests evidently compiled works on the subject of their art for the benefit of their successors. But none of these have come down to us. Hermes Trismegistus is said to have written two myriads of books on the occult sciences. He was the Alexander Dumas of the Egyptian pantheon.

Trewey, an apt descendant of the ancient magi of the land of Mizraim, has compiled a ponderous folio of illusions, and feats of juggling and legerdemain; a great manuscript volume of mysteries, the text of which is illustrated by pen-and-ink sketches by himself. Over two thousand magical experiments are described and explained in this tome of thaumaturgy, gathered from all sources, many of them being his own inventions, perhaps the majority of them. I know that this volume exists, for I have seen it and glanced over it. I have urged Trewey to publish the work. Perhaps he will some day, now that he has the leisure for literary labors.