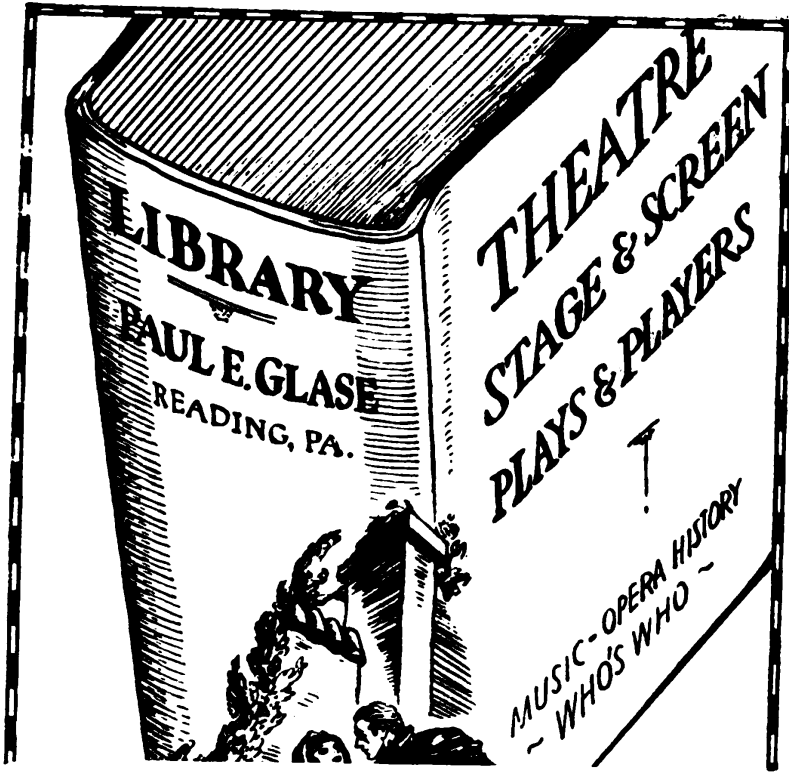




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PLAYERS AND PLAYS OF THE LAST  
QUARTER CENTURY

VOLUME I.

THE THEATRE OF YESTERDAY

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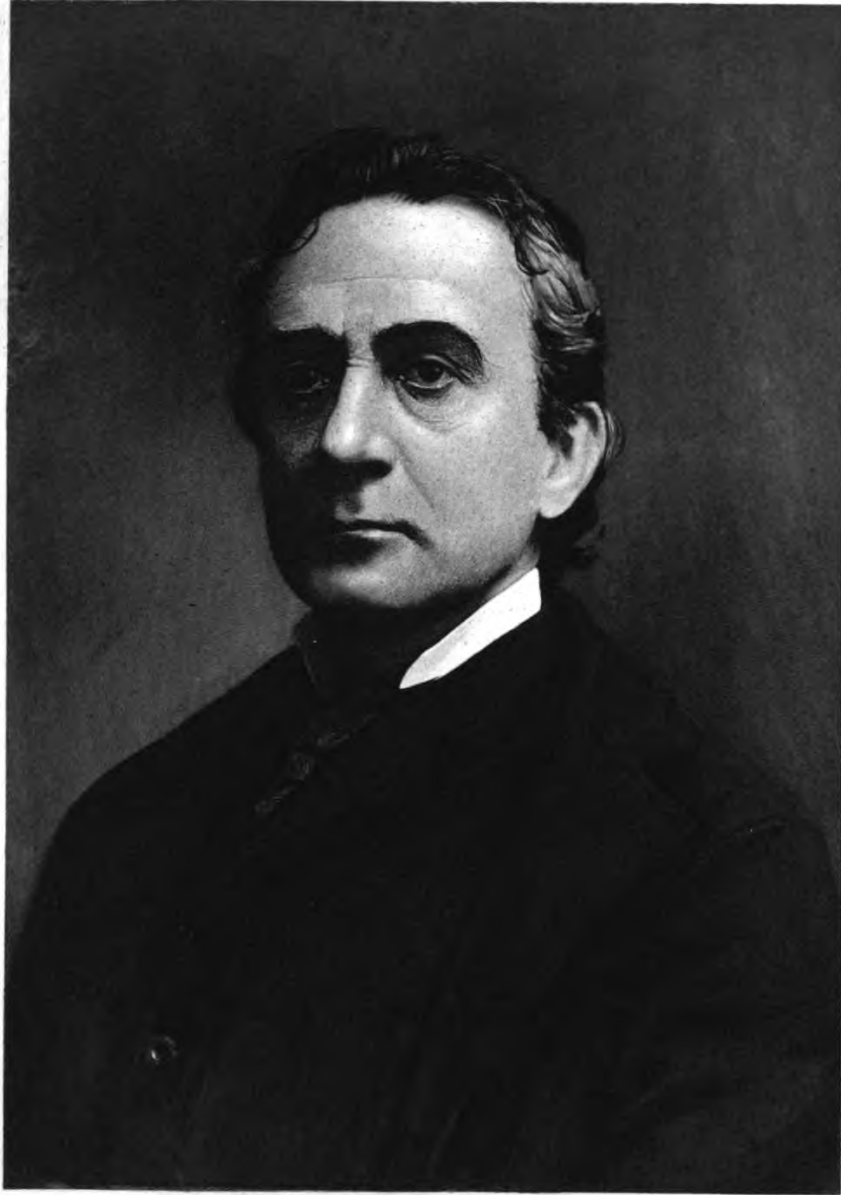


**L. C. PAGE & COMPANY**

**53 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.**

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*Fitz in Booth*

Photography from an old portrait in the Boston Theatre





*Players and Plays*  
\* of the \*  
*Last Quarter Century*

An Historical Summary of Causes and a Critical  
Review of Conditions as Existing in the American  
Theatre at the Close of the Nineteenth Century

By Lewis C. Strang

Volume I.  
THE THEATRE OF YESTERDAY

*Illustrated*



*Boston*  
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## PREFACE

T first thought it may seem inconsistent to begin the tale of the theatre of the last quarter of the nineteenth century with an account of the life and work of Thomas Betterton, the first of the great actors and the especial pride of the theatre of the seventeenth century. When the writer first considered the present work, it was his purpose to stick closely to his text; but as his subject expanded and his own view broadened, he found that, if he were to present any conclusions that were really worth while, he would have to go back to the beginning for the premises from which to make his deductions.

The theatre has developed with remarkable consistency. Certain conditions in the thought life of the people have invariably resulted in dramatic buoyancy; opposite conditions have brought dramatic depression. Thus the first half of the eighteenth century was a period of decided decline in the English drama, while

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the latter part of that century witnessed a notable revival, especially in the field of comedy. This revival extended well into the nineteenth century. It was followed by the practical obliteration of English dramatic literature, and a vast influx of plays from foreign sources. These importations began perceptibly to fall off during the eighth decade of the nineteenth century. At that time the English theatre was in a state of stagnation, but this was relieved by the first outcroppings of a new English drama, which at the end of the century showed some signs of definiteness and encouraging promise for the future.

Such is the bare outline of the work that the writer has endeavoured to accomplish in the two volumes on "Players and Plays of the Last Quarter Century," the first volume of which he has called "The Theatre of Yesterday," and the second, "The Theatre of To-Day." He desires to express his gratitude to Mr. Lawrence McCarty, manager of the Boston Theatre, for his kindness in permitting the reproduction of many of the rare portraits hung in the lobbies of that playhouse.

LEWIS C. STRANG.

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# PLAYERS AND PLAYS OF THE LAST QUARTER CENTURY

VOLUME I.

## THE THEATRE OF YESTERDAY



### CHAPTER I.

#### THE THEATRE THEN AND NOW

**S**INCE the day after its beginning, the theatre and its actors have been praised for their past, condemned for their present, and commiserated for their future. In Garrick's day it was vehemently asserted that there never was such an actor as Betterton. Macready in his turn was belittled by the fame of Garrick, and Edwin Booth was declared a flickering candle compared with the gorgeous sunburst of Forrest's glory. Now Booth himself, demigod en-

throned, is the idolised of the hero worshippers. Beating hands on breasts, they cry in melancholy strain, "Alas! Alas! When shall we look upon his like again?"

Of course, there is a leavening element of truth that puts enough vitality into this peculiar historical generalisation to keep it alive. Viewed with restricted eyes, that encompass only the contemporaneous, the theatre of the present moment may be justly declared to furnish a field for artistic endeavour, ephemeral, unpromising, and unsatisfactory. Such ideals as the theatre of to-day has are almost without exception sordid and commonplace. Pecuniary profit is universally regarded as a sufficient excuse for any abuse, while a sense of responsibility to the community on the part of the theatre is shockingly absent.

After all the blinding glare of the tinsel and the deafening blare of the trumpets, the real work actually accomplished by the theatre is pitifully, even ludicrously, small. The output of plays, even for a single season, is literally enormous. Yet the permanent dramatic literature of four centuries' accumulation is microscopically minute. Coupled with the

fleeting shadow of the acted play, is the little tragedy of the player himself, who with self-satisfaction and importance flutters in the dazzling brilliancy of the lime-light during his butterfly day and then suddenly and completely disappears, from memory as well as from sight. For one or two, men of genius or men strangely chosen by an eccentric fortune, there is now and then quick admission into the exclusive band of the immortals. For all the others, there is blank oblivion; for the actor leaves behind him neither book nor monument to carry his name and fame to posterity. The contrast between the up of to-day and the down of to-morrow is indeed startling. Small wonder that the diligent pursuer of a moral, with which to point a tale, has ever trod close upon the heels of unhappy Thespis.

One cannot be just to the theatre, however, unless he take largely into account the truism that the theatre is a mirror, accurately reflecting the popular thought. It follows that, in order clearly to see this reflected image, one must view it from the proper perspective. To comprehend the modern theatre, to perceive why it is as it is, and to deduce something of

what it is likely to be to-morrow, the theatre of to-day must be studied in the light of the theatre of yesterday. Inasmuch as the dominant thought, which governs and moulds a people, also governs absolutely and moulds precisely its theatre, it is necessary to understand this thought — this motive — before one can grasp intelligently the theatrical conditions that the thought and the motive bring into existence.

Let me give an exceedingly commonplace example. In the year 1898, the United States was at war. What was the quick result? A tremendous blaze of patriotism in the theatres, particularly in the variety houses and in the popular priced resorts patronised by the "plain people." Sensational melodramas abounded, portraying the destruction of the *Maine*, and the exploits of Dewey at Manila; and no soubrette ventured to make a public appearance without singing about the Stars and Stripes forever and the man behind the guns. Now, all this blatant buncombe became after a time very much of a bore to such as had to endure it week after week. They were sincerely thankful when peace was declared.

However, because we were in the midst of it, and therefore without a perspective, we were in no position whatever to estimate the real sociological importance of this reflection in the theatre of the patriotic debauch of the nation. A dozen decades from now, some delver into the historic may happen upon those fearsome melodramas. Therein he will find enshrined the spirit of a people, and forthwith he will formulate wonderful theories regarding the extraordinary thirst for gore that seized the citizens of the United States at the close of the nineteenth century.

Both the strength and the weakness of the art dramatic lie in this circumstance, that it feels so keenly every digression and every tendency of popular thought. Considered merely from day to day, or even from season to season, the theatre is as variable as a weather-vane, twisting and turning nervously with the constantly shifting wind. Regarded collectively by periods, however, the theatre does reveal a principle, in the light of which its momentary whims and vagrancies shape themselves into classified formations. The theatre then becomes a sociological document

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of inestimable value, a document on which is indelibly inscribed the ruling thought of a decade, a generation, or a century.

Such a period was the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a period which witnessed a decided growth in the dignity and the stability, and somewhat in the art, of the acted drama; and during this period could be traced humble beginnings, which were destined, it would seem, sometime to define with fair accuracy the exact scope and the precise place of the theatre in the world of art. The unqualified and absolute supremacy of the tragedy of materialism as the noblest dramatic form was being successfully disputed, while the play with only classic formality to recommend it had already been dethroned. The result, considered broadly, was really marvellous. Even in a few years there was under the process of development a drama, many in its shortcomings, it is true, but nevertheless distinctly vital in its sincerity and in its honest demand for truth, and thoroughly encouraging in its flexibility, its inherent strength, and its possibilities still to be unfolded. Not since the time of the mighty Elizabethans, whose



broad humanity was lost in the formalism of the Restoration, did the outlook appear more encouraging. By substituting real emotion for form, and common humanity for canons of art, the modern drama was preparing to take a decided step forward.

It may be said without exaggeration that, from the time of Thomas Betterton to the day when Tom Robertson, humble agent working with an unformed and immature ideal of truth, turned the theatrical world topsy-turvy by the production of an almost inanely simple comedy called "Society," the formal tragedy of classic conformation ruled the English-speaking stage with crushing despotism. The lasting opposition to this restricted, though intensely serious and literary, drama was the genius of Shakespeare; and this was momentarily obliterated, during the period of the Restoration, by the playwrights who insisted on making over Shakespeare according to their ideas of what his plays should be. So complete was the tragic thralldom that from Betterton to Edwin Forrest scarcely a serious play was written, which would to-day obtain production on its merits. The formalism of Thomas Ot-

way, Nicholas Rowe, and John Dryden controlled English tragedy for two centuries, and dramatic authors, who aspired to the dignity of the literary pose, faithfully walked in the footsteps of the lawmakers, exaggerating their faults and minimising their virtues.

Comedy fared better, for it early adopted the elastic prose form, and, being left to its own happy purposes without artificial rule or academic discipline, it remained fairly faithful to its proper function of reflecting life and portraying understandable men and women. Even when its merit was obscured by its obscenity, it was virile and true to life conditions as it saw them. Its crowning glory was that it literally became the salvation of the English-speaking stage. Still, the academic critic has never, even to this day, taken much account either of comedy writers or of comedy players. That they delighted the common herd, he willingly and patronisingly admitted, but for this very reason he deemed them hardly worthy of his serious consideration. Under these conditions, the early players of comedy, whose genius lifted them into decided prominence, were not many. Oddly enough, too, most of

them were women. Eleanor (Nell) Gwynne (1642-1691), Mrs. Anne Bracegirdle (1663-1748), Colley Cibber (1671-1757), Thomas Doggett, who died in 1721, Mrs. Anne Oldfield (1685-1730), Kitty Clive (1711-1785), and Margaret (Peg) Woffington (1718-1769) were some of those especially esteemed in comedy, though several of them also made reputations in tragedy.

Arrayed against these comedians are the dozen and a half tragedians, who by common agreement are listed as the most brilliant lights that have adorned the English-speaking stage. Their names are almost household words: Thomas Betterton, Elizabeth Barry, James Quin, Charles Macklin, David Garrick, Mrs. Cibber, Spranger Barry, Mrs. Sarah Siddons, John Philip Kemble, George Frederick Cooke, Charles Kemble, Edmund Kean, William Charles Macready, Lucius Junius Brutus Booth, Edwin Forrest, Charlotte Cushman, down to and including our own Edwin Booth, the last and the greatest of them all. Each one of these made his triumphs in the sombre and formal drama of death, in the tragedy, too, of deliberate and blood-curdling horror,

not in the tragedy of softened sorrow and suggested repentance. That there are degrees to this statement is true, and therefore a somewhat detailed examination of the work of these players, and such comparisons of their methods as are possible from the variable testimonies of those who saw them act, will bring to light several interesting facts.

It will be noted that, as years went by, the tragedy standard was gradually shifted, until it became firmly fixed on Shakespeare. It will be seen, too, that the tendency, from the beginning, was toward natural acting, although there were frequent lapses, it must be confessed, into the meaningless, the stilted, and the rotund. Betterton, very likely, used the artificial and oratorical style entirely, not impersonating a character at all, as we understand impersonating to-day. Macklin, however, astounded his contemporaries by his naturalness. Garrick, during his first London season, was especially marked because he spoke like a human being and not like an actor. It will be noted also that the tendency of tragic acting toward idealisation has been practically constant. This tendency finally achieved its cul-

mination in Edwin Booth, who was both poet and player. Although the dramas, in which Edwin Booth acted, ended in death, Booth himself avoided — and particularly was this tendency prominent toward the end of his career — laying any especial emphasis on mere bloodshed. In Shakespeare he thrust into the background the melodramatic, — the quality that had, more than likely, made Shakespeare's plays "go" with the pit in the days of the old Globe Theatre, and the quality, moreover, that was brought to the fore by every version of the Shakespearian drama made by the minor playwrights of the Restoration. Ceasing to lay stress on theatricalism, Booth strove the more to bring out the poetic beauty of the dramatist's imagery and the matchless character development that has given Shakespeare his immortality.

In the days of the Restoration, the line between tragedy and comedy was sharply drawn, the distinction between the two dramatic forms having first been borrowed from the French and then made even more decisive by the borrowers. Among the French dramatists the same metrical form was used for both tragedy

and high class comedy, but with the English, tragedy alone was considered worthy of verse, the comic writers, with a few experimental exceptions, using prose exclusively. After the severely classic period of the Restoration, the specialised forms of tragedy and comedy began gradually to disappear, until at length the dramatic form of both tragedy and comedy became identical, even as they were in the noblest of the Shakespearian drama; and with the passing of the purely formal in poetry came the complete blotting out of the tragedy of outrageous brutality. Still, it should be understood that tragedy is absolutely dependent on poetry for life; but it should also be noted that poetry is not merely the arrangement of words in metrical form, nor the sonorous collocation of contrasting phrases. Poetry is crystallised and concentrated emotion; and genuine poetry can never be interpreted by acting that emphasises the crass, the crude, and the cruel.

When, at the auspicious moment, the future shall develop a tragedy of its own, that moment will see the quick revival of the poetic drama. This tragedy of the future will breathe sweetness, tenderness, loveliness, and purity. In-

stead of shocking by its horror, it will inspire by its inherent optimism. It will beget love, strength, and fidelity. It will be a tragedy pointing straight to heaven, voicing a stirring promise of final victory, not a tragedy of eternal defeat. The acting of this lofty tragedy will bring keener appreciation and finer art to the stage. The blunt depicter of animal rage and brute passion will be replaced by the poetic actor, who will idealise and elevate, the actor of whom Edwin Booth was the legitimate forerunner.

To account for the downfall of the classic tragedy one must hark back to the original proposition that the theatre mirrors the popular thought. What drove the old tragedy from the boards was not the cause most commonly attributed, the lack of actors to interpret that tragedy. Had there continued the slightest demand for the old tragic drama, there would have been actors to interpret it. Stock companies or no stock companies, traditions or no traditions, these tragic actors would have been trained somewhere and somehow. The demand would have been met as it always has been met and always will be met. What sent

tragedy into retirement was the total change in the thought of the people. For one thing, the average one of the people became refined beyond the point where universal blood-letting was a source of pleasure. The absolutely brutal in the drama was forsaken at the same time that public sentiment began to express itself in laws abolishing bear-baiting and dog-fighting, the cockpit and the man fight.

Deeper, far deeper, in its effect, however, was the steady uprising of the unquenchable spirit of modern optimism. Classic tragedy was inherently the drama of defeat. It dealt with a fate that was regarded as both rigorous and unconquerable. It preached insistently on the theme of man impotent. Its inevitable offspring were hopelessness, despair, dissolution, annihilation. Tragedy, in short, spoke loudly of the burden of materiality. It declared man overweighted by it, and it continually proclaimed man's inevitable destruction. Because the classic tragedy was so linked with pessimism and defeat, it was utterly rejected by the modern theatre, which was reflecting the modern thought of serene hope and complete faith in man's ultimate perfection. The



modern theatre mirrors the thought of a people that is seeing materiality gradually subdued, that has seen space mocked at and the finger of time turned against itself. With each new day telling the story of fresh victories in the realm of the one-time impossible, there is no patience with the wailings of the dark tragedy of defeat.

In this summing up of past, present, and future, no account has been taken of the tragic works of Henrik Ibsen and of his outcroppings, Herman Sudermann, Gerhardt Hauptmann, and Arthur Wing Pinero. Ibsen's pessimistic plays primarily reflect the sociological conditions in a single country. His is the drama of the midnight sun. Ibsen's lasting influence has been exerted, not on the subject-matter of the drama, but on the technique of play-writing. I question if Ibsen's plays are acted to any great extent, if at all, in the future, though I am convinced that Ibsen himself will always hold an honourable and prominent place in the history of the world's dramatic literature, on account of the marvelous contributions that he has made to the science of dramatic construction. Ibsen

stands as the apostle of sincerity, of simplicity, of directness, and of the accumulative force of unbiased logic.

The paramount influence on the theatre of the world has been Shakespeare. The master's touch has vitalised in the past the dramatic literature of both France and Germany, while the extraordinary and far-reaching effect of his genius on the English-speaking stage becomes apparent beyond the possibility of an argument after even a superficial study of theatrical history. In his rude theatre, and in the rude times when Elizabeth was Queen of England, Shakespeare fixed the standard for play-writing and play-acting, the standard by which the work of the dramatists and actors of the past and of the present is measured. Though a player win praise unbounded from his own generation for his manifold excellencies in the drama of his day, he has no assurance whatsoever that his fame is permanently established until he has attained an acknowledged position as an exponent of Shakespearian character. This may not be justice, but it is fact. It will be found, therefore, that such judgment as has been passed on the old-time

actors, who appear in these records, is based almost entirely on the quality of their work in the Shakespearian drama. The writer did not deliberately choose this course, but it was forced upon him by the positiveness and the preponderance of the evidence which declares Shakespeare to be the single definite factor in the English-speaking theatre.

## CHAPTER II.

### FROM BETTERTON TO MACREADY

**S**TUDENTS of acting have divided players of the serious drama into two classes or schools, — the classic and the romantic. Into the first school they have gathered actors, like Betterton, John Philip Kemble, and Mrs. Siddons, whose ideal of dramatic art has been the concentration of passion and emotion into a statuesque conception to be presented with the accuracy and inflexibility of a formula. The living fire of inspiration was circumscribed by the cold statement of fact. Grace of gesture, statuesqueness of pose, and perfection in oratory became of so great importance, that in the end they confined truth in a strait-jacket of meaningless artificialities and traditions. Excellent as graceful gesture, statuesque pose, and cultivated oratory are in themselves, if pursued too zealously they unquestionably lead to sense-

less bigotry and unprogressive pedantry. The protest against dwarfing classicism was made in the first place by such actors as Garrick, and even more pronouncedly by Edmund Kean and the elder Booth, actors to whom burning passion was everything and the form of expression comparatively nothing. They were natural actors, inspired players. Emotion came to them as a spontaneous revelation; in short, they read their characters with an insight that convinced absolutely, although its power baffled the understanding and defied analytical statement.

Before proceeding further, however, it will be well to define exactly what is meant by inspiration. It must not be imagined that any player, however "inspired" he may be, is so foolish as simply to memorise his part and then to go on the stage, trusting to luck and his own quick wit for the satisfactory interpretation of his character. Such a course would be wholly absurd, and the inevitable and merited result would be disaster. Every actor worthy of his calling, whether he be classic or romantic, works up his characters to the fullest extent before he puts them to the final test of

public presentation. Spontaneity is the dearly bought product of serious thought and faithful practice. But different actors accomplish this working up process in different ways, and the actor's preliminary attitude toward his work largely determines the school to which he belongs. The classic actor approaches his character externally and intellectually. He studies his situations for their deepest significance and his lines for their nicest shades of meaning. He also reads and interprets his part externally and intellectually, and as a result his acting is finished, perfect in its mental appeal, clean-cut in every sense. The one thing it lacks is vitality. The romantic actor, on the contrary, looks away from form to the actual human being, whom the dramatist has tried to picture. He interprets this character through his own emotional apprehension. He imagines how he would feel if he himself were the character he is acting, and this feeling he strives to reproduce every time he portrays the part. In an extreme case, therefore, the romantic actor's work is ragged and unformed, when compared with the work of the classic actor; but the romantic actor atones for his lack of

polish by the intensity and the reality of his appeal to the emotions and the sentiments. It is in clearness of conception that the romantic actor is usually deficient.

Of course, in the practical application of these schools of acting to the needs of the stage and of the individual player, they shade off one into the other until in many cases the line of demarcation is scarcely definable. The ideal school of acting would be the perfect combination of the two, and, indeed, this combination has been termed by some, among them Lawrence Barrett, who was both an actor and a student and therefore well qualified to bear witness, a third school of acting. However, that subdivision seems to add unnecessary and useless complications. Still, it is this so-called third school of acting that the modern theatre is trying its best to develop, and which it will probably succeed in developing when the present excess of "natural" acting shall have become toned with the right infusion of the imaginative and the idealistic, and when, moreover, the modern actor comes to comprehend something of the value of the voice as a means of expression.

## THOMAS BETTERTON

In tracing the course of the tragic drama and its interpreters, one must start with Thomas Betterton, who was born either in 1634 or 1635, and who died in 1710. As a member of Mr. Rhodes's company he made his first appearance on the stage at the Cockpit in Drury Lane about 1659. His rise was rapid. He became a favourite with the king, Charles II., and was sent to France to study the theatre. According to Cibber, it was after Betterton's return from Paris that shifting scenes replaced tapestry in the English theatres. Betterton made his last appearance on the stage in the spring of 1710 as Melantius in Beaumont and Fletcher's "The Maid's Tragedy." The chief heralds of Betterton's fame were the confidential Samuel Pepys, who declared, "I only know that Mr. Betterton is the best actor in the world;" Alexander Pope, who was the intimate of Betterton's declining years; Joseph Addison, who wrote, "I have hardly a notion that any performer of antiquity could surpass the action of Mr. Betterton in any of the occasions in which he has appeared



on the stage ;” and the foppish Colley Cibber, actor, playwright, and poet laureate, who testified, “So far was he from being ever overtaken that, for many years after his decease, I seldom saw any of his parts in Shakespeare supplied by others but it drew from me the lamentations of Ophelia upon Hamlet’s being unlike what she had seen him :

“ ‘ Ah ! woe is me !

T’ have seen what I have seen, see what I see ! ’ ”

In as much as Cibber was also familiar with Garrick’s acting, it is well to state that there was reason for his enthusiastic admiration of Betterton. Colley Cibber first went on the stage as a “volunteer,” or supernumerary, without pay, and while in that capacity he chanced to offend Betterton in some manner. Betterton demanded the name of the young man and the amount of his salary, and, learning that Cibber was working for nothing, ordered : “Put him down ten shillings a week, and forfeit him five.” Placing his name on the salary list made Cibber an enrolled member of the company, and started him fairly on his career. Naturally he was grateful to Mr. Betterton.

In connection with the matter of salary, it is interesting to know that the highest amount paid Betterton himself was five pounds a week, which included one pound as a pension to his wife after she ceased acting in 1694. Hamlet and Othello were accounted Betterton's two best parts, and a good word is also spoken for his Falstaff. Betterton is credited with originating 130 new characters in the extraordinary and blessedly obsolete tragedies by the poets of the period.

#### ELIZABETH BARRY

Contemporary with Betterton, and his companion in many of his triumphs, was Elizabeth Barry (1658–1713), the tragedy queen of the seventeenth century. She gained the foremost place among the actresses of her time in a single night in 1680, when she acted Monina with Betterton as Castalia, in Otway's "The Orphan, or the Unhappy Marriage." This character, together with Belvidera in Otway's "Venice Preserved," first done in 1682, were her greatest parts, though she is said to have originated in all 112 characters.

BARTON BOOTH

Directly after Betterton came Barton Booth (1681-1733). Indeed, he served his apprenticeship on the stage with Betterton and Mrs. Barry. Booth's two great parts were Pyrrhus in "The Distresst Mother," Ambrose Philips's translation of Racine's "Andromache," and the title part in Joseph Addison's "Cato." This tragedy was the most popular play of its time. It was translated into Latin, French, Italian, and Russian, and it was acted in Italy and in the Jesuits' College at St. Omer. Moreover, it contains more quoted passages than any other English work except Gray's "Elegy." When "Cato" was produced, its lines and sentiments could be applied most admirably to the politics of the moment, and to that circumstance was due its surprising vogue. Intrinsically, however, its merit was mediocre. Barton Booth was a strong Othello, a "sorrowing and not a roaring Lear," and a "manly yet not blustering Hotspur." He gained no lasting reputation in comedy, though he "once played Falstaff in the presence of Queen Anne, 'to the delight of the whole audience.'"

## MRS. ANNE OLDFIELD

Mrs. Anne Oldfield (1684–1730) was adjudged a competent actress in tragedy, in which “the glory of her form, the dignity of her countenance, the majesty of her walk, touched the rudest spectator;” but her overwhelming triumphs were in comedy, in which she was declared to be irresistible.

## JAMES QUIN

James Quin (1693–1766) first came into prominence by his acting at Lincoln’s Inn Field, during the season of 1718–19, of Hotspur, Clytus, Bajazet in Rowe’s “Tamerlane,” Brutus, Falstaff, Mashwell, and Sir John Brute in Sir John Vanbrugh’s “The Provoked Wife.” His career began in London in 1714 and ended in Bath in 1753, when he was driven from the stage by the triumphs of Garrick and Spranger Barry. Quin’s Cato, Brutus, Henry VIII., Gloster in “Jane Shore,” of which Mrs. Oldfield was the original Alicia, and Falstaff were excellent. He failed as Macbeth, Othello, Richard III., and Lear. From the retirement of Booth in 1728, until

Macklin acted Shylock in 1741, Quin was without a rival.

CHARLES MACKLIN

To Charles Macklin (1690 or '99–1797) belongs the credit of introducing into the English theatre the “natural” style of acting — at least, a style of acting that seemed natural in comparison with the extremely artificial methods of Betterton and Quin. Both Garrick and Spranger Barry were Macklin’s pupils, and both owed much to their preceptor. In the matter of costuming his parts, too, Macklin showed some appreciation of the historically correct. He told Alexander Pope that he played Shylock in a red hat because he had heard that the Italian Jews wore such hats. He also dressed Macbeth in “the Caledonian habit,” which caused George Frederick Cooke to describe Macklin’s impersonation as “like a Scotch piper.” These details of costuming seem ludicrous enough to us to-day, accustomed to the archæological drama as a matter of course, but in those days, when Othello habitually wore the uniform of an English general, and Hamlet was arrayed in knee

breeches, such a thing as a "Caledonian habit" was a startling evidence of originality.

Macklin's most important contribution to the theatre, however, was his seriously conceived and acted Shylock, which made so powerful an impression, when first seen at the Drury Lane on December 14, 1748, that Lord Lansdowne's "Jew of Venice," in which Shylock was treated as a low comedy part, was superseded for all time by Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice," from which Lansdowne drew his subject-matter. Macklin's especial excellence was in the presentation of villainous characters, for which he was physically well fitted. After Shylock, his best efforts were his Iago and his Sir Pertinax McSycophant in his own play of that name.

#### DAVID GARRICK

Continuing in the way indicated by Macklin, David Garrick (1716-1779), the "British Roscius," as he was termed, for a trice swept away the old traditions that had been accumulating for two centuries. Garrick stands even to this day as the most universally known of all English actors, much of this widely spread fame



**CHARLES MACKLIN**  
As Sir Pertinax McSycophant in "Man of the World."





being due, it must be acknowledged, to the circumstance that an excellent acting drama was written around his name. However, Garrick had many positive merits. He was a sincere artist, striving faithfully for truth and verisimilitude. He started posterity in the right direction, going quite a piece on the road himself, a service which should earn him his measure of gratitude. Garrick's formal début was made at Goodman's Fields on October 19, 1741, as Richard III., which part, he afterward explained, he selected because in it his small stature would not count against him. His extremely natural acting immediately gained him a hearing. He was something new for the coffee-house critics to discuss, ponder over, praise and condemn. During his first season Garrick played more comic than tragic characters, though among the latter were, in addition to Richard, the Ghost in "Hamlet" and King Lear. Bayes was Garrick's most taking comic impersonation during the season, as it gave him a chance to imitate the leading London players. When summer came, Garrick journeyed to Dublin, and in that city on his benefit night first tried

Hamlet. In 1745 he essayed Othello, but not successfully. In 1746 came his great contest with Quin. The old actor proved to be the better Falstaff, as against Garrick's Hotspur, in "Henry IV.," but Garrick as Hastings won the honours over Quin's Gloster in "Jane Shore." As Abel Drugger in "The Alchemist," Ranger in "The Suspicious Husband," Macbeth, Lear, Sir John Brute in "The Provoked Wife," and Archer in "The Beau's Stratagem," Garrick was acknowledged as unapproachable.

In 1750 occurred the famous contest of the Romeos, Garrick playing at Drury Lane to the Juliet of Mrs. Bellamy (1730-1788), and Spranger Barry (1719-1777), the most serious rival Garrick ever had, appearing at Covent Garden to the Juliet of Mrs. Cibber (1710-1766), the daughter-in-law of Colley Cibber. Barry was an actor of great personal charm, and his Romeo was considered better than Garrick's, though Mrs. Bellamy made an exception in Garrick's favour as regards the Friar scene. As Othello, Barry was accounted the equal, if not the superior, of his Drury Lane rival. As Lear, however, Garrick en-

tirely effaced Barry. In 1763, Garrick left the English stage for a time, going to Paris, where he was lavishly entertained, and from there to Naples, where he was the recipient of equally fervent hospitality. On his return to England, he at once regained his former place by his acting Benedick in "Much Ado About Nothing." In 1773, Garrick became sole manager of the Drury Lane, after which he was on the stage infrequently. In June, 1776, he made his last appearance as Don Felix in Mrs. Centlivre's "The Wonder."

Garrick was considered remarkably skilled in hiding his identity in the character which he was impersonating. He was also a careful student, and Doctor Doran records that he spent two months rehearsing and correcting his Benedick, but when he did finally play it, all the gaiety, wit, and spirit seemed spontaneous. Like that wonderful actor, Constant Coquelin, Garrick had no difficulty in throwing off his character instantly and resuming it at will. Coming from the stage as King Lear, he would immediately set a group in the green-room to laughing with a witty sally or a humorous story. He was a clever mimic and a

nimble dancer, "the genteelest dancer I ever saw," declared Mrs. Delaney. It was Garrick's own contention that a man must be a good comic actor to be a great tragedian, and in his own case he went far toward proving his theory. Garrick's best Shakespearian impersonations were Richard III., Hamlet, and King Lear, which was the last tragic character that he acted.

#### MRS. CIBBER AND PEG WOFFINGTON

The leading actresses of the Garrick period were Kitty Clive, comedian pure and simple; Mrs. George Ann Bellamy (1730-1788), who wrote her memoirs in frankest fashion, and thereby passed herself on to posterity; Margaret Woffington, fortunate like Garrick in being put into a drama, and Susanna Maria Cibber (1710-1766), the best, though the least known to-day, of them all. Mrs. Cibber was the first Ophelia of her time, while her Juliet, Constance, and Belvidera had rare merits. Her Alicia in the mad scene in "Jane Shore" was described as thrilling. Doctor Johnson, however, did not care for Mrs. Cibber, contending that she "got more reputation than she de-

served, as she had great sameness; though her expression was undoubtedly very fine."

While the frolicsome "Peg" Woffington was essentially a comedy actress, she was not without her tragedy triumphs, notable among them being her Lady Macbeth. Her voice, however, was considered bad for tragedy. For ten years she ranked as the greatest of Rosalinds, though from first to last her most popular impersonation was George Farquhar's impudent rake, Sir Harry Wildair

MRS. SARAH SIDDONS

All of these women, however, were entirely overshadowed by the fame of Mrs. Sarah Siddons (1755-1831), of whom John Henderson, the actor, said, when she was just entering upon her career, "She is an actress who has never had an equal nor will she ever have a superior." Both Mrs. Siddons and her brother, John Philip Kemble (1756-1823), were devotees of the "grand" or "heroic" style, while their contemporary, George Frederick Cooke (1756-1812), was one of the finest representatives of the natural school that has ever graced the stage. Mrs. Siddons made her first appearance

at the Drury Lane, London, on December 19, 1775, as Portia in "The Merchant of Venice," a part unsuited to her. During Garrick's farewell performances in 1776, she acted Mrs. Strickland in his *Ranger* in "The Suspicious Husband," and Lady Anne to his *Richard III*. With the end of Garrick's management, came also the end of Mrs. Siddons's engagement at the Drury Lane, and the renewal of her acquaintance with the Provinces. She was not seen again in London until 1782, when once more at the Drury Lane her matured art quickly brought her recognition as Isabella in Southern's "Fatal Marriage," in "The Grecian Daughter," "Jane Shore," "The Fair Penitent," and "Venice Preserved." Next came two Shakespearian parts, Isabella in "Measure for Measure," and Constance in "King John." Mrs. Siddons's reputation was then and there firmly established. *Lady Macbeth*, *Queen Katharine*, and *Volumnia* to the *Coriolanus* of John Philip Kemble followed the next season. She played *Hermione* in "A Winter's Tale" in 1802, and after that, until 1812, acted every season at Covent Garden, of which her brother was manager. After 1812,

Mrs. Siddons's appearances in the theatre were infrequent, though she continued before the public as a reader. The last part that she played was Lady Randolph in Home's tragedy "Douglas," at Charles Kemble's benefit in June, 1819. William Charles Macready was the Glenalvon in this cast. Toward the end of her active service Mrs. Siddons became so corpulent that the effect of her acting was decidedly marred.

Mrs. Siddons's biographers are fond of declaring her the greatest actress that ever lived. Perhaps she was. The statement can be no more disproved than it can be proved. It is certain, however, that her versatility was not great, and in parts that called for gentleness, tenderness, and quiet pathos, or in parts that required the slightest touch of comedy, she was absolutely ineffectual. The storm and the stress of passion, the portrayal of what are termed the "grand" emotions, the soaring heights of vigorous tragedy — these Mrs. Siddons realised with accompanying and resulting effects that were astonishing, if the reports of the critics and writers of the period are to be believed. It was not Mrs. Siddons's way to

impersonate, that is to say, to make any effort to conceal her identity, as did Garrick. Always in her own character of Mrs. Siddons, — not unlike the platform reader of to-day, I imagine, — she declaimed her lines, and very likely, in the extremity of climactic passion, she ranted. Therefore, realising Mrs. Siddons's well-defined limitations, it need cause no surprise that she should have failed as Rosalind and as Juliet. It was also claimed that her Ophelia was not to be compared with Mrs. Cibber's. Indeed, Desdemona seems to have been the only womanly character in which Mrs. Siddons made any decided impression. As Isabella in "The Fatal Marriage," as Belvidera in "Venice Preserved," and, in Shakespearian tragedy, as Lady Macbeth, Mrs. Siddons was preëminent.

## JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE

John Philip Kemble, Mrs. Siddons's brother, acted until 1817, when he made his farewell appearance in his greatest part, Coriolanus. There is no occasion to dwell in detail on his work. Like his sister, he was successful only in tragedy. He was an excellent Hamlet





JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE

As Cato

*From an old engraving by Thomas Boys, after the painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence*



and a good Richard III., but neither was equal to his Coriolanus. Kemble held the opinion that all the good plays had been written, and, indeed, he was not so tremendously mistaken from his standpoint, for the old-time tragedy was even in his day fast degenerating into maudlin bombast. Kemble's professed regard for the old plays, however, did not prevent him foisting on the public a version of Shakespeare's "Coriolanus" that was an insult to the master dramatist. Kemble is entitled to passing credit, nevertheless, for an effort, after he became manager of Covent Garden, to produce Shakespeare with some attention to historical accuracy in the matter of costuming.

THOMAS ABTHORPE COOPER

It was in the middle of the eighteenth century that the theatre in the American colonies began to attract attention in English theatrical circles, but the first prominent English actors to seek this country were Thomas Abthorpe Cooper (1776–1849) and George Frederick Cooke (1756–1812). Cooper had appeared in London, before accepting the invitation of the offer of an engagement from Mr. Wignell of

the Philadelphia Theatre and making his appearance in that city on December 9, 1796, as Macbeth, though he was far better known in the English provinces. Cooper tried London again in 1803 and in 1827, but did not succeed in establishing himself there. For a quarter of a century he was the leading star in the American theatres, the visits of George Frederick Cooke in 1810 and of Edmund Kean in 1820 only momentarily affecting his prestige.

#### GEORGE FREDERICK COOKE

But for his dissolute habits, George Frederick Cooke would probably have gained the leadership of the stage of his time, for his native talent was far greater than that of John Philip Kemble. Cooke's London reputation was made between 1800 and 1803 by his Richard III., Shylock, Iago, Macbeth, and Sir Giles Overreach in Massinger's "A New Way to Pay Old Debts." To Kemble's Richard he acted Richmond, and to Mrs. Siddons's Lady Randolph and Kemble's Old Norval, in "Douglas," he acted Glenalvon. Cooke's fondness for the bottle then got the better of him, and he was hissed from the stage for be-

ing drunk. Recovering from his debauch, he played Iago to Kemble's Othello, Mrs. Siddons's Desdemona, and Charles Kemble's Cassio. Again drunkenness interrupted his work, in the end bringing to a disgraceful conclusion his London career. On November 21, 1810, Cooke acted Richard III. at the Park Theatre, New York, before the largest audience that had ever assembled in a theatre in this country. At the Boston Theatre on July 21, 1812, he played his last part on any stage, Sir Giles Overreach. Sober, Cooke was a cultured gentleman in every respect; drunk, he was a veritable sot, the lowest of the low.

EDMUND KEAN

Cooke was followed to the United States by Edmund Kean (1787-1833), who appeared for the first time in this country at the Anthony Street Theatre, New York, on November 29, 1820, as Richard III. At that time Kean's excesses had begun to sap his powers, and his irregularities were continually getting him into trouble. In February, 1821, Kean played in Boston to extraordinary business, and in May returned to that city for a second engagement,

although warned that it was a dull season and many were out of town. He opened as Lear on May 23 to a fair house. The second night he appeared as Jaffier to a small audience, and on the third night, going to the theatre prepared to act Richard III., and finding the spectators few, he refused to play, and left the house. After that the audience grew to fair proportions, and Kean was sent for. He declined to return, and the play was given without the star. The feeling against Kean was very bitter, as the actor found out when he again visited Boston in 1825.

Edmund Kean's early life had been one of exceeding hardship, and the recognition of his genius was long delayed. Although he made his *début* on the stage at the age of two years, and became a strolling player before he was ten years old, not until January 26, 1814, when finally the chance came to him to act Shylock at Drury Lane, did he taste the sweets of success. Shylock, as which Kean perpetrated the innovation of wearing a black wig instead of a red one, was followed by Richard III., Hamlet, Othello, Iago, Macbeth, and Sir Giles Overreach.







When Kean left England in 1825 for his second visit to the United States, his London reputation was decidedly tarnished. He had been careless in his acting and had been hissed from the stage more than once. He had also been the correspondent in a notorious divorce suit, which had thoroughly disgusted the British public. Remembering his haughty farewell to America four years before, he viewed his reappearance in this country not without trepidation. But like many others who have come hither from England, he needed the money. He was hissed for twenty minutes, when he tried to act Richard III. in New York, but after that was permitted to continue. Kean got to Boston on December 21, 1825, and his first action was to send a humble apology to the newspapers for his conduct on the occasion of his previous visit. That night he attempted to play Richard III. at the Boston Theatre. All the tickets had been sold the day before, and soon after the doors were opened the house was crowded with men. Outside, also, there was a large gathering, fully prepared for a row. Before the play began, Kean came before the curtain to apologise,

but he was assailed by shouts of "Off! Off!" and pelted with nuts, pieces of cake, and bottles of vile-smelling compounds. Driven from the stage, he returned *once*, but the uproar not ceasing for an instant, he retired to the greenroom, where he wept with mortification and discomfiture. Then he left the theatre, and the play proceeded for an act without him. But the disturbance was so great that the curtain was dropped for good after one act.

No sooner was the noise inside silenced, however, than the mob outside made an assault on the house, and those within forgot all about Kean in looking after their own safety. Lamps and windows were smashed, the entrances were stormed, and the few police officers were overpowered. The occupants of the pit retreated by means of the stage, while the men in the boxes climbed through the windows. By the time order had been restored, the interior of the theatre was a complete wreck.

Kean acted for the last time in the United States at the Park Theatre, New York, on December 5, 1826, appearing as Richard III.



EDMUND KEAN  
As Othello.



His last appearance on any stage was at Covent Garden on March 25, 1833, as Othello to Charles Kean's Iago. All through his ascendancy Kean was a conscientious student, and in working up his parts he left nothing to chance. Every gesture, every movement, every word, was timed. Rehearsing on a strange stage, he was accustomed to count the steps from point to point in order to be sure of speaking certain lines at exactly the right moments to secure the effects he desired. As a result of this attention to detail, Kean, with all his drinking, was able to act with fair effect as long as he could stand up or speak with reasonable clearness.

According to George Henry Lewes, "Othello, which is the most trying of all Shakespeare's parts, was Kean's masterpiece." After that would certainly rank his Richard III., Shylock, and Sir Giles Overreach. His Hamlet and Macbeth were not first-class, and, oddly enough, his Iago was a comparative failure. Kean was a "natural" actor, though not in the same degree as George Frederick Cooke. Kean's reading was evidently clear, but nevertheless peculiarly explosive, as different from

Mrs. Siddons and John Philip Kemble as can be imagined. Mrs. French, writing to Lady Fanny Proby, declared: "I took my boys to see 'Macbeth' last night, but found that, though they read Shakespeare, they did not readily catch the language of the scene. They understood Kean well, his tones are so natural, but the raised voice and declamatory style in which most others pronounce tragedy renders it, I see, nearly unintelligible to children." In this connection the following extract from Henry Irving's "Harvard Address" of 1885 is interesting:

"There are many causes for the growth of naturalism in dramatic art, and amongst them we should remember the improvement in the mechanism of the stage; for instance, there has been a remarkable development in stage lighting. In the old pictures you will observe the actors constantly standing on a line, because the oil-lamps of those days gave such an indifferent illumination that everybody tried to get into what was called the focus—the 'blaze of publicity' furnished by the 'float,' or footlights. The importance of this is illustrated by an amusing story of Edmund Kean,

who one night played Othello with more than his usual intensity. An admirer who met him in the street next day was loud in his congratulations: 'I really thought you would have choked Iago, Mr. Kean — you seemed so tremendously in earnest.' 'In earnest!' said the tragedian, 'I should think so! Hang the fellow, he was trying to keep me out of the focus!'"

JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH

The season of 1816–17 was an eventful one for the London theatres. That season John Philip Kemble withdrew from the stage, the leadership having been wrested from him by Edmund Kean, who was then at the very apex of his career. As opposing lights to this brilliant star, there were put forward at Covent Garden two actors from the provinces, William Charles Macready and Lucius Junius Brutus Booth (1796–1852). Only the latter had the temerity at that time to challenge the great Kean in any of the characters that Kean had made particularly his own. Small of stature as Kean himself, black of hair and brilliant-eyed, Booth was marvellously like his rival in appearance and in artistic gifts. It

was on February 12, 1817, that Booth acted Richard III. at Covent Garden, and his impersonation was accounted the equal of Kean's. Crafty Kean, however, preferring to have so formidable an opponent where he could watch him, seized the opportunity that was afforded by Booth's quarrel with the Covent Garden management over the matter of salary, and secured the younger actor for Drury Lane. There Booth acted Iago to Kean's Othello, the newcomer acquitting himself finely. Kean, however, had no intention of cherishing in his bosom a viper that might sting him. He was willing that Booth should act Richmond to his Richard, but he resolutely reserved for himself the great tragic characters. Consequently Booth forthwith withdrew from Drury Lane and returned to Covent Garden; but this vacillating conduct enraged the tempestuous public, and Booth was denied a hearing for several nights. Eventually, however, he wore down the opposition, and during March, 1817, acted Sir Giles Overreach, Posthumus in "Cymbeline," and Sir Edward Mortimer in "The Iron Chest," completing his engagement at Covent Garden.





LUCIUS JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH



Booth made his first appearance in America at Richmond, Virginia, on July 6, 1821, as Richard III., and thereafter he was continuously identified with the theatre in this country, with the exception of his visits to London in 1825 and 1836. In Richmond, Booth acted, besides Richard, Lear, Sir Edward Mortimer, and Bertram. After a short engagement in Petersburg, Virginia, Booth was seen in New York, Baltimore, New Orleans, and other Southern cities, and in Boston and Philadelphia, presenting, in addition to the characters already mentioned, Hamlet, Sir Giles Overreach, Octavian, and Jerry Squeak in the old farce, "Mayor of Garratt." It was Booth's habit to open an engagement in a new place with "Richard III.," following that play with such others from his repertory as pleased him. On his return to the United States from abroad in 1827, Booth acted Posthumus, Reuben Glenroy, Salem in "The Bride of Abydos," and Pescara in "The Apostate," by Richard Lalor Sheil. Lawrence Barrett notes that, when this play was produced at Covent Garden in 1817, Booth, who was enamoured of Miss O'Neill, then the darling of the London pub-

lic, declined the part of Pescara, the villain, which he afterward made so famous, and demanded that of Hemeya, the lover of Florinda, that he might play the love scenes with Miss O'Neill. This incident placed Pescara in Macready's hands, and it was the first great hit that Macready made in London. The character was soon resumed by Booth, for whom it was intended, and never again acted by Macready.

While stage-manager of the Camp Street Theatre, New Orleans, in 1828, Booth played in French Orestes in Racine's "Andromache." In 1831, he acted two nights in New York with Edwin Forrest, Booth playing Pierre in "Venice Preserved" to Forrest's Jaffier, and Othello to Forrest's Iago. Also in the same year, when Charles Kean acted Hamlet in Baltimore, Booth impersonated the second actor. During this season of 1831-32, Booth's new characters were Richard II., Falkland in "The Rivals," Hotspur, and Luke in "Riches." Just before he sailed for England in 1836, he acted Shylock. During the last ten years of his life Booth was before the public but intermittently, though he made annual visits to

Boston and New Orleans, where he was a favourite. One of his notable performances was in Washington in 1850, when he played the title part in "Brutus," to Edwin Booth's Titus, before John Howard Payne, the author of the tragedy. Booth's last appearance on any stage was in New Orleans, on his way home from San Francisco, November 19, 1852, as Sir Edward Mortimer in "The Iron Chest," and John Lump in "Review."

According to Edwin Booth, than whom none other knew the elder Booth so well, the characters of Brutus, Sir Giles Overreach, Richard III., Cassius, Bertram, Shylock, Pescara, and Sir Edward Mortimer were the most impressive in the elder Booth's repertory. If one were to choose from this list a single impersonation that overtopped all the others, Richard III. would be the one. Certainly Booth considered it his best, and it was the part in which he was most widely known. Descriptions of Booth as Richard agreed that it was his custom to walk through the first two scenes, either with a view to saving himself for the hard work to come, or else to afford a contrast to the highly dramatic

episodes of the later acts. The soliloquy, "Now is the winter of our discontent," was given almost amateurishly, and the meeting with Lady Anne was nearly as pointless. In the scene with Buckingham, wherein Richard hints at the death of the two princes, Booth began his real work, and after that there was never any complaint of tameness. In the tent scene the audience felt with a shudder the terror of Richard as he wrested himself from the dream phantoms and rushed out of his tent, his face pale, his eyes rolling, his legs trembling, both features and form convulsed with horror. "The dying scene of Booth," wrote H. D. Stone in "Theatrical Reminiscences," "was truly frightful, — his eyes, naturally large and piercing, appeared to have greatly increased in size, and fairly gleamed with fire; large drops of perspiration oozed from his forehead, and coursing down his cheeks, mingling with and moistening the ringlets of the wig he usually wore in Richard, caused them to adhere to his face, rendering his appearance doubly horrible."

"Without question Booth was royal heir and legitimate representative of the Garrick-

Kemble-Siddons traditions," declared Walt Whitman, mixing up his schools of acting, but having a worthy idea to express for all that, "but he vitalised and gave an unnamable *race* to those traditions with his own electric personal idiosyncrasy. (As in all art-utterance it was the subtle and powerful something *especial to the individual* that really conquered.) . . . Yes; although Booth must be classed in that antique, almost extinct, school, inflated, stagy, rendering Shakespeare (perhaps inevitably, appropriately) from the growth of arbitrary and often cockney conventions, his genius was to me one of the grandest revelations of my life, a lesson of artistic expression. The words, fire, energy, *abandon*, found in him unprecedented meanings. I never heard a speaker or actor who could give such a sting to hauteur or the taunt. I never eard from any other the charm of unswerving perfect vocalisation, without trenching at all on mere melody, the province of music."

WILLIAM CHARLES MACREADY

Passing by Charles Kemble (1775-1854),  
brother of John Philip Kemble and of Mrs.

Sarah Siddons, the best Romeo since Spranger Barry, a fine Mercutio, Mark Antony, and Benedick, and, after the retirement of John Philip Kemble, the best Hamlet on the stage, without detailing his career any more than to record his visit to this country in 1832 with his daughter Fanny, and his great popular success here as Hamlet, and as Romeo to his daughter's Juliet, we come at once to William Charles Macready (1793-1873), the legitimate successor in England of Edmund Kean, and the bitter rival in the United States of Edwin Forrest.

Macready, son of a provincial theatre manager, had none of the early struggles that darkened all the after life of Kean and Booth. In his father's theatre in Birmingham, on June 7, 1810, he made his professional début as Romeo with fair success, wearing on that momentous occasion a close-fitting white satin tunic and knee-breeches, the tunic being slashed with purple on the breast, and the breeches similarly bedecked on the thighs. Early the next year he tried Hamlet, recording regarding himself that "a total failure in Hamlet is of rare occurrence." Posthumus



in "Cymbeline" and Orestes in "The Distresst Mother" were both acted about this same time, as was Duke Aranza in Tobin's "Honeymoon," his first comedy part. It was at Newcastle that the young Macready first met Mrs. Siddons, and he played Beverly in "The Gamester" to her Mrs. Beverly, being so overcome with the honour that he made a botch of the part, and Young Norval in "Douglas" to her Lady Randolph, well enough to win her praise. During the season of 1811-12, still at Newcastle, he added Richard II., Richard III., and Mark Antony in "Antony and Cleopatra" to his repertory. The Mark Antony of "Julius Cæsar" followed in Glasgow in the summer of 1813.

Finally, on September 16, 1816, Macready made his first appearance in London, acting at Covent Garden Orestes in "The Distresst Mother," Ambrose Philips's translation of Racine's "Andromache." His London début created no stir, although the new actor was generally praised. On October 10, however, when he played Othello, a part with which he was not especially familiar, warm commendation followed. On May 3, 1817, he created

the character of Pescara in Richard Lalor Sheil's "The Apostate," adding to his growing reputation. The following October, Charles Kemble's illness gave Macready the chance to play Romeo to Miss O'Neill's Juliet, and this was succeeded by his originating Rob Roy in Pocock's adaptation of Sir Walter Scott's novel. It remained for many years one of his most popular characters. When Sheil's "Evadne, or the Statue," was produced on February 10, 1819, Macready was the Ludovico and Miss O'Neill the Evadne. This was Miss O'Neill's last season on the stage, and it was a coincidence that she should have died on October 29, 1872, just six months before Macready.

On October 25, 1819, Macready acted Richard III., coming at last into direct competition with Kean. A month later Coriolanus was creditably done, though Kemble was by no means shaken from his eminence. When the death of George III. took the embargo off "King Lear," Kean announced the play at Drury Lane. Harris forthwith rushed through a production at Covent Garden, casting Booth for Lear and Macready for Edgar. The pres-

entation made no especial impression, and Kean's impersonation a week later was scarcely more successful. On May 12, 1820, took place the crowning event of the season, the production with Macready in the title part of James Sheridan Knowles's first drama, "Virginius." Charles Kemble was the Icilius and Maria Foote the Virginia. Later, when Macready went on a provincial tour, his Virginia was Catherine Frances, in private life the "Kitty" Atkens whom the tragedian afterward married. In 1826 came Macready's first visit to the United States, opening at the Park Theatre, New York, on October 2 as Virginius. Although Kean's second American tour with its humiliations had occurred only the previous winter, Macready was courteously, even enthusiastically, received, particularly in Boston, where the most serious of the Kean riots took place.

During the season of 1827-28, a company of English actors visited Paris, presenting "The Rivals," "She Stoops to Conquer," and "Hamlet," with Charles Kemble as the Dane. In April, Macready appeared there as Macbeth and Virginius. This visit marked an

epoch in the French drama, for the English Shakespeare accomplished the quick release of the French drama from its fettering traditions and the deadly restrictions of the classic three unities. "It was the first time," wrote Dumas of "Hamlet," "that the stage had shown me real passions animating men and women of flesh and blood." Regarding Macready, the critic of *La Réunion* exclaimed: "Who would believe that this man, to whom Nature has refused everything,—voice, carriage, and physiognomy,—could rival our Talma, for whom she has left nothing undone?"

The year 1836 brought Charles Kemble's retirement from the stage. January, 1837, saw the production of Bulwer-Lytton's first play, "The Duchess de la Vallière," in which Macready acted Bragelonne, while, on May 1, "Strafford," by Robert Browning, was presented with Macready in the title part. Macready's reputation and position were now established, and, when he visited the United States for the second time in 1843, he was the acknowledged head of his profession in England. Previous to this, moreover, Macready had become a successful London manager.

Bulwer-Lytton had also come rapidly to the fore, his "The Lady of Lyons" having been produced on February 15, 1838, with Macready as Claude Melnotte and Helen Faucit as Pauline, and his "Richelieu" on March 7, 1839, with Macready as the Cardinal and Miss Faucit as Julie de Mortemar. For his second American tour, therefore, which opened in New York on September 25, 1843, and closed in Boston on October 14, 1844, Macready's repertory consisted of Claude Melnotte and Richelieu and, in addition, Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, Iago, Lear, Shylock, Brutus, Cassius, Benedick, King John, King Henry IV., Wolsey, Virginius, Tell, Werner, Marino Faliero, Melantius, Lord Townly in a three-act version of "The Provoked Husband," and Joseph Surface in a like version of "The School for Scandal." Hamlet was his most popular character. In 1848-49 occurred Macready's farewell tour to America, with its tragic ending in the Astor Place riots in New York, the culmination of the serious difficulties with Edwin Forrest, the first American-born tragedian of rank. Macready retired from the stage in 1851, his last appearance having been made at

the Haymarket on February 26 as Macbeth. He died on April 27, 1873.

Macready had the reputation among his associates on the stage of being a harsh taskmaster, who hated his art. This statement probably may be translated to mean that Macready hated bad acting, and was severe with indifferent actors. It scarcely is creditable that Macready should have spent the best years of a long lifetime laboriously and painstakingly working to the front of a profession that he utterly despised. Macready's disposition, it is true, was not of the sweetest, and he had the actor's selfishness. When he was on the stage, every one had to "play up to him." However, if Macready did find an actor or an actress that suited him, though such instances were rare, he was generous in praise, as witness his treatment of Charlotte Cushman, an unknown provincial actress, when he played with her in 1843, and afterward wrote of her in his diary, "The Miss Cushman who acted Lady Macbeth interested me much. She has to learn her art, but she showed mind and sympathy with me, — a novelty so refreshing to me on the stage."

“She showed mind and sympathy with me.” That remark throws a flood of light on Macready and his attitude toward his profession. I believe that he loved his art as deeply as any actor who ever lived, but he did grow to hate the theatre, which fell so far short of the ideal that he was cherishing. Macready abandoned the theatre without a regret, but when partial blindness came upon him in his old age, his art, breathing life into the great dramatic conceptions that still held their places in his memory, was solace, comfort, and inspiration.

CHARLES KEAN

Before passing from the English to the American stage, a mention of Charles Kean (1811–1868), the son of Edmund, is in order. He made his first appearance at Drury Lane on October 1, 1827, as young Norval in “Douglas,” and was unfavourably received. In December, 1828, he again tried London, and this time with better success. Charles Kean’s first tour to the United States began at the Park Theatre, New York, on September 1, 1830, when he acted Richard III., and it continued for nearly two years and a half.


His parts were Romeo, Sir Edward Mortimer, Sir Giles Overreach, Hamlet, and Richard III. On January 29, 1842, Kean married Miss Ellen Tree, and in 1845 he made his third and Mrs. Kean her second visit to this country. In 1850, Kean became manager of the Princess's Theatre, London, and two years later began his famous productions of Shakespearian comedy and tragedy, thus first introducing that mastery of stagecraft which later had its full development in Sir Henry Irving. Kean's productions were as follows: "The Merry Wives of Windsor," "King John," "Macbeth," "Richard III.," "Henry VIII.," "Winter's Tale," "Midsummer - Night's Dream," "Richard II.," "The Tempest," "King Lear," "The Merchant of Venice," "Much Ado About Nothing," and "Henry V." During these seasons there acted in the Kean company Kate and Ellen Terry, Agnes Robertson (Mrs. Dion Boucicault), Carlotta and Rose Leclercq, and Caroline Heath (Mrs. Wilson Barrett). In July, 1863, the Keans started on their final tour, going first to Australia, then to California, from there to the Atlantic coast, and thence to England. Kean's



last appearance in this country was at the Broadway Theatre, corner of Broome Street, New York, April 16, 1866, as Louis XI., and as Mr. Oakley in "The Jealous Wife." His last appearance on any stage was at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, Liverpool, as Louis XI. on May 29, 1867.

## CHAPTER III.

### EDWIN FORREST AND CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN

N the introduction to his life of Edwin Forrest, Lawrence Barrett stated: "There have been three methods of acting, and only three, upon the English stage since the restoration of Charles the Second." Now, from an article by "T" in the *New Monthly* (1820), can be obtained some idea of what Mr. Barrett meant by these three methods of acting: "Mr. Kean represents simple man in his fiercest passions, his most terrific agonies, or his deepest sympathies. Mr. Kemble delineated him chiefly as surrounded with the pomp and external circumstance which gave a stateliness to all his actions and distresses. Mr. Macready depicts him as elate with high enthusiasm, attired on great occasions in sudden brightness, or wearing the pensive livery of fanciful sorrow. . . . If Mr. Kean is the most intensely human, and

Mr. Kemble the most classical, Mr. Macready is the most dramatic of actors.”

“ These (three methods of acting) have been illustrated in our own times,” continued Mr. Barrett, “ by Forrest, Macready, and the elder Booth. Modifications of these styles have been seen ; but the groundwork remains. . . . The generation that witnessed the advent of Edmund Kean knew not that his school was that of Garrick, dead then less than half a century. The method of Edwin Forrest, on the other hand, dates even farther back, through the Kembles to Betterton and Barton Booth.”

To Edwin Forrest (1806–1872), born in Philadelphia, the son of a Scotch father and a Pennsylvania Dutch mother, belongs the honour of being the first native tragedian that the United States produced. That positive historical fact is practically the only thing about Edwin Forrest that is unquestioned. Was he really a great actor? The query was insistent throughout his long career, and even now, more than a quarter century after his death, his precise niche in the hall of fame is by no means determined. As a matter of fact, there were two Edwin Forrests, — one a man

of scholarly tastes, intellectual dignity, moral refinement and strength, the other a man unbearably rude, intolerably selfish, harsh toward his fellows, a creature of uncivilised bluntness, and of untempered brutality. Sympathy, sincerity, and especially impressive personality were required to bring to light the first Forrest; adverse criticism, even if free from the taint of faultfinding, any opposition, whether honest or the outcome of envy, brought quickly into violent being the second Forrest. Unfortunately for himself, and for many that had intimate relations with him, Forrest never learned the value of the soft and conciliatory answer. Always he was the rabid, unprincipled, irresponsible partisan. He suffered much, and the pitiable part was that he suffered needlessly. Sensitive unto morbidity, proud, — the more so because conscious of his lack of early advantages in the way of culture and education, — suspicious, ready to offer an affront, yet quick to take offence, — yes, given to seeking for offence where none was intended, — such was Edwin Forrest, with all his triumphs, his fame, and his wealth, a most pathetic figure. All his life he



EDWIN FORREST



acted tragedies, but none was so appalling as the bitter tragedy of selfishness which he lived.

Two anecdotes of Forrest's boyhood, — one of a fault committed by him, the other of an injustice suffered by him, — illustrate a trait of his character, which remained with him till the end, and to which were due many of his difficulties in after life, including the disgraceful squabble with Macready. This was an unchecked desire to pay back, no matter at what cost, the inflicter of what he considered a wrong. Nor was Forrest ever careful to ascertain whether there actually had been any wrong. An imaginary insult was exactly the same to him as a real insult. He required his revenge in the one instance just as much as in the other.

One day, on a Philadelphia street, the lad Edwin Forrest was amusing himself by holding an apple under a horse's nose. Every time the horse made a reach for the apple, the boy would strike the horse with his fist. The driver finally came along, and, seizing his whip, cut the boy sharply around the legs. Forrest swore vengeance, and when the chance came, some days later, evened up the score by hit-

ting the driver in the head with a stone, hurled from a safe distance. The second incident was not to Forrest's discredit, though it did show his unreasonableness when he was thoroughly angered. On a snowy afternoon, Forrest, then a boy, was pushing a wheelbarrow load of produce along the sidewalk, when he met a pompous Quaker, who ordered him into the street. Forrest expostulated, declaring that the snow made wheeling difficult and that there was room enough on the sidewalk for his wheelbarrow and all reasonable persons. The Quaker closed the argument by kicking over the wheelbarrow and dumping its contents into the snow. Forrest, as far as is known, never succeeded in squaring accounts in this case, but for years afterward he never met a Quaker without feeling rage, hatred, and a wild desire to punch quick and hard.

After his father died, Edwin, then thirteen years old and the next to the youngest of six children, was apprenticed first to a printer, then to a cooper, and finally to a ship chandler. These occupations rested lightly on him, however. He liked best of all to recite



and to mimic. His memory was remarkable, and he could repeat whole passages from sermons, which he had heard delivered but once. It is recorded that when he was nine years old, he was a weak-looking chap, with round shoulders and a narrow chest. A circus that came to town inspired the youngster with gymnastic ardour, and he began to practise somersaults and "flipflaps." A genuine love of athletics was thus inculcated, and the result was the finely developed physique, to which was due not a little of Forrest's wonderful hold on the pit and the gallery.

Forrest's first appearance on the stage came suddenly and unexpectedly when he was eleven years old. The manager of the old South Street Theatre was badly in need of some one to play Rosalia de Borgia in the romantic melodrama "Rudolph, or the Robbers of Calabria." Forrest was hanging around the theatre and readily agreed to go on. For a costume he hung a petticoat about his waist, and at the rise of the curtain, being concealed behind prison bars, he was encouraged with a hearty round of applause. When he advanced to the footlights, however, his

ridiculous clothing caused howls and hoots of laughter. The manager dragged his protégé from the stage and forbade his appearance thereon again. But Forrest was determined to redeem himself, and finally, in desperation, he stormed the citadel. Watching his opportunity, he slipped passed the Cerberus at the stage door, and, after the curtain fell on the last act of the play, rushed on the stage in the garb of an harlequin. Once safe before the audience he delivered so cleverly the epilogue, written by Oliver Goldsmith for Lee Lewis, that the surprised audience applauded him vigorously.

Forrest's formal début was made at the Walnut Street Theatre on November 27, 1820, as Young Norval in Home's tragedy of "Douglas." In the cast were William Warren, father of William Warren, so long the comedian at the Boston Museum, and Mrs. Jefferson, grandmother of Joseph Jefferson. This first appearance was apparently successful, though the fact scarcely seems credible, for at that time Forrest was only fourteen years old and had had only a few preliminary lessons in acting from Lemuel G. White,

teacher of elocution and firm believer in the Garrick-Kean methods. There is, however, practical evidence of Forrest's success in the fact that he was engaged for two other performances, acting on December 29 Frederick in "Lovers' Vows," and on January 8, 1821, Octavian in "The Mountaineers," one of Edmund Kean's early successes. Moreover, this year he was bold enough to hire the Prune Street Theatre and present "Richard III." therein. He even made a little money by the venture. Then came his enrolment as leading juvenile in a barnstorming company that played in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, Lexington, Kentucky, and came to an unfortunate end in Cincinnati, Ohio. The most abject poverty, that included hunger and suicidal despair, was crowded into these months of wretched experience. Before fortune turned and he was engaged for James H. Caldwell's New Orleans company, Forrest did tumbling "stunts" with a circus.

The season of 1824-25, passed in New Orleans, was eventful for Forrest. For one thing, he acted for the first time Brutus in John Howard Payne's play, originally done by

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Edmund Kean. Again, he nearly died with yellow fever, and third, he fell in love with Miss Placide, the leading woman of the theatre, and was eager to fight duels on her account. Most important of all, however, was Forrest's strange friendship with the Indian Push-na-to-ha, chief of the Choctaws, who, without a doubt, furnished the model for *Metamora*.

The fall of 1825 saw the real turning-point in Forrest's life, when, having journeyed northward and joined a company in Albany, New York, he acted with Edmund Kean, then touring the United States for the second time. "Two men more unlike in mind and body can scarcely be imagined," declared Lawrence Barrett. "Kean, who had come up from his early sufferings into that prosperity which crazed him, bore upon his delicate frame the marks of the struggle. . . . The early life of Kean, passed in the midst of social prejudices which outlawed the player, was the last sad and awful protest against the injustice and ignorance of an era which placed the genius of the actor among the glories of mankind, while the man himself was socially neglected and contemned.

"Until now Forrest had seen no actor

who represented in perfection the impassioned school of which Kean was the master. . . . Here was, indeed, a revelation. How must his mind have grown in the study of that style which grasped the innermost of the passions, and flashed out its expression with the spark divine, through a frame slender but magnetic. In later life Forrest loved to recall those impressions, and a lock of the great actor's hair was tenderly preserved amongst his most valued treasures."

During this memorable engagement Forrest played Iago to Kean's Othello, Titus to Kean's Brutus, and Richmond to Kean's Richard III. In his impersonation of Iago Forrest succeeded in making one "point" that impressed Kean vividly. The current Iago of the time was a sullen and sinister villain, totally devoid of subtlety. Forrest made his Iago a gay and dashing fellow, who cloaked his wickedness. In delivering the lines, —

"Look to your wife; observe her well with Cassio;  
Wear your eyes thus, not jealous,— nor secure," —

Forrest began in an easy and natural fashion, but at the last two words his voice dropped to

husky and whispered horror, as if his evil imagination had of itself penetrated the mask of indifference that was intended to conceal it. Kean responded to the touch, and the scene was acted with fervour that pleased mightily the audience. When it was over, Kean rushed to Forrest, and demanded :

“In the name of God, boy, where did you get that ?”

“It is something of my own,” was Forrest’s reply.

“Everybody who speaks the part hereafter must do it just so,” declared Kean.

The Bowery Theatre was building in New York at this time, and Forrest was engaged to act there as soon as it was opened. When he left Albany, he did not have money enough to pay both his board and his fare to New York, so he was obliged to leave trunk and wardrobe in Albany as security for his debt. Friendless and penniless, he found the big city dreary enough. He was lonesome, discouraged, and morbid. Again he contemplated suicide, and went so far as to buy poison — for the ostensible purpose of killing rats. Finally Jacob Woodhull, a utility actor



EDWIN FORREST  
As King Lear.





at the Park Theatre, who was going to have a benefit, asked Forrest to appear. Thus it came about that on June 23, 1826, at the Park Theatre, Forrest made his first appearance in New York, acting Othello. The audience was not large, but the hit that the newcomer made was positive.

Forrest's first appearance at the Bowery Theatre occurred on November 6, 1826, and he played Othello. This was followed by Damon, perhaps the most popular of his early impersonations, Jaffier in "Venice Preserved," the Indian chief in "She Would Be a Soldier," Sheridan Knowles's William Tell, Mark Antony in "Julius Cæsar," Earl Osmand, George Barnwell, Lear, Sir Edward Mortimer, Rolla in Kotzebue's "The Spaniards of Peru," rewritten by Knowles from an English paraphrase, on May 21, 1827, as Virginius, probably for the first time, Shylock, Lucius Brutus in "The Fall of Tarquin," Ludovic in "Evadne," Macbeth, and Sir Giles Overreach in "A New Way to Pay Old Debts." During this engagement Forrest acted with both Thomas Cooper and Junius Brutus Booth.

Forrest continued to play his New York

engagements at the Bowery Theatre until October, 1828, when he appeared at the more fashionable Park Theatre, opening with his favourite *Damon*, which he followed with *Hamlet* and other characters in his repertory. At the Park Theatre, on December 25, 1829, Doctor John A. Stone's prize tragedy, "*Metamora*," had its premier performance. At the same theatre, on September 26, 1831, another prize play, "*The Gladiator*," by Robert M. Bird, of Philadelphia, was produced. There in 1838 "*The Lady of Lyons*" was seen for the first time in this country, Forrest playing Claude Melnotte, and at the same house, on May 24, 1841, R. T. Conrad's "*Aylmere, or the Kentish Rebellion*," received its first presentation by Forrest. This play was afterward revised and renamed "*Jack Cade, or the Bondman of Kent*."

Forrest's rush to the front was astonishing. In 1834, when he ceased acting in order to travel two years in Europe, he was the acknowledged head of his profession in the United States. That he accomplished so much in so short a time, even in the days when actors were few and when audiences were not

especially exacting, is of itself proof of his unusual histrionic talent. Physically, moreover, he was gifted beyond compare. In strength, he was a veritable giant, powerful in build but shapely, though probably too bulky to serve as an ideal model. His face was noble, strong, and impressive; but his greatest glory of all was his voice, rich, full, and masculine, which he managed with praiseworthy art. There was a vast difference between the reading of the elder Booth and Forrest. Booth's delivery was music, and imagination bedecked the text with delicate fancy. Forrest relied on emphasis for his effects. He followed the energetic enunciation and startling transitions of Edmund Kean, and toward the end of his career he used the suggestive pause in as marked a fashion as did John Philip Kemble.

Herman Vezin, the actor and teacher of acting, after declaring that the first actor who made a lasting impression upon him was Forrest, continued: "Had this man learned his art in an old country, amid cultured surroundings, had he enjoyed the advantages of acting only before refined and intellectual audiences, a means of education of inestimable value, he

would have gone down to posterity on a footing with Garrick, Mrs. Siddons, Talma, and Edmund Kean. But the audiences he attracted were not the most refined, and their wild enthusiasm only confirmed in him faults which sometimes dimmed, but were powerless to quench, the lustre of his genius. Physically, he was endowed beyond any actor I have ever seen. . . . His voice was in perfect keeping with the rest of his physique. In volume, resonance, melody, and compass, it was phenomenal, while its power of endurance was such that no amount of ill-usage seemed to affect its purity. I have seen him play two tragedy parts in one night, and to the last his tones were clear as a bell. Add to these qualities the fact that he was endowed with dramatic genius of equal fibre, and you will ask, What then did he lack? He lacked the high polish of art."

This interpretative criticism is well matched and paralleled by John Foster Kirk, who wrote, "Forrest had extraordinary physical advantages, and though he failed to make them properly responsive to the call of deep or wild emotion (had he succeeded in this, his

rightful eminence would have been as little disputed as was that of Talma or Mrs. Siddons), he displayed them intelligently, and with a very pleasing effect in many scenes and passages of a less exacting nature. He acted best when he acted least, — when he was content to let his fine face, his imposing figure, and the full, pure tones of his unforced voice exert their natural charm.”

I have found it difficult to get at the exact merits of the unseemly row between Forrest and Macready. Writers of theatrical biography are apt to shy at the plain, unvarnished truth. Not content with presenting their man a hero only a little lower than the angels, they do their utmost to exalt him to a position unparalleled in the heavens. If you want to know the genuine worth of a player, shun resolutely the panegyric labours of his authorised biographers. It is now too late a day to permit any petty feelings of misapplied patriotism to sway one's judgment; and ruling out resolutely the sentiment that so biassed contemporaneous opinion, there is nothing to offset the conclusion that Forrest alone was to blame for the shameful episode

in the theatrical history of the United States. I do not doubt that when Forrest failed — and fail he unquestionably did — to win the approval of the London public on his second visit to that city, Macready did make apparent his delight at the downfall of the player who had set himself up as a rival. Macready would have been a remarkable actor if he had wholly restrained himself at that critical moment. Still, there is no positive evidence that Macready did even that much. There are only Forrest's own claims, and Forrest, by his exaggerations and misstatements of details in connection with his controversy with the English actor, plainly proved that his word on that particular subject was not to be relied upon. The Reverend William R. Alger, Forrest's biographer, received his facts either from the actor himself or from the actor's personal friends, and consequently Mr. Alger's review of the case is prejudiced. William Archer, the London dramatic critic, in his excellent biography of Macready, went to the original source for his information, — playbills and the publications of the period. Moreover, Mr. Archer is of sound and judicial thought, mani-

festly fair, and with absolutely no reason to falsify. His conclusions, fortified with data and reasonable always, impress one as truthful and sincere. I have utilised them in the following narrative of the events that led up to the Macready riots.

Forrest and Macready met during Macready's first tour of the United States in 1826, when Forrest was coming to the front at the Bowery Theatre. Macready liked the young American actor, thirteen years his junior, and recorded the fact in his diary. When Forrest went to England in 1836, he dined with Macready, and wrote home that "Mr. Macready behaved in the handsomest manner to me." Their paths crossed again in 1843-44, when Macready visited the United States. Forrest entertained the English actor in New York, and five months later, when they were together in New Orleans, they were still friendly, although newspaper writers were beginning to make comparisons between them. Mr. Archer finds untenable the theory, which posits the germ of the strife in Macready's rage over the "failure" of this tour, for Macready was successful, especially in the South and West.

The feud, according to Mr. Archer, really dates from Macready's visit to Paris in 1844-45.

Forrest went to Paris while Macready was acting there, and, willing to show that America had her tragedian as well as England, called on Mitchell, the manager of the English company, in order to make arrangements to appear. Mitchell, for some unknown reason, refused to see him, and Forrest immediately blamed Macready for the affront, and continued to blame him, even after Mitchell had asserted in writing that Macready had nothing to do with the matter. Still incensed at the rebuff, Forrest journeyed to London to appear at the Princess's Theatre, where only a day or two before Charlotte Cushman had made a successful London début. Forrest's opening there is a matter of controversy. Forrest claimed that the house was packed by Macready and John Forster, the critic of *The Examiner* and the personal friend of Macready, and that he was not given a hearing as Othello. Mr. Archer found that the London newspapers told a different story. *The Times* stated that Forrest's Othello was greatly applauded, and the *John*



*Bull* added the commendation that it "merited the immense applause that it received." After Forrest had played *Macbeth* four days later, however, Oxenford remarked that "the tragedy was not announced for repetition, probably on account of the general disapprobation that Mr. Forrest's peculiarities excited, in spite of the unanimous applause awarded to Miss Cushman." Probably, Mr. Archer adds, it was this "general disapprobation" of Forrest's third performance that grew into the statement that an attempt was made to drive him from the stage on his opening night. Subsequently, Forrest's *King Lear* and *Metamora* were warmly praised by *The Times*. The engagement came to an end, prematurely probably, after eighteen performances.

The critic Forster, next to Macready, bore the brunt of Forrest's resentment. In 1836 Forster was alone in depreciating Forrest's boisterous acting of *Othello* and *Lear*, though he did join in the praise of Forrest's non-Shakespearian characters. While Forrest was playing in London in 1845, Forster himself was ill, and there were no direct criticisms of Forrest's performances in *The Examiner*.

There did, however, appear two or three contemptuous paragraphs regarding Forrest, and by these the passion of Forrest was still further inflamed. Then came Forrest's indefensible act of hissing Macready's Hamlet in Edinburgh. Mr. Archer declares that, as far as he has been able to learn, that hiss of Forrest's was the solitary one during the performance. Yet, when he returned to the United States, Forrest's tale was that the entire English press had assailed him, and that the whole Edinburgh theatre had hissed Macready. In addition, the unfortunate element of caste complicated the situation in the United States. Forrest's hold on the mass of the people was remarkable. He was a popular idol. Through Forrest, the potency of physical magnetism was artfully exerted, though held in check by iron repose and precision of method that approached perfection. His humour was that of the lioness playing with her cubs, his passion, a blaze of ferocity that swept an emotionally impressive audience into unrestrained frenzy. Macready appealed to an entirely different class in the community. With natural gifts less pronounced than those

of Forrest, Macready earned the leading position on the English-speaking stage by incessant work and study. He was an intellectual actor, and it was the refined and the cultivated that appreciated his acting most highly.

Macready's engagements in New York and Boston in the fall of 1848 were without especial incident. Not until he appeared in Philadelphia on November 20 was there any hostile demonstration. The audience was noisy through the presentation of "Macbeth," though the majority was with Macready. Macready made a speech in which he asserted that he had never injured Forrest. Forrest replied to this by a newspaper card in which he called Macready a "superannuated driveller." Macready's tour South and West was without incident, and May found him again in New York ready for his farewell performances. Although he knew that Forrest was in the city, playing at the Broadway Theatre, Macready apparently anticipated not the slightest difficulty, and the demonstration at the Astor Place Opera-House on the night of May 7, when he tried to act Macbeth, was a surprise to him. It was Macready's intention

to quit then and there, but a petition signed by forty-eight prominent citizens, including Washington Irving and Richard Grant White, induced him to change his mind, and "Macbeth" was announced for May 10. In the meanwhile, the "Replies from England," refuting Forrest's charges, were published, and, if anything, made the situation still more critical.

On the evening of May 10 the theatre was filled with those favourable to Macready, though a few "Bowery Lads" were present, who made themselves heard during the first act, after which they were ejected by the police. Outside, however, the mob was both noisy and active. Stones were hurled against the windows, and the theatre was literally besieged. Still the play continued to the end, although the spectators who remained were obliged to huddle together in the sheltered places. After the play, Macready escaped from the theatre disguised, boarded a train and went to Boston, sailing from that port for England two days later. The crowd surrounding the theatre got entirely beyond the control of the police, and the militia was called. The

soldiers were assailed with stones and missiles of all sorts, but not until they were falling in the ranks and in actual danger of being overwhelmed was the order to fire given. Of the rioters twenty-two were killed, and many more wounded.

Beginning January 9, 1852, occurred Forrest's memorable engagement of sixty nights at the Broadway Theatre, New York. He appeared first as Damon. This was immediately after the notorious divorce proceedings, the trial of his suit against his wife, — formerly Miss Catherine Sinclair, whom Forrest had married in London in 1837, — and her suit against him. Forrest lost in court, but as a defeated man he was even more popular with the masses than before. In February, 1853, he produced "Macbeth" at the Broadway Theatre with unusual elaborateness, and the play continued for twenty nights, up to that date the longest run of a Shakespearian drama on record in America. In 1858, Forrest announced his farewell to the stage, but in the fall of 1860 he was acting again, beginning his engagement of one hundred nights at Niblo's Garden with "Hamlet." This was the climax of his career,

for shortly afterward he was afflicted with gout, which resulted in lameness and partial paralysis. His last engagement in New York occurred in February, 1871, when he acted *Lear* and *Richelieu*. On March 25, 1872, he opened at the Globe Theatre, Boston, playing *Lear* the first week. For the second week he announced *Richelieu* and *Virginius*; but Sunday he caught cold, and on Tuesday evening, April 2, as *Richelieu*, he made what proved to be his last appearance before the public as an actor. "*Virginius*" was scheduled for Wednesday evening, but Forrest was too ill to fulfil the engagement. During the summer he regained his strength sufficiently to make the attempt in the fall to reënter public life as a reader. The experiment was disappointing. Edwin Forrest died on December 12, 1872.

According to Lawrence Barrett, Forrest's greatest Shakespearian parts were *Lear*, *Othello*, and *Coriolanus*. *Lear* grew in mellowness as the actor became older, while it still retained much of its early force. His *Othello* suffered with the decline of his faculties, although his clear conception of all he did was apparent to the end in the acting of every

one of his parts. Coriolanus died with him. Forrest was at his best in such parts as Virginius, William Tell, and Spartacus, where his mannerisms of gait and utterance were less noticeable than in his Shakespearian characters, or were overlooked in the rugged massiveness of the creation. Hamlet, Richard, and Macbeth were out of his temperament, and added nothing to his fame; but Richelieu is said to have been one of his noblest and most impressive performances. "He was in all things marked and distinctive," continued Mr. Barrett. "His obtrusive personality often destroyed the harmony of the portrait he was painting, but in his inspired moments, which were many, his touches were sublime. He passed over quiet scenes with little elaboration, and dwelt strongly upon the grand features of the characters he represented. His Lear, in the great scenes, rose to a majestic height, but fell in places almost to mediocrity. His art was unequal to his natural gifts. He was totally unlike his great contemporary and rival, Macready, whose attention to detail gave to every performance the harmony of perfect work."

## CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN

Charlotte Cushman has always been to me a creature of mystery, though exactly why, I cannot say. Certainly the facts of her life and career are straightforward and simple, even prosaic. Yet, as regards Charlotte Cushman herself, I always have been and am still puzzled, dissatisfied, and undecided. She was the first great American actress. That much is plain; but is it true, as it is so often claimed, that she has never been rivalled on the stage of this country? As regards the potent spell of her personality, there can be no dispute, for scarcely a critic writes of her in cold blood and with satisfactory analysis. Still, how came it that this marvel of personality grew out of even-tempered and strictly conventional New England? To be sure, neither New England nor New York, for that matter, had any notion that she was a genius until England discovered it, for Charlotte Cushman was simply the "utility woman" of a New York stock company, when William Charles Macready magically aroused her and sent her abroad to conquer the same





**CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN**  
Early in her career



London, which would not receive the American Forrest, already accounted a great actor in his own country.

Charlotte Cushman was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on July 23, 1816. Her family was thoroughly Puritan, Robert Cushman, the original immigrant, being credited with having preached the first sermon in New England. Miss Cushman went on the stage because necessity compelled her to earn her living. When she was thirteen years old, she had to leave school; and she began then a semi-public life by singing contralto in church choirs and in concerts in Boston. In 1835, Mrs. Wood, a famous prima donna of that day, required a contralto for her company, and secured Miss Cushman. After a little coaching Miss Cushman sang at one of Mrs. Wood's concerts so successfully that her patron sent her to James G. Maeder to be prepared for the operatic work.

Miss Cushman made her professional début in opera at the Tremont Theatre, Boston, on April 8, 1835, in "The Marriage of Figaro," Mrs. Clara Fisher Maeder singing Susanna and Miss Cushman, the Countess Almaviva.

Her second part was Lucy Bertram in "Guy Mannering." She went with the Maeders to New Orleans, singing in opera at the St. Charles Theatre, where, in the attempt to make herself heard in a large house, she quickly ruined her voice. Following the advice of James H. Caldwell, the manager of the principal New Orleans theatre, she abandoned opera for play-acting, ambitiously essaying as her first part Lady Macbeth, which she impersonated at the benefit of Mr. Barton, the leading man of Caldwell's company. Miss Cushman's first appearance in New York occurred at the Bowery Theatre on September 12, 1836, as Lady Macbeth. The next night she acted Helen MacGregor in "Rob Roy" and Mrs. Haller in the lachrymose drama, "The Misanthrope and Repentance" from the German of Kotzebue, which is better known as "The Stranger;" and on September 17 at her benefit played Alicia in "Jane Shore." A winter engagement in Albany, New York, during which she played Lady Macbeth to the elder Booth's Macbeth, was followed by her reappearance in New York on April 21, 1837, as Romeo, and on May 13 and 15 as Meg

Merrilies in "Guy Mannering," her first presentation of what became her most famous character. On May 30, she appeared in Boston as Lady Macbeth, during her engagement acting also Fortunato Falvoni in "Matteo Falconi," Portia in "The Merchant of Venice," Henry in "Speed the Plough," a "breeches part," and Madge Wildfire in "The Heart o' Midlothian," a play founded on Scott's novel and antedating Dion Boucicault's "Jeanie Dean."

From September, 1837, to September, 1840, Miss Cushman was the "walking lady" or "utility actress" of the Park Theatre Stock Company of New York. During this time the chief characters that she sustained were Lady Macbeth, Alicia in "Jane Shore," Henry in "Speed the Plough," Mrs. Haller in "The Stranger," Portia in "The Merchant of Venice," Julia in "The Hunchback," Lady Teazle in "The School for Scandal," Claude Melnotte in "The Lady of Lyons," Tullia in "Brutus," Belvidera in "Venice Preserved," Romeo, Elvira in "Pizarro," Goneril in "Lear," Mrs. Beverly in "The Gamester," and the Queen in "Hamlet." With Forrest she acted Emilia

in "Othello," Goneril, and the Queen in "Hamlet." In 1839, she again acted Meg Merrilies, but it was not until she returned from her first English triumph that her playing of this character really attracted attention in the United States. Miss Stebbins, in her biography of Charlotte Cushman, relates very circumspcctly how Miss Cushman's conception of the part came to her as an inspiration, and declares that the effect of Miss Cushman's acting was so great and so unexpected that the English tenor, John Braham, who was singing Henry Bertram (for "Guy Manner-ing" at that time was a real melodrama, a combination of music and drama), was nearly overcome at the sight of her. Miss Stebbins thus grandiloquently described the moment:

"As she stood at the side scene, book in hand, awaiting her moment of entrance, her ear caught the dialogue going on upon the stage between two of the gipsies, in which one says to the other, alluding to her, 'Meg, — why, she is no longer what she was; she doats,' etc., evidently giving the impression that she is no longer to be feared or respected, that she is no longer in her right mind. With

the words a vivid flash of insight struck upon her brain. She saw and felt, by the powerful dramatic instinct with which she was endowed, the whole meaning and intention of the character; and no doubt from that moment it became what it never ceased to be, a powerful, original, and consistent conception in her mind. She gave herself with her usual concentrated energy of purpose to this conception, and flashed at once upon the stage in the startling, weird, and terrible manner which we all so well remember. On this occasion it so astonished and confounded Mr. Braham — little accustomed heretofore to such manifestations — that he went to her after the play to express his surprise and admiration.”

There seem to be, however, two very excellent reasons for doubting the truth of this interesting story. In the first place, there is no record to show that Braham appeared in “Guy Mannering” during the engagement referred to. In the second place, Miss Cushman was not at the Park Theatre, New York, while Braham was singing there, but in Philadelphia.

It was, as a matter of fact, as that melo-

dramatic horror, Nancy Sykes in "Oliver Twist," that Miss Cushman made her most abiding impression during her stay at the Park Theatre. She first played the part on February 7, 1839. Regarding this impersonation, Lawrence Barrett, who had acted Fagin with her, declared: "It was an astonishing thing, as well to those of the profession as to the public,—but the death scene was certainly superlative in effect; she dragged herself on to the stage in a wonderful manner, and, keeping her face away from her audience, produced a feeling of chilly horror by the management of her voice as she called for Bill and begged of him to kiss her. It sounded as if she spoke through blood, and the whole effect was far greater than that which any other actress has ever made, with the sight of the face and all the horrors which can be added."

At the Park Theatre, on August 30, 1841 Miss Cushman acted Oberon in "A Midsummer-Night's Dream," then played for the first time in this country for fifteen years, and on October 11, she was the Lady Gay Spanker,—a constrained and almost serious



Lady Gay,—in Dion Boucicault's "London Assurance," when that comedy had its first American production. During the winter of 1842-43, Miss Cushman managed the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, and the following fall she came under the influence of the finely rounded art of Macready, an influence that was literally the making of her. George Vandenhoff thus admirably wrote down the Charlotte Cushman of that period: "She played the Queen to me in 'Hamlet,' and I recollect her shocking my ear and very much disturbing my impression of the reality of the situation, by her saying to me in the closet scene:

“‘What wilt thou do? thou wilt not *kill* me?’

instead of

“‘What wilt thou do? thou wilt not *murder* me?’

thus substituting a weak word for a strong one, diluting the force and destroying the rhythm of the verse. She was much annoyed at her error when I told her of it; but confessed that she had always so read the line, unconscious of being wrong. . . . It is in

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darkly shadowed, lurid-tinged characters of a low order, like this (Nancy Sykes) and Meg Merrilies, — half demon, half human, — with the savage animal reality of passion, and the weird fascination of crime, redeemed by fitful flashes of womanly feeling, that she excels.”

From Macready, Charlotte Cushman obtained her first notion of what finished acting really was. Indeed, from him she learned practically all of the *art* of acting that she ever knew. After playing with him, she began to develop authority, whereas before she had possessed merely crude, unformed, and uncontrolled dramatic talent. He inspired her with something of his own spirit of conscientious labour, and he inflamed her ambition, banishing for all time the deadening condition of quiescent self-satisfaction that had temporarily clogged her advancement. In December, 1843, at Macready's request, Miss Cushman appeared at the Park Theatre, New York, as Evadne to his *Melantius*, as *Beatrice* to his *Benedick*, and as *Angiolina* to his *Marino Faliero* in Byron's "*Marino Faliero*," and after that she played an engagement with him in Boston.

Directly due to Macready also was Miss Cushman's decision to go to England, and on October 25, 1844, she gave a farewell performance at the Park Theatre, New York, as Beatrice in "Much Ado About Nothing." It was suggestive, as showing of what comparatively small moment this event was to the public at large, that the house was both small and plainly disappointed in her acting. Her first London appearance was on February 14, 1845, as Bianca in "Fazio," and she was received with unusual enthusiasm. Then she acted Lady Macbeth to the Macbeth of Edwin Forrest so successfully that after that night the two were never again friends. Her engagement at the Princess's Theatre continued for eighty-four nights, during which she played Bianca, Lady Macbeth, Emilia in "Othello," Mrs. Haller, and Rosalind in "As You Like It." On December 30, at the Haymarket, she appeared as Romeo to her sister Susan's Juliet and made another great success, and on July 10, 1848, when a gala performance was given at the Drury Lane by the command of Queen Victoria, Miss Cushman played Queen Katharine in

“Henry VIII.” to the Cardinal Wolsey of Macready.

On her return to the United States Miss Cushman opened at the Park Theatre, New York, on October 8, 1849, as Mrs. Haller in “The Stranger.” Her chief support was Charles Walter Couldock, who had come from England with her and on that occasion was seen for the first time on the American stage, with which he afterward became so thoroughly identified. In the spring of 1852 Miss Cushman announced the first of the frequently repeated series of farewell performances, but in December, 1853, she was acting again in Dublin, and during the following three months in London. In September, 1857, she was once more in New York, and on November 13, she played Cardinal Wolsey in “Henry VIII.,” being the first and only woman successfully to impersonate that character. On June 21, 1858, at Niblo’s Garden, New York, she began a second “farewell” engagement, during which she was supported by E. L. Davenport, John Gilbert, Ida Vernon, and Mary Devlin, afterward Mrs. Edwin Booth, who made her début as Juliet to Miss Cushman’s Romeo.

## Forrest and Charlotte Cushman 109

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The fall of 1860 found Miss Cushman in the United States, the interim since her last appearance having been passed in England, and her tour of the country was a brilliant one. On March 21, 1861, at the Academy of Music, New York, when "Macbeth" was presented for the benefit of the American Dramatic Fund, Miss Cushman played Lady Macbeth to the Macbeth of Edwin Booth and the Macduff of Charles Fisher. She sailed for England in July, and did not return until 1863, when she gave a series of performances for the benefit of the Sanitary Commission. During the season of 1870-71, Miss Cushman toured the United States as a reader of Shakespeare's plays, but the following season she acted. She continued before the public, part of the time on the stage and part of the time as a reader, until her farewell season of 1874-75. During these last seasons, Miss Cushman was disease-stricken, and she acted, not to earn more money nor to gain further honour, but solely to keep herself employed. Her last New York engagement began in Booth's Theatre on October 18, 1874, and in her support were George Vandenhoff, John

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Jack, Fred B. Warde, Charles Le Clercq, Mary Wells, Charles Wheatleigh, and E. K. Collier. She played Katharine in "Henry VIII.," Meg Merrilies, and Lady Macbeth, her final performance being in this last character on November 7. Her formal farewell to the stage took place at the Globe Theatre, Boston, on May 15, 1875, when she again acted Lady Macbeth. Her last appearance was made as a reader in Easton, Pennsylvania, on June 2, 1875. She died in Boston on February 18, 1876.

Miss Cushman's four best known characters were Nancy Sykes, Meg Merrilies, Lady Macbeth, and Queen Katharine. The first two may be dismissed with the barest mention — in fact, she dismissed Nancy Sykes herself as soon as her position as an actress became defined. Both of these characters were melodramatic monstrosities, and no actress, capable of presenting the vulgar emotions with boldness, vividness, and unembarrassed breadth of action, ever wholly failed in either of them, while actresses whose art, though keener and finer and deeper, has been lacking in the sledge-hammer qualities have always found



**CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN**  
Toward the end of her career





them impossible. Miss Cushman's capabilities in the portrayal of masculine character found their best expression in *Romeo and Cardinal Wolsey*. This latter part was acted at a time when it was quite the fashion to praise everything that Charlotte Cushman did, and accordingly her *Cardinal Wolsey* was praised. Yet, from the fact that no especial account was taken of it by her biographers, one may draw the conclusion that it made no extraordinary stir. Her *Romeo*, on the contrary, was accounted a decidedly effective impersonation. At least one experienced critic called it the best *Romeo* that he ever saw, making a single reservation in favour of the balcony scene as given by Ernesto Rossi. This superlative estimate of Miss Cushman's *Romeo*, which one is at first inclined to reject as absurd, becomes more tenable upon consideration. Let one ask himself how many male *Romeos* he has seen, who have really impressed him especially in the part, who were entirely satisfactory, who made themselves fixtures in his memory. There is scarcely a single one. There is, in truth, something very feminine — not effeminate, mind you — in the romance

and the ethereal idealism of Romeo's love ; and it is quite believable that a woman like Miss Cushman might have formulated in her feminine thought, and represented with her masculine face and figure, a Romeo in whom the seeming contradictions and rare subtilities of the character were perfectly reconciled and realistically revealed.

Faults emphasise virtues, and, therefore, one is better able to estimate the real value of an actor's work from an adverse criticism than from a favourable one. Of course, the criticism must really be a criticism, and not merely a tirade of abuse, which is as valueless as excessive praise. In both unmerited abuse and injudicious praise, the personality and bias of the critic are the prominent elements, and ordinarily it is not the critic himself, but the critic's opinions, that interest one. Before considering Miss Cushman's *Lady Macbeth*, it should be noted that there are two tradition views of this character. Mrs. Siddons made *Lady Macbeth* a very feminine woman, madly in love with her husband, insanely ambitious for him, ruling him by a caress, and spurring him on to crime and vio-

lence with a kiss. Charlotte Cushman, on the contrary, presented a Lady Macbeth that was more man than woman; and she had, moreover, a theory, which she claimed could be proven by the text, that both Macbeth and his wife were drunk when they murdered Duncan.

George Vandenhoff had acted Macbeth to Miss Cushman's Lady Macbeth, and in view of that fact there is more than a touch of unconscious humour in his criticism which follows: "I never admired her Lady Macbeth. It is too animal; it wants intellectual confidence, and relies too much on physical energy. Besides, she bullies Macbeth, gets him into the corner of the stage, and—as I heard a man with more force than elegance express it—she 'pitches into him.' In fact, as one sees her large, clenched hand and muscular arm threatening him, in alarming proximity, one feels that if other arguments fail with her husband, she will have recourse to blows."

Temper Vandenhoff's personal view with James E. Murdoch's dip into the psychological, and one begins to get an idea of what Miss Cushman's Lady Macbeth really was like: "Miss Cushman's style of acting, while

it lacked imagination, possessed in a remarkable degree the elements of force. She grasped the intellectual body of the poet's conception without mastering its more subtle spirit; she caught the facts of a character, but its conceits were beyond her reach. Her understanding was never at fault; it was keen and penetrating, but that glow of feeling, which springs from the centre of emotional elements, was not a prominent constituent of her organisation. She was intensely prosaic, definite, practical; and hence her perfect identity with what may be termed the materialism of Lady Macbeth."

Unmistakably on a plane higher than that of her Lady Macbeth was Miss Cushman's impersonation of Queen Katharine in Shakespeare's "Henry VIII." Adverse criticisms of this assumption must have been few, for I have been unable to find one. William Winter declared: "As Meg Merrilies, she obeyed the law of her own nature; as Queen Katharine, she obeyed the law of the poetic ideal that encompassed her." William T. W. Ball wrote: "Of these two parts (Lady Macbeth and Queen Katharine) it is safe to say that her Queen Katharine was the more finished performance. . . . The

great charm of this glorious assumption was found in its evenness throughout. There was no overstraining for effect, and if there were times when an unusually strong point was made, it was made with such exquisite *finesse* that in no degree whatever it overstepped the modesty of nature. . . . I incline to the opinion that her finest work was found in her interview with the two cardinals in the first scene of the third act, and in her death in the second scene of the fourth act. I have looked upon many a death scene on the stage as portrayed by Rachel and Ristori and hosts of lesser lights, both male and female, but never saw anything more impressive than this of Miss Cushman's. . . . The dissolution was so gradual that, from the very opening of the scene, one entirely unfamiliar with the history of Katharine could not fail of being prepared for what was certain to ensue; and when the culmination took place the impression left was so profoundly sad that tears became almost a necessity."


It is quite probable that in the mechanics of acting, — in gesture, facial expression, detail of movement, and more especially (and this applies particularly to Forrest) in the ability to

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be forceful and emphatic without being noisy, — there are actors on the stage to-day plainly the equals and possibly the superiors of Forrest and perhaps of Miss Cushman. But in one important requisite, — indeed, in the acting of Shakespeare, the really important requisite, — they were both unquestionably the immeasurable superiors of any of the modern players. This point of superiority was their elocution; and elocution comprehends not only reading the lines so that every word can be heard, — though there are modern actors who do not accomplish even that much, — but reading them so that the most subtle meanings are uncovered, the full beauty of the rhythm and balance is felt, and still the mar-ring element of pedantry is entirely absent. Such reading as that is an art in itself, and it is, unfortunately, an art which the modern stage has largely lost.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE LAST OF THE HEROIC ACTORS

ONLY two actresses in any way challenged Charlotte Cushman during her lifetime, and neither of them seriously. One was Jean Margaret Davenport, afterward Mrs. F. W. Lander. She was born in England in 1829, went on the stage when only eight years old, and at the age of thirteen played in the United States such parts as Richard III., Shylock, and Sir Peter Teazle. She was the originator in this country of Camille (John Wilkes's version), Peg Woffington, Adrienne Lecouvreur, Charlotte Corday, Mary Stuart, Maid of Marendorff, Medea, Parthenia, Marie Antoinette, and Elizabeth. Her last appearance on the stage was made in the Boston Theatre on January 1, 1877, in her own version of "The Scarlet Letter." The second of Miss Cushman's rivals was Mrs. Emma Waller, who made her first

appearance in America with her husband, D. W. Waller, in the old Broadway Theatre, New York, on April 5, 1858, as Marina in "The Duchess of Malfi." Her Lady Macbeth was a strong, passionate impersonation, and her Meg Merrilies was considered smoother than Charlotte Cushman's.

To find an approximate prototype of the essentially masterful genius of Charlotte Cushman, however, one must go back to Mrs. Siddons. Nor has Charlotte Cushman's successor yet appeared among English-speaking actresses. The nearest approach to her in style—and that chiefly in paralleling Miss Cushman's peculiar melodramatic powers—was the Bohemian, Francesca Romana Magdalena Janauschek, born in Prague on July 30, 1830, and first seen in the United States at the Academy of Music, New York, on October 9, 1867, when she acted Medea in German. Her repertory included also "Mary Stuart," "Deborah," "Gretchen," "Egmont," "Don Carlos," "Cabale and Liebe," "Braut von Messina," and "The Gladiator of Ravenna." During the season she acted Lady Macbeth in German to the Macbeth of Edwin Booth.





MADAME JANAUSCHEK



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Returning to this country for the season of 1873-74, Janauschek played Medea, Deborah, Mary Stuart, and Brünnhilde (of *Götterdämmerung*) in English with so much success that after that she made the United States her home. "A Winter's Tale," "Henry VIII.," "Marie Antoinette," "Woman in Red," "Adrienne Lecouvreur," and "Mother and Son," were added to her repertory before she attempted *Meg Merrilies* with such effectiveness that she in her turn became identified with the character. Another of Janauschek's popular performances was the dual rôle of Lady Dedlock and Hortense in "Chesney Wold," a dramatisation of "Bleak House." The plays that she produced were "My Life," by Harry Meredith, "The Harvest Moon" and "The Doctor of Lima," by Salmi Morse. Her last important part was the old hag in the sensation melodrama, "The Great Diamond Robbery," which she acted during the season of 1895-96.

The following estimate of Janauschek is by Philip Hale: "For in Janauschek is the rare combination of temperament working harmoniously and generously with art, to the glorification of each. Temperament is indis-

pensable, beyond price, beyond the attainment of art; but let temperament run riot, and there are in a performance a few great native moments, with dreary half-hours of commonplace and crudity. For temperament alone sees only a few points that interest, and to these points all else is sacrificed; or it is better to say that when nothing appeals to temperament, then there must be a Macedonian cry to art. Now, a woman like Janauschek in the detail always holds the attention by reason of her art. The hearer is conscious of the approach of great moments; the crescendo on the stage is synchronous with the crescendo of interest in the pit; there is no sudden, unexpected appeal that misses fire; art and temperament together enchain the audience, and prepare for the final climax, which, when it comes, comes as though inevitably, and with irresistible force. Here is a woman that is the last of the actresses of 'the grand style.'"

JOHN McCULLOUGH

Edwin Forrest, less individual than Charlotte Cushman, was the founder in a limited sense



JOHN McCULLOUGH



of a school; and, principally through the work of two "heroic" actors, John McCullough and Thomas W. Keene, the Forrest traditions remained on the stage for twenty-five years after the American tragedian's death. McCullough was almost Forrest's pupil; Keene pursued what he regarded as the most effective form of acting. Neither possessed Forrest's native force, his scholarliness, nor his originality, — Keene to a far less degree than McCullough.

Indeed, John McCullough (1832–1885) is worthy of more than the passing mention of indifference, for when one compares what he was with what he came to be, John McCullough stands forth as one of the most remarkable figures that the American theatre has produced. Born in Ireland in abject poverty, he immigrated to the United States at the age of fifteen years, and went to work in Philadelphia as a chair-maker. At that time McCullough could read, but he could not write. He educated himself. His school was the theatre, and his books were the masterpieces of the great dramatists. The spouting of a stage-struck workman in the shop where the Irish lad was employed made McCullough

acquainted with "Richard III." He read the play. Then he read the whole of Shakespeare. He saw Sheil's "The Apostate" acted at the Arch Street Theatre, became interested in amateur dramatic clubs, studied elocution with Lemuel G. White, and finally, at the Arch Street Theatre on August 15, 1857, made his début on the stage, acting Thomas in "The Belle's Stratagem." Three seasons there were followed by one at the Howard Athenæum, Boston, then under the management of E. L. Davenport. Early in the fall of 1861 McCullough was again in Philadelphia, at the Walnut Street Theatre. There Edwin Forrest found him, and engaged him to play "seconds," thus forming an association that lasted until 1866. McCullough's first appearance in the support of Forrest occurred in Boston in October, 1861, when he acted Pythias. His other parts were Laertes, Macduff, Iago, Edgar, Richmond, Icilius, and Titus, as well as the second parts in "Metamora," "The Gladiator," "Jack Cade," and "The Banker of Bogota." When Forrest revived "Coriolanus" at Niblo's Garden in November, 1863, McCullough was the Cominius.



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In 1866, McCullough assumed the management of the California Theatre, San Francisco, and for five years gave the Pacific coast a series of productions both magnificent and scholarly. Lawrence Barrett joined him in the management in 1869. During these five years McCullough added one by one to his repertory the great parts to which he so long played "seconds" under Forrest, Virginius being perhaps his most signal success. After Barrett withdrew from the partnership in 1870, McCullough continued the management of the theatre until 1875. On May 4, 1874, he made his first appearance in New York as a star, acting "The Gladiator" at Booth's Theatre, and following it with Richelieu, Hamlet, and Philip Falconbridge in the revival of "King John" on May 25. McCullough then returned to California, but on August 10 again acted at Booth's Theatre, appearing as Colonel Bligh in Dion Boucicault's "Bella Lamar," and on September 14 as Pierre in Boucicault's version of "Venice Preserved." A trip over the Western and Southern circuits preceded his return to San Francisco, where he remained until the fall of 1875. In March, he

played with Edwin Booth at the California Theatre, acting DeMauprat to Booth's Riche-  
lieu, and Richmond to Booth's Richard III.  
On April 2, 1877, McCullough began another  
New York engagement, during which he acted  
Virginius, Richelieu, Richard III., Othello,  
Iago, Spartacus, Metamora, and King Lear,  
manifesting a decided gain in his art since his  
visit of a year and a half before. McCullough  
first played Coriolanus at the Boston Theatre  
on February 7, 1878, and Lucius Brutus in  
"The Fall of Tarquin," at the Grand Opera  
House, New York, on May 13, 1878. He  
made his London début on April 18, 1881, at  
the Drury Lane Theatre as Virginius, and  
afterward acted Othello. On December 12, at  
the Fifth Avenue, New York, he brought out  
Lewis Wingfield's "The Bondman," a play on  
the Jack Cade rebellion. McCullough's break-  
down began in the spring of 1883. He was  
not wholly himself during the Cincinnati Dra-  
matic Festival, from April 25 to May 4, when  
he played Brutus in "Julius Cæsar," Othello,  
and Master Walter in "The Hunchback." In  
January, 1884, he made his last appearances  
in Boston, and New York saw him for the last

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time on March 29 as Richard III. His final collapse came on the stage of McVicker's Theatre, Chicago, on September 29, 1884. His death occurred on November 8, 1885.

McCullough was a simple, whole-souled, lovable man, and his personal popularity was remarkable. Indeed, his friends were so numerous and so loyal that critical judgment regarding his intrinsic worth as an actor was in a measure swayed by the affection felt for the man. A fair estimate of his histrionic ability would place McCullough decidedly in the second class, but still not disgracefully so. He was essentially an "heroic" actor. Hamlet was beyond him. Richelieu was too subtle for him. The devilry of Iago he could not understand. McCullough was at his best in the closing scene of Payne's "Brutus," the forum scene of "Virginius," and the scaffold scene of "Damon and Pythias."

THOMAS W. KEENE

Thomas W. Keene (1840-1898), real name Thomas R. Eagleston, was born in New York city. He started as an amateur, played Lucius in "Julius Cæsar" at a benefit in New York

on August 13, 1856, and finally became a supernumerary at Niblo's Garden. His first prominent character was Henry IV., which he acted in support of J. H. Hackett's Falstaff in Albany, New York. After five weeks with that comedian, Keene's round of the stock companies began with an engagement in Newark, New Jersey. Following that, he was at John Brougham's Lyceum Theatre in New York, where he played Robert Howard during John E. Owens's long run in "Solon Shingle." A period as leading juvenile at Wood's Theatre was followed by stock work at the National Theatre in Cincinnati, and a barnstorming tour in "Macbeth," "Hamlet," and "Richard III." For four years after that Keene was active in the company at Wood's Museum, playing everything from a clown in pantomime and burlesque in support of Lydia Thompson to Macbeth. Keene made his English debut in July, 1871, as Ferris in "Across the Continent," and toured the Provinces successfully in that drama and "Jack Cade." One of those who played in his support was Henry Irving. On his return to this country, Keene played leads with E. L. Davenport, Edwin Booth,



THOMAS W. KEENE



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Charlotte Cushman, and Clara Morris. For five seasons, beginning in 1875, Keene was the successor of John McCullough at the California Theatre, San Francisco, where he acted with all the stars, alternating Othello and Iago with Edwin Booth, and during a run of "Julius Cæsar" exchanging the parts of Mark Antony, Cassius, and Brutus with Booth and McCullough.

Returning East, Keene was with the Boston Theatre company for a short time, his best effort being Coupeau in "Drink," Charles Reade's adaptation of Zola's "L'Assommoir," in which Keene represented the horrors of delirium tremens so realistically that no one would go to see the play. Keene's starring career began in 1880. The features of his repertory were "Richard III.," "Merchant of Venice," "Hamlet," "Othello," "Richelieu," "Macbeth," "Fool's Revenge," and occasionally "Romeo and Juliet." During his eighteen years as a star, Keene was never well known in the larger cities; but on the minor theatrical circuits he had a large and loyal following. Although his reputation was thus entirely provincial, he nevertheless made money, and

died a comparatively rich man. As an actor, Keene was inferior to McCullough. Keene's lack even of superficial finish was noticeable. His style was without flexibility, and his method without authority. Stilted, artificial, and unconvincing, still Keene was never wholly uninteresting, for he was the last representative of the Forrest school, the last "tragedian" on the American stage.



## CHAPTER V.

### MURDOCH, DAVENPORT, AND BARRETT

**E**VEN while Edwin Forrest was the acknowledged leader of the American theatre, there was being nurtured, comparatively unnoticed beside his greatness, a class of players destined in the end both to outlive and outact the school of heroic histrionism of which Forrest was the founder. The foremost characteristic of these actors was versatility, and not even "Davy" Garrick himself stood before them in that quality. They were not tragedians, nor comedians, nor romantic actors; they were all three, and whether they were best in tragedy, in comedy, or in romance, no man had the hardihood to declare. As chief of this categorical classification stood Edward Loomis Davenport, whose artistic reputation suffered most shamefully because of this very versatility, but who is surely entitled to rank next to Edwin Booth,

Charlotte Cushman, Edwin Forrest, and William Warren, as the most brilliant product of the stage in the United States. This school of versatility, if I may call it that, was not a native growth, but, like nearly everything else connected with the American theatre, an importation from England. Introduced into the United States by James W. Wallack, Sr., it found a ready follower in James E. Murdoch, who, although he began acting about the same time that Davenport did, attained the climax of his career much sooner than his better known and more gifted contemporary.

JAMES W. WALLACK, SR.

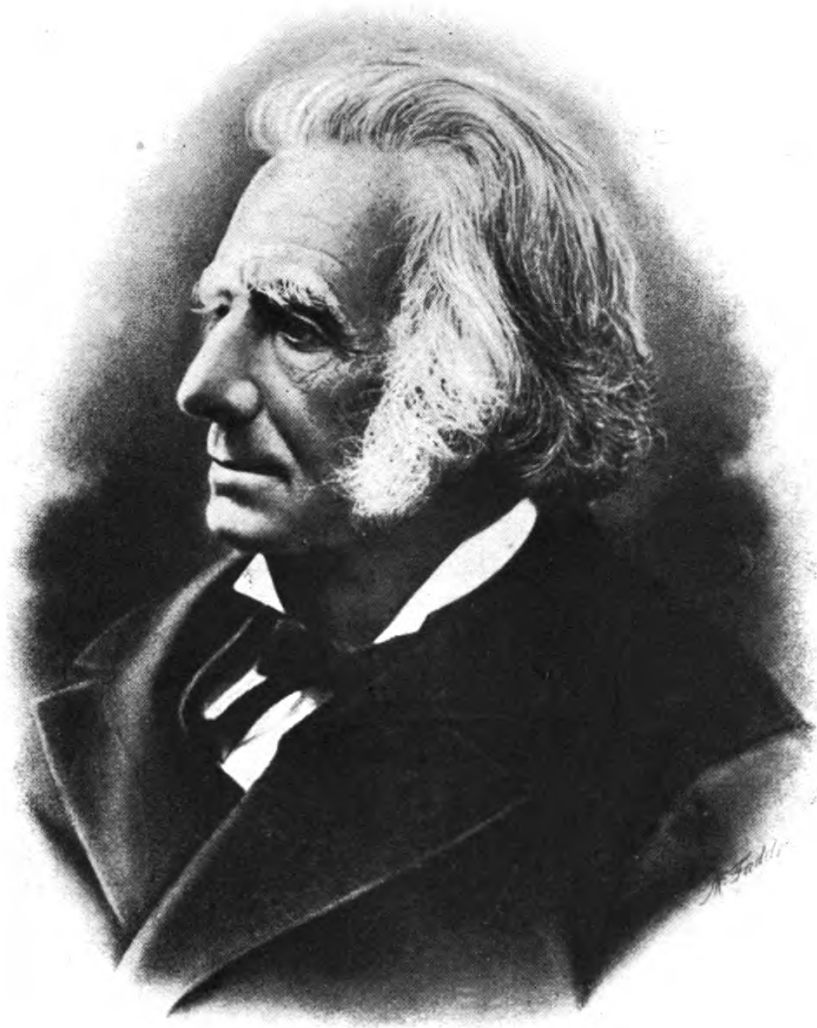
James W. Wallack, Sr. (1795-1864), was first seen on the American stage in 1817. Five distinct characters — Rolla, Martin Heywood in "The Rent Day," Alessandro Mazzaroni in "The Brigand," Don César de Bazan, and Dick Dashall in the farce "My Aunt" — are connected with his name, and are evidence of his versatility. He was a man of fine figure, handsome face, and distinguished manner, a notable representative of what Charles Dickens termed "the romantic school of acting."

James W. Wallack's brother Henry (1790–1870) was a stage-manager and stock actor, but Henry's son, James W. Wallack, Jr. (1818–1873), following his uncle's example, finally won his way to a "star" position. J. Lester Wallack (1820–1888) was the son of James W. Wallack, Sr., and the cousin of James W. Wallack, Jr. In 1852 the elder Wallack opened his theatre in New York, where he was exceptionally successful as manager and actor, and where he laid the foundation of the famous Wallack régime, which was carried to its culmination and conclusion by Lester Wallack.

#### JAMES EDWARD MURDOCH

James Edward Murdoch (1811–1893) was a native of Philadelphia, and, like John McCullough, was first an amateur actor, then studied under Lemuel G. White, and made his first public appearance at the Arch Street Theatre on October 13, 1829, as Broderick in Kotzebue's "Lovers' Vows." Murdoch's first notable success was made in 1831 at the Arch Street Theatre, when at his benefit he introduced a drama by Robert T. Conrad, called "Conrad of Naples." Although the play made

a hit, it had to be shelved, because the leading man of the theatre would not take it up. The etiquette of the stage, then in vogue, made it impossible for a subordinate actor to appear in a leading part except at his benefit. The manager of the Park Theatre, New York, offered to bring out the play, but Murdoch could not get his release from the Arch Street Theatre, and the golden opportunity was lost. Later, Conrad rearranged the work, and it became famous when presented by Edwin Forrest under the name of "Jack Cade." After playing leading juveniles with Fanny Kemble at the Chestnut Street Theatre, Murdoch was the home star in F. C. Wemyss's Philadelphia and Pittsburg companies, and then, after a year at the Tremont Theatre, Boston, the stage-manager of the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia. The season of 1840-41 found him again in Boston as the stage-manager of the National Theatre, where he had charge of the first production in that city of Boucicault's "London Assurance." After several years of retirement and study, Murdoch returned to the stage in October, 1845, acting Hamlet for the first time, the engagement



**JAMES EDWARD MURDOCK**



being played at the Park Theatre, New York.

The succeeding fifteen years proved to be the most important ones of his career. In 1856 he visited England, appearing at the Haymarket, London, in such comedy parts as young Mirabel in "The Inconstant," Charles Surface, Alfred Evelyn, Rover in "Wild Oats," Don Felix in "The Wonder," and Vapid in "The Dramatist." In Liverpool he played Hamlet successfully. During the war Murdoch devoted himself as absolutely to his country as any soldier in the field. He gave readings in all the cities of the North, in the soldiers' hospitals, in the camps of the army — wherever there was money needed, or fainting courage to be cheered. The last years of Mr. Murdoch's life were spent in lecturing, and in teaching elocution.

When Murdoch decided to go on the stage, he studied Hamlet with the purpose of making his first appearance in that part, even going so far as to put the play in rehearsal. He succeeded fairly well with the opening scenes, but when he came to the interview with the players, he broke down completely. After

that experience, he had the good sense to choose a less arduous character for his début. Murdoch did not act Hamlet until 1845, and then after an absence from the stage of three years, which were devoted largely to study of the part. Until Davenport took the honour from him, Murdoch was regarded as the best Hamlet in this country.

The Dane was a character in which Forrest never was received with any marked approval, except, oddly enough, in Edinburgh, Scotland. Royalty was not a conspicuous element in Forrest's equipment, nor was subtle suggestion. Hamlet seemed to embarrass him and to make him awkward in bearing and gesture. Moreover, he was violent, his quiet moments being only comparative in contrast with his vehemence in the expression of doubt, hatred, and anger.

Murdoch's Hamlet displayed fully the actor's merits and faults. It was thoroughly intelligent, in bearing graceful and princely, in quality courtly and gentle. But it was also cold and formal, a Hamlet that was scholastic rather than scholarly. For Murdoch, unfortunately, was pedantic in his treatment of the



mechanics of elocution. He studied according to a theory, and he talked according to a system. His thought was fixed first on the method of expression, and second on the matter to be expressed. As is inevitably the case under such conditions, Murdoch failed to inspire conviction. His sincerity was not positive. Davenport's art was deeper etched than Murdoch's. It was more finished. Retaining all of Murdoch's grace and royalty, Davenport diffused his impersonations with the fire of sensibility that Murdoch lacked. Davenport made Hamlet live, whereas Murdoch never got any further than drawing a picture of Hamlet. In particular was Davenport's scene with the grave-diggers remarkable for its ease, natural raillery, and satire.

EDWARD LOOMIS DAVENPORT

Edward Loomis Davenport (1816-1877) was born in Boston and became interested in theatrical matters while he was clerking it for a wholesale dry-goods establishment. This interest, as was the case with so many others, was manifested actively in amateur acting. His success as the leading man of the Booth

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Dramatic Association finally led to his professional appearance under the name of Dey in Providence, Rhode Island, when he was twenty years old. He played Parson Willdo in "A New Way to Pay Old Debts" to the Sir Giles Overreach of the elder Booth. During this first engagement Davenport also acted Montano in "Othello," the Duke of Albany in "Lear," and Marcellus in "Hamlet." From Providence the company went to Newport, and there Davenport made his first appearance as William in "Black-Eyed Susan," a part in which later he gained great favour with the public. In 1837 he joined the Tremont Theatre company in Boston, and began the round of stock characters, starting as the First Officer in Mrs. Gore's comedy, "King O'Neal," which was written for Tyrone Power, and not long after acting M. Deschappelles in "The Lady of Lyons" to the Claude Melnotte of Edwin Forrest, the Damas of John Gilbert, and the Pauline of Mrs. Barrett. The "walking gentlemen" and the juveniles of the old comedies were also assigned to Davenport, and in the course of the season he supported Booth, Ellen Tree (Mrs. Charles Kean),



**EDWARD LOOMIS DAVENPORT**



George Vandenhoff, and James E. Murdoch. At that time, too, Davenport had an excellent tenor voice, and he often sang between the acts such songs as "The Bay of Biscay" and "Billy Barlow." Even later, when he began to be well known through his tours with Mrs. Mowatt, he was accustomed, in towns where there were no theatres, to sing the ballads of the time, "Sally in Our Alley" and "All in the Downs," to appreciative audiences. After two seasons in Boston, Davenport went to the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, where he remained until 1844, when he made his New York début at the old Bowery Theatre as Titus to the Brutus of Thomas Hamblin. On the night of April 12, 1845, when Davenport was announced to take his first benefit, this theatre burned down. Davenport's first starring engagement was played shortly after that at the Boston Museum, where he opened as Duke Dorgan in "Presumptive Evidence." He was next seen at Niblo's Garden, New York, and during his engagement there, arrangements were concluded which brought about his association with Mrs. Anna Cora Mowatt.

Davenport joined Mrs. Mowatt in 1846 at the close of her first year on the stage, first appearing with her in Buffalo. At the Park Theatre, New York, on September 27, 1847, he acted Armand in Mrs. Mowatt's play of that name, and two months later accompanied her to England, opening first at Manchester, where Davenport played Claude Melnotte, and on January 5, 1848, in London, where he acted Sir Thomas Clifford in "The Hunchback." Later a combination was formed between Davenport, Mrs. Mowatt, and Gustave Vaughn Brooke, and the trio appeared in Henry Spicer's tragedy, "The Lords of Ellingham," Davenport acting Latimer. In January, 1851, began the series of Macready farewell performances, during which Davenport played such parts as Brutus, Iago, Icilius, and Macduff. He afterward supported James H. Hackett, and then acted on his own account, supported by his wife, who was Miss Fanny Vining. In all, Davenport spent seven years in England. He made his reappearance in the United States at the Broadway Theatre, New York, in September, 1854, as Othello. That was the beginning of his career as the

most versatile star that the American stage has ever known. He acted everything from Bill Sykes to Hamlet, and from Sir Lucius O'Trigger to Othello. He is known, on a single evening, to have presented three acts of "Hamlet," an act of "Black-Eyed Susan," topping off with the impersonation of a stage-struck Yankee in a farce. His attempts at management were numerous,—at the American Theatre (formerly Burton's), New York, at the Boston Howard Athenæum, at the old Washington Theatre, and at the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia,—but in none was he successful. He had both energy and taste, but he also had the sort of liberality that made him generous to everybody except himself. In 1862 Davenport joined with James W. Wallack, Jr., and the drama "St. Marc" was produced. In 1868 he acted Prospero for the first time, at the Grand Opera House, New York. At Booth's Theatre, New York, on December 25, 1875, began the famous run of "Julius Cæsar," with Davenport as Brutus, Lawrence Barrett as Cassius, and Frank C. Bangs as Mark Antony. A year from that time Davenport's last engagement in New

York occurred, during which, in support of Barrett, he acted Edgar in "Lear," Richmond in "Richard III.," and the sturdy blacksmith in "Dan'l Druce." It was in this character that later in the season Davenport made his last appearance on the stage. He died on September 1, 1877.

One cannot refrain from sympathetically admiring Davenport, the man, for his generosity in always providing for everybody else before he thought of himself. Nevertheless, Davenport, the actor, does deserve censure for thus displaying injustice toward himself and his own interests. As a manager, it was the weakness of others that Davenport continually strove to conceal, and the talent and ambition of others that he was always anxious to develop and gratify. In casting a play, Davenport first took care that all the rest were satisfied with their parts, and then, if there was anything left, he took it. To be sure, he usually succeeded in making noteworthy artistically these minor studies, but his constant undervaluing and minimizing of his own ability had a deteriorating effect on his reputation. He made himself too common, too



ordinary; and so the public, taking its cue from the man himself, became accustomed to regard him as common and ordinary.

Davenport, like William Warren, the comedian of the Boston Museum, lost through the very positiveness of his virtues some of the fame that was rightfully his. That is to say, they both forgot to be just to themselves as well as to others. Both were generous men, especially so in the theatre. They would scarcely have understood the attitude of the modern actor, who not only wants what actually belongs to him, but as much more beside as he can by any manner of means secure. Both Davenport and Warren liked to see their friends and co-workers succeed, and they were willing and anxious to help them to success. Dignified and thorough gentlemen on the stage and off, they breathed a spirit of kindness, such as is rarely felt either in or out of the playhouse.

Some of Davenport's finest effects were made by the splendid suggestiveness of his repose. His marked points were his quietness, his intensity, and his self-control; and in these particulars he was entirely of the modern

school. Alfred Ayres characterised Davenport as cold and formal, but Alfred Ayres's ideal actor was Forrest, so his estimate can hardly be depended upon. The style of Davenport's acting of Othello has been placed as between that of Charles Young and Edmund Kean, — more highly coloured than Young's, which was all drab, and less impetuous than that of the passionate and explosive Kean. Davenport's Sir Giles Overreach was assuredly one of the best of the many impersonations of that character, at least equal to the memorable portrayals of Kean and the elder Booth. The following estimate of Davenport is from H. D. Stone's "Theatrical Reminiscences :"

"He does not seek to take his auditors by storm ; he is content with winning them. In his impersonations, calm judgment controls his impulses. . . . His conception of character, matured in his closet, is produced upon the stage as he has learned to understand it. He leaves nothing to chance thought. . . . In reviewing any one of his delineations one is struck with its harmony. None of its local lights and shades will be found to have been exaggerated, but the various points appear so duly balanced

that the impression left upon the mind is precisely that produced by a well-drawn, well-grouped, and well-coloured picture.”

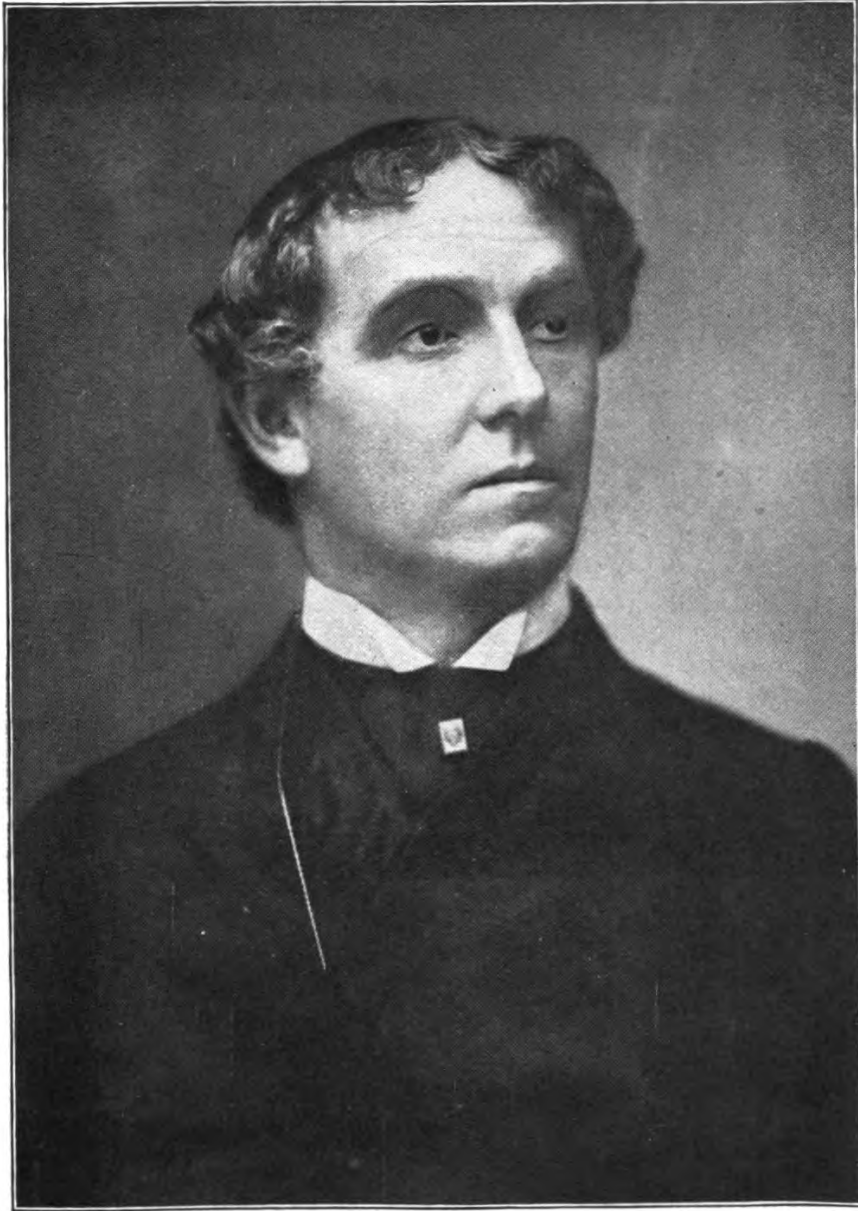
Edward L. Davenport was distinctly intellectual, and consequently the single great lack in his acting was the warming, vivifying, convincing potency of a tenderly sympathetic and an intuitively comprehending nature.

LAWRENCE BARRETT

It was the cherished plan of Edwin Forrest to establish a national American drama, and with that end in view he became a producer of plays early in his career. By offering prizes he thought to awaken an interest in dramatic authorship, and such successful works as “Metamora,” and “The Gladiator” were the direct results of Forrest’s zeal in this particular. However, after he became settled in his reputation, Forrest ceased longer to interest himself in new plays. He did not, in fact, feel personally the need of new plays; and the apathy as regards the contemporaneous drama, common among the star actors that followed Forrest, was not shaken until Lawrence Barrett became a prominent figure in the Ameri-

can theatre. He made himself, far more than had any of his predecessors, an actor-manager of the type that has so especially fostered the drama in England; and Barrett did this under circumstances and in the face of odds that would have appalled the English actor-manager. For Barrett had no theatre of his own, no theatrical home, as it were, and he was obliged continually to convey his valuable theatrical property over an immense expanse of territory and subject it to the extraordinary wear and tear of constant travel.

Lawrence Barrett was not a great actor like E. L. Davenport or Edwin Booth, but because Barrett had the germ of unrest in his temperament that made him a producer of plays, his lasting influence on the theatre of his country was far beyond that of Davenport, and nearly equal to that of Booth. Public taste makes the theatre, but it is original genius that makes public taste. Occasionally, this original genius expresses itself through the theatrical manager, as was the case with Augustin Daly, and to a less degree with Lester Wallack and A. M. Palmer. Usually, however, this original genius is found in the actor, who



LAWRENCE BARRETT



to be true to himself must continually seek the means wherewith to declare the artist that is in him. Witness, as the most illustrious example of to-day, Sir Henry Irving, who, without being at all a great actor, is, nevertheless, the leading figure on the English-speaking stage. Witness William Warren, to whose original genius as an actor of comedy was due the Boston Museum stock company, which disintegrated soon after his unifying influence ceased to be felt. Witness our own Julia Marlowe, whose artistic reputation has steadily declined since she resigned the direction of her own career. Witness Richard Mansfield, who by remaining true to his artistic sense rightfully claims leadership in the theatre in this country. Witness Edward H. Sothern, reaching marvellously upward since the day that he took under his own control the day and the to-morrow of his hopes and his ambitions. To these add Lawrence Barrett, one of the first actors of the United States to realise his responsibilities in furthering the artistic development of the theatre. It was but a just reward that, aside from his Cassius in "Julius Cæsar," the real excellencies of Lawrence Barrett's art should

have been revealed in three dramas of his own production, "The Man o' Airlie," "Yorick's Love," and "Francesca da Rimini."

Lawrence Patrick Barrett (1838-1891) was born in Paterson, New Jersey, of Irish parentage. He had practically no schooling, and when, at the age of fourteen years, he became call-boy at the Metropolitan Theatre, Detroit, he could scarcely read and write. Yet, he became, in the course of time, preëminently the scholar of the American stage, thoroughly versed in every branch of English literature, and an authority on the history of the stage. He early began to dip into Shakespeare, and his recitations about the theatre of the famous speeches that he had learned first induced the manager to cast the boy for the small part of Murad in "The French Spy." He acted that creditably, and other "bits" came his way. He left Detroit when he was sixteen years old, being engaged for the Grand Opera House stock company in Pittsburg, where he remained a year. Then he journeyed to New York, and, after literally starving, at length secured an engagement to support Mrs. Denis MacMahon, who thought that she was destined



for a brilliant dramatic career, but who quickly proved that she was not. As Sir Thomas Clifford to her Julia in "The Hunchback," Barrett made his first appearance in New York at Burton's old Chambers Street Theatre, in January, 1857. The star was harshly criticised, but the Sir Thomas, lean of figure and haggard of face, was warmly praised. During the four weeks of this engagement Barrett appeared as Fazio, Ingomar, Armand Duval, Claude Melnotte, and The Stranger. He was then engaged by Burton for the Metropolitan, afterward the Winter Garden, and on March 2, 1857, appeared there as Matthew Bates in Douglas Jerrold's comedy, "Time Tries All." Three months later, Barrett supported Edwin Booth, only recently returned from California, at the Metropolitan. Two seasons as the leading man of the Boston Museum, and an engagement with E. L. Davenport at the Howard Athenæum, followed. Then came the outbreak of the war. Barrett enlisted on the first call and served as a captain in the Twenty-Eighth Massachusetts from October, 1861, to August, 1863.

Following his discharge from the army,

Barrett played engagements in Washington and Philadelphia, one of the latter being in support of Edwin Booth, who made Barrett an offer to play opposite parts in an important engagement at the Winter Garden, New York. At the same time, however, came a proposition from Lewis Baker, to join in the management of a New Orleans theatre, and inasmuch as Barrett was himself anxious to try the great tragedy rôles, he decided to accept Baker's offer. The season at the New Orleans Varieties began in the fall of 1863, and lasted thirty weeks, during which time Barrett played Richelieu, Hamlet, and Shylock; his great triumph, however, being Eliot Grey in Lester Wallack's "Rosedale." After the season was brought to an untimely end by the burning of the theatre, Barrett started forth as a star in "Rosedale," opening at Pike's Opera House in the fall of 1864 and continuing on tour through the season of 1865-66. In 1867, he acted for a single week in Liverpool, England, and on February 17, 1868, began, with the presentation of "Hamlet," an eleven weeks' engagement at Maguire's Opera House, San Francisco. His next move was to

enter into partnership with John McCullough in the management of the California Theatre, and the season which began on January 18, 1869, lasted for twenty months.

The summer of 1870 saw the real turning-point in Lawrence Barrett's life. In the course of his starring engagement at Niblo's Garden, New York, an elaborate production of "Julius Cæsar" was made with Barrett as Cassius, Davenport as Brutus, Walter Montgomery as Mark Antony, and Mark Smith as Casca. As "the lean and hungry Cassius," Barrett made an extraordinary impression. In December, Barrett joined Edwin Booth at his new theatre on Twenty-Third Street, playing opposite parts to him for four months. On June 5, 1871, he acted Harebell in "The Man o' Airlie" for the first time. In December, 1871, he was once more a manager in New Orleans, where "The Coquettes" was successfully produced, but he returned to New York soon after to appear on Christmas night with Booth in a spectacular revival of "Julius Cæsar." On March 4, 1872, Barrett acted Hamlet in New Orleans, but mismanagement during his absence of the new Varieties Theatre in that

city cost the actor many thousands of dollars and several years of hard work before he cancelled his debts. During the summer of 1873 Barrett acted in San Francisco, and the season of 1873-74 was passed as a star in the standard tragedies. On December 27, 1875, came another big revival of "Julius Cæsar" at Booth's Theatre, New York, with Barrett as Cassius, Davenport as Brutus, Frank C. Bangs as Mark Antony, Milnes Levick as Julius Cæsar, H. A. Weaver, Sr., as Casca, Mary Wells as Portia, and in the cast E. K. Collier, Charles Leclercq, and Rosa Rand. On October 11, 1877, Barrett produced William Dean Howells's "A Counterfeit Presentment" in Cincinnati. The following year, at the Park Theatre, New York, "Yorick's Love," adapted by Howells from the Spanish, had its first presentation. "Pendragon," by William Young, was produced in Chicago on December 5, 1881, and Boker's "Francesca da Rimini" in Philadelphia on September 14, 1882. On April 14, 1884, during Henry Irving's absence in the United States, Barrett appeared at the London Lyceum as Yorick. The famous combination with Edwin Booth began in Buffalo on Sep-

tember 12, 1887. The following season, while Booth appeared with Helena Modjeska under Barrett's management, Barrett produced William Young's "Ganelon" in Chicago. For the season of 1890-91, he rejoined Booth. On March 16, 1891, the two were to begin the eleventh and last week of their engagement at the Broadway Theatre, New York. The play was "Richelieu," with Booth in the title part and Barrett as De Mauprat. Barrett could not act the first night because of what was adjudged a slight cold. He appeared Tuesday, but broke down during the Wednesday matinée. He died on March 20 of pneumonia.

The following summing up of Mr. Barrett's work, made by William Winter in the New York *Tribune* on December 29, 1885, the morning after Barrett's revival of Victor Hugo's romantic drama, "Hernani," indicates the actor's unusual activity: "Mr. Barrett has not restricted himself to Hamlet, Richelieu, and the usual line of 'star' parts. Long ago he brought out 'The Man o' Airlie,' and gave a noble and pathetic personation of Harebell. More recently he presented himself as Yorick. . . . His revival of Mr. Boker's 'Francesca da

Rimini,' three years ago, is remembered as one of the most important events of this period. His production of Mr. Young's tragedy of 'Pendragon,' in which he acted King Arthur with brilliant ability and fine success, gave practical evidence of a liberal desire to encourage American dramatic literature. Within a brief period he has restored to the stage Robert Browning's superb tragedy, 'A Blot in the 'Scutcheon.' Last season he resumed Shakespeare's Benedick, and brought out the charming little drama of 'The King's Pleasure'; and early in the present season he effected a fine revival of Mrs. Centlivre's comedy of 'The Wonder.' Mr. Barrett's range of characters is, in fact, remarkable. Among the parts acted by him are Cassius, Hamlet, Richard III., Shylock, Benedick, Richelieu, Don Felix, Alfred Evelyn, Raphael in 'The Marble Heart,' Yorick, James Harebell, Lord Tresham, Gringoire, David Garrick, Lanciotto, Claude Melnotte, and Cardinal Wolsey. . . . When he was at Booth's Theatre, years ago, he acted King Lear, and when he was associated with Charlotte Cushman he acted Macbeth. He was the first in this city to

impersonate Dan'l Druce, and he is the only representative of Leontes in 'A Winter's Tale' (this was before Mary Anderson produced this play), who is remembered by the present generation of playgoers." Referring to Barrett's acting of Hernani, Mr. Winter continued: "He carried it with splendid dash and touching fervour. The sonorous elocution was almost wholly discarded in favour of a vehement, impulsive delivery, and at such points as the challenge to Carlos, the reproach of Zartz, and the avowal of the outlaw's royal station, he spoke and acted with the true eloquence of heart, and he evoked a tumult of sincere public applause."

Barrett was at his best in the presentation of denunciation of the stinging, biting, intense type, in depicting passion vehement and active, and anger suppressed but struggling for an outlet. His elocution was his weakest point. He worked too hard at it. His anxiety to enunciate clearly and distinctly made his utterance pedantic in its preciseness, and robbed his speech of sympathy and spontaneity. Similarly, his regard for the rhythm of blank verse often led him into a singsong that was both

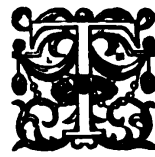
monotonous and deliberate. Barrett's grasp of pathos and sentiment was not ordinarily certain, though his Harebell in W. G. Wills's "The Man o' Airlie" was an exception in that particular. Scholarly intelligence and impressive dignity were evident in all his impersonations, and those of themselves commanded and obtained for the actor respectful attention and serious consideration. Yorick was Barrett's most elaborate performance, and probably his most finished; and in this representation, as well as in that of Lanciotto, the actor displayed a freedom and an emotional conviction that were not felt in his Shakespearian characters. This was unquestionably due to the fact that neither as Yorick nor as Lanciotto did Barrett have to deal with such elocutionary stumbling-blocks as formal soliloquys and set speeches.

Compelled at the outset of his career to fight for the recognition that finally was freely granted him, Barrett bore himself all his life with an air of aggressive positiveness that many found almost repellent. Yet he was a simple man, withal, a man whose intense desire was to be understood and to be appreciated.



## CHAPTER VI.

EDWIN BOOTH

HE life of Edwin Booth has been so fully recorded, and his art has been so thoughtfully considered by critics, notable among them William Winter, Laurence Hutton, and Henry Austin Clapp, all particularly and peculiarly equipped for the task, that it would be both unnecessary and unbecoming labour for the present writer to attempt to add anything to the work so lovingly and so worthily accomplished. Edwin Booth's place among actors and among men is firmly established, and there is no need to travel with the air of an explorer and a discoverer the road that has already been so plainly marked with mile-stones and sign-posts. Even if one had the purpose or the desire, which the present writer has not, to detract aught from the fame of Edwin Booth, such a purpose and such a desire could only lead to labour both futile and

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ungracious. Booth is solid on his honestly acquired pedestal, and no successor has arisen to snatch at the laurel wreath that bedecks his modest brow. He was the last of the great actors and the foremost poet of his profession, the idealist by whose achievements the theatre of the future is bound to be measured. The present writer does not expect — indeed, shall not try — to say anything novel regarding Edwin Booth as a man and as an actor; but he does hope so to place the art of Edwin Booth that its relations to the histrionic art both of the past and the present will stand in a light, which, if not positively new, will at least have the novelty of the only slightly considered. He shall try to interpret Edwin Booth as the promise of greater things to come, as the embodiment of a prophecy, as the culmination of one acting epoch and also as the indication of another. It is not, therefore, to advance any strange thing regarding Edwin Booth, but to declare his dual relationship, on the one side to the past, on the other to the future, that the following chapter on Edwin Booth is written.

Edwin Booth was essentially a tragic actor,

a depicter of the solemn emotions and the sombre thoughts of mankind ; and in the broad field of tragedy Booth's art was magnificently full and comprehensive. It encompassed the mental enigma of the intellectual Hamlet and the brutal animalism of the jealousy-mad Othello ; it exemplified the very essence of evil in the diamond-like brilliancy of Iago and the fulness of pitiable pathos in the cogent and definite suffering of the physically and mentally warped Bertuccio. As a lover and as the inspirer of merriment, Booth failed. While his habitual attitude toward women, so beautifully expressed by him in the scenes between Brutus and Portia, was chivalrous, tender, almost worshipful, he never sounded perfectly the note of burning ardour and of inconsiderate youthful passion, which is elemental in the compelling lover. Booth's humour on the stage was either grotesque or grim ; it had both the sparkle and the menace of a jagged lightning flash, flung from a black and threatening thunder-cloud.

Students of acting are fortunate in being permitted to trace in many excellent criticisms of Booth's work, from the beginning to the end

of his career, the line along which his art developed, its progressive growth and its final expansion. Edwin Booth did not blaze forth spectacularly in a single night as did Edmund Kean. He attained gradually. Booth's early model was his father, an actor of moments as magnificent as any ever realised on the stage. Wholly unconscious of the process, the son became fairly saturated with the spirit and the form of the elder Booth's acting, so much so, in fact, that in many characters Edwin Booth was obliged to watch himself closely in order to avoid actual reproduction of his father's method and manner. This acquisition of his father's artistic equipment was as much the inheritance of Edwin Booth as were his beautifully chiselled features, his glorious eyes, his facile form, and his natural grace and unaffected poise.

Thus it came about that Edwin Booth began as an actor of the strenuous school. It was not the strenuous school of Forrest, whose force was wholly physical and who had no notion whatsoever of spiritual expression, but it was the strenuous school of Cooke, Kean, and the elder Booth, a school which tried to

force an antagonistic combination of the physical with the spiritual, a school which relied for its effects on the power of an explosion rather than on the irresistible force of steadily accumulated energy, a school which alternated periods of slighted and inartistic action with climaxes that were by contrast grand and tremendous. The impersonations of Edwin Booth early in his career were characterised by violence of acting and conventionality of conception. When Booth first played Hamlet he was accustomed, during the rebuke of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, to hurl violently into the wings the unoffending pipe with which he had so cunningly trapped the pair. Later he abandoned that theatrical piece of business altogether. Booth's first conception of Shylock was strictly ordinary and wholly in line with tradition. He emphasised the Jew's good traits, and brought him forward as the avenger of his race, a figure of heroic proportions and martyr-like tendencies. As Booth's own notions moulded the character, Shylock became an entirely different person. He was still a Jew, who hated Antonio because he was a Christian,

but more especially he was a money-lender, who hated Antonio because Antonio was a foe to usury and therefore a menace to the Jew's profitable business. In this embodiment Shylock seemed very human, but he lost most of the impressiveness that was attached to the representative of an ancient and down-trodden race. Subsequently, the actor remedied this lack by so broadening his conception that it included both the Jew who was to a degree the avenger of his people and the Jew who hated Antonio because he was a Christian with a prejudice against the asking of interest money. In this, the final conception, extremes were avoided and theatricalism was spurned, while depth and intensity, implacable hatred, indomitable will, and resolute purpose were all expressed with impressive power and illuminating understanding.

Thus Booth, developing consistently his art, at the apex of his career and during his moments of ennobling inspiration,—for Booth was a temperament actor, dependent on the ecstasy of spirit for the full splendour of achievement,—became, all things considered, the most nearly perfect representative of the

modern school of acting that the stage has yet seen. Inasmuch as this modern school comprehends the highest development of the histrionic art, it follows that Booth must be placed in the front rank of the world's great actors. In honouring him thus, it should be remembered that Booth's reputation does not rest insecurely on his presentation of a single part or a single line of parts. He was both impersonator and interpreter of many and varied characterisations within the field of tragedy. Nor does his reputation rest on the unsatisfactory circumstance that he was able momentarily to intoxicate an audience with a massive emotional upheaval or a vivid shock of the horrible. Booth advanced beyond theatrics and the assiduous making of "points" into the realm of kindling imagination where sympathy and idealism combine with truth to make of nature a poem.

Edwin Booth was profoundly a "natural" actor, but his conception of nature was not a cosmos of dusty streets and mud-making watering-carts. He saw nature cleansed of the earthy, for he perceived nature through the refining glass of spirituality. There is

such a thing as ideal realism. It was this beautiful quality, paradoxical only to the superficial thought, with which Booth infused his impersonations. Many make the mistake of confounding realism, the quality of truth for which all sincere art is insistently striving, with literalness, a quality that is wholly foreign to art. It should be understood that the fulness of any artistic work is not found in its literalness but in its suggestiveness. Art abides not in mimicry nor in imitation, but in origination and in imaginative appeal. It is not what the actor does, but it is the effect of what the actor does, that counts. Cold, unenlightened method is nothing; but individuality, imagination, intelligence, sympathy, and understanding, all producing a specified effect in accordance with a preconceived method,—that is the art of acting at its noblest; and such acting is both realistic and idealistic. The common clay of man does not comprehend the beauty of positive reality and absolute truth until it is unveiled by the prophet, the poet, and the artist. Mistaking the shadow for the substance, the nothing for the something, mortals are given to call-



ing that real which is but the photographer's reproduction of sordid experience, to label that truth which expresses only the commonplace and ignoble. Such a view is narrow and uninspiring. "Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good repute," — those are the things that are real and true, and those are the things which it is the loftiest function of art to uncover. From the standpoint of ultimate perfection, therefore, art is realism; from the standpoint of the earthy, art is idealism.

"Taking Richelieu, Hamlet, Lear, Iago, and Bertuccio together," wrote William Winter, "the observer had a complete exemplification of Booth, and of his style and method." Mr. Winter adds that Booth was not a "natural" actor, in the sense that he acted as persons do in every-day life; but he was a natural actor in a much higher sense — because he produced natural effects by artificial means, by the legitimate exaggerations of art, while always sustaining himself in an ideal region. To do this he utilised to the

fullest extent his superb means of utterance, — the powerful eyes, the mobile face, the flexible, sonorous voice, the intense concentration of eloquent repose, and the force and grace of dramatic movement.

Edwin Thomas Booth, fourth son of Junius Brutus Booth, was born at Belair, Hartford County, Maryland, on November 13, 1833. He early became his father's companion, dresser, protector, and confidant, and consequently his schooling was both intermittent and limited. To replace this he had a vast and varied experience and close relationship with a brilliant and accomplished, though erratic and occasionally almost insane, father. Even as a boy Edwin Booth was grave and reticent, early developing the atmosphere of gentle melancholy that clung to him all his life. This air was not an affectation; it was Booth, though it did indeed cloak a disposition that among friends and intimates was often playful and always sympathetic and loving. Through this father, also, Booth was afflicted with an appetite for liquor that in his early years fitfully possessed him, — his devil, he called it. But after the death of his first

wife, he conquered this propensity absolutely. During his last seasons before the public, Booth suffered from vertigo, which occasionally attacked him while he was on the stage, affecting his speech and to some extent his acting. To this unfortunate condition were due reports that Booth was addicted to the use of intoxicants.

Edwin Booth made his first appearance on the stage at the Boston Museum on September 10, 1849, as Tressel to his father's Richard III. The prompter, who had been cast for the small part, persuaded Edwin to take it, and the arrangement was made without the elder Booth's knowledge. Not until the night of the performance did he learn his son's purpose, and then he did not approve of it. Indeed, it was some time before the father became reconciled to Edwin's evident desire to act. At Providence the same season, Edwin played Cassio in "Othello," and Wilford in "The Iron Chest." His first appearance in New York was made on September 27, 1850, at the National Theatre as Wilford, and in 1851 at the same theatre he acted Richard III. for the first time, his father having re-

fused at the last moment to appear, and Edwin being induced to take his place. The story is that the elder Booth wanted to put the boy to a severe test, and that as one of the audience he watched his son's performance. Edwin acquitted himself creditably, and was obliged to respond to the applause at the close of the play.

In 1852, Edwin accompanied his father to California, remaining in San Francisco after his father had ended a disastrous series of engagements and left for home. It was on the journey back that the elder Booth died on a Mississippi River steamboat. During his precarious first season in San Francisco, Edwin Booth acted Richard III., Sir Edward Mortimer, Shylock, Othello, and at his benefit, Hamlet. He then joined a stock company, playing seconds to Catherine Sinclair, who had been Mrs. Edwin Forrest, James E. Murdoch, and Laura Keene. In 1854, Booth visited Australia and the Samoan and Sandwich Islands. On his return to San Francisco he acted Benedick in "Much Ado" to Mrs. Sinclair's Beatrice, and a little later Raphael to her Marco in the first presentation in the

**BOSTON THEATRE.**

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\* He has gone on increasing in favor, his audience, consisting of citizens of exalted rank and distinction, and many of these old and well-qualified dramatic judges, who we see, go to hear him night after night. The attention paid him from the moment he appears is the most profound—every listener seeming spell-bound; and the anxious warmth of the applause so heartily bestowed on him at last, must be cheering encouragement to his young heart. We hail him the most promising actor of the day!—N. O. Paper, March 31.

**MRS. JOHN WOOD, MISS LIZZIE EMMONS,**  
**MR. BELTON, MR. JOHN GILBERT,**  
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**This Monday Evening—April 20, 1857,**  
 Will be performed, 1st Time in three years, the Play in 5 Acts, by Philip Massinger, entitled

**A NEW WAY  
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**SIR GILES OVERREACH, by . . . Mr. EDWIN BOOTH**  
 1st Night of his Engagement.

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WELLD, by . . . . . Mr. DAYMOND	ALLWORTH, by . . . . . Mr. COWELL	VINTNER, by . . . . . Mr. GOUVERNEUR
TAPWELL, by . . . . . Mr. T. E. MORRIS	TAYLOR, by . . . . . Mr. HOLMES	AMBLE, by . . . . . Mr. FORESTER
LADY ALLWORTH, by . . . . . Miss LIZZIE EMMONS	MARGARET OVERREACH, by . . . . . Miss EMMA TAYLOR	FROTH, by . . . . . Mrs. MARSHALL

To Conclude with, 1st Time this Season, the Comic Drama of AN

**OBJECT OF INTEREST**

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MRS. CULVERIN, by . . . . . Mrs. MARSHALL	Mrs. SIMMERTON, by . . . . . Mr. COWELL	And FANNY, by . . . . . Mrs. JOHN WOOD
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 will appear on TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY, and SATURDAY AFTER-  
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PLAYBILL OF EDWIN BOOTH'S FIRST APPEAR-  
 ANCE IN BOSTON AS A STAR



United States of "The Marble Heart." In 1856, Booth returned to the East, first appearing at the Front Street Theatre, Baltimore, and then in Washington and Richmond, Virginia, where Joseph Jefferson was the stage-manager of the theatre, and where Booth met Mary Devlin, who later became his wife. Booth appeared at the Boston Theatre on April 20, 1857, as Sir Giles Overreach, and his success was immediate. On May 14, at Burton's Metropolitan Theatre, New York, he acted Richard III., the Tressel being Lawrence Barrett. In Richmond, in 1858, he played "Henry V.," when that drama received its first presentation in this country. Booth married Mary Devlin on July 7, 1860. She died on February 21, 1863, leaving a daughter, Edwina, who was born in December, 1861.

In 1860, at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, Booth appeared for the first time as Bertuccio in "The Fool's Revenge," Tom Taylor's version of Victor Hugo's "Le Roi S'Amuse." On December 10, Booth and Charlotte Cushman began a series of ten performances at the Academy of Music, Philadelphia, presenting Wolsey and Queen

Katharine in "Henry VIII.," Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, Shylock and Portia, and Katharine and Petruchio. In September, 1861, Booth and his wife sailed for England, and that same month he appeared at the Haymarket, London, as Shylock, but was not well received. Sir Giles Overreach fared no better, and Richard III. even worse. Finally, at the very end of the engagement, Richelieu, which Booth had originally acted in California in July, 1856, and which continued to the end of his career to be one of his greatest parts, was tried and scored a complete success. Unfortunately, however, Booth was soon obliged to leave London, and was thus unable to follow up his advantage. He played for three weeks in Manchester with Henry Irving as his Laertes in "Hamlet" and Bassanio in "The Merchant of Venice." Returning to the United States, Booth began an engagement at the Winter Garden, New York, on September 21, 1862, and continued acting until his wife's death, after which he did not appear in public for several months. During the Winter Garden engagement, he played Hamlet, Othello, Lucius Brutus, Shylock, Iago, Richelieu, Rich-







ard III., Romeo, Pescara, Sir Edward Mortimer, and Don César de Bazan.

On September 22, 1863, Booth and John Sleeper Clarke became the managers of the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, and opened the house with Booth as Hamlet. Toward the close of his stay, which came in the middle of October, Booth acted Ruy Blas for the first time. On August 18, 1864, the Winter Garden was opened by Booth, John Sleeper Clarke, and William Stuart. On November 25, the three Booth brothers appeared in "Julius Cæsar," — Junius Brutus as Cassius, Edwin as Brutus (his first appearance in the part), and John Wilkes as Mark Antony. The next night, Booth began his one hundred consecutive nights as Hamlet, the play being elaborately staged and finely cast. Booth played Sir Edward Mortimer at the Boston Theatre on the night of April 14, 1865, and the next morning the fearful news of the assassination of President Lincoln by John Wilkes Booth reached him. With the avowed purpose of quitting the stage for ever, Edwin Booth retired in sorrow and shame to his home in New York. The counsel of kind

friends and the evident public sympathy served at length to dissolve the resolution, and at the Winter Garden on January 3, 1866, Booth once more appeared as Hamlet. He was received with the greatest enthusiasm. On February 1, a sumptuous revival of "Riche-lieu" was made, and on January 28, 1867, "The Merchant of Venice" was similarly adorned. The last week of this engagement also saw the last of the theatre. Booth played on five successive nights Pescara, Hamlet, Othello, Sir Giles Overreach, and Lucius Brutus. Early in the morning of March 23, the theatre was destroyed by fire, and with it all of Booth's fine scenery and many of his personal effects, valued mementoes, and relics.

To raise money for the building of Booth's Theatre, Booth travelled for two years. In Chicago, Mary McVicker, afterward Booth's second wife, played Juliet to his Romeo. Booth's Theatre was opened on February 3, 1869, with Booth and Miss McVicker in "Romeo and Juliet." The play was beautifully staged, and was given for the first time in America in the original text of Shakespeare. It ran sixty-eight nights, and was

followed on April 19 by "Othello," which ran till May 29. On June 7, Booth and Miss McVicker were married. She died on November 13, 1881.

On January 5, 1870, Booth reappeared at his theatre as Hamlet, which he played until March 19, following it with Sir Giles Overreach, Claude Melnotte, and Macbeth. Beginning January 9, 1871, Booth presented "Richelieu" for eight weeks, and after that, "Much Ado About Nothing," "Othello," and "The Fool's Revenge." On April 24, "A Winter's Tale" was brought out with Lawrence Barrett as Leontes. December 25, 1871, "Julius Cæsar" was produced, Booth acting at different times Brutus, Cassius, and Antony, and Lawrence Barrett winning great praise for his Cassius. In 1874, Booth was forced into insolvency, and his theatre passed out of his hands. Booth's Theatre, however, was not a failure. It was badly financed, and Booth suffered unnecessary losses through his lack of business ability. The house in the first place cost twice as much as was needed, and, as if that were not enough, Booth gave away, in a moment when he was harassed by his

cares, a third of the real estate, which he was later compelled to buy back.

During Booth's management of the house, there appeared in its company many players who at that time were, or afterward became, prominent on the American stage. It was at one time a common allegation that Booth preferred to be supported by actors of inferior quality in order that his brilliancy might seem all the greater in contrast. This claim was not borne out by the facts. While Booth was himself a manager, he always secured the best talent that was available. After he ceased to manage his own affairs, his company was engaged without his having any voice in the matter. Moreover, Booth was always ready to appear with distinguished actors, whenever the opportunity was afforded. In the Winter Garden days, he played Iago with the famous German, Bogumil Davidson, as Othello, and Madame Methua-Scheller as Desdemona. Booth also acted with Charlotte Cushman, Janaushek, Ristori, John McCullough, E. L. Davenport, Salvini, and Henry Irving, and he starred with Lawrence Barrett and Helena Modjeska.

In Chicago, October, 1870, Booth first presented "King Lear" according to the original text. For ten years he had refrained from acting the play, which he had been accustomed to give in the Tate version as modified by Kemble. On October 25, 1875, Booth appeared at Daly's Fifth Avenue Theatre as Richard II., and the next year he substituted for Colley Cibber's "Richard III." a version made from the original text. Beginning in Baltimore on January 3, 1879, Booth made an extraordinarily successful tour of the South, which he had not visited since 1859. That fall, he returned to California, where he was given another cordial reception. Booth's customary repertory at this time included some sixteen dramas, which indicate the character of his engagements for the rest of his career. They were "Hamlet," "The Lady of Lyons," "The Fool's Revenge," "The Stranger," "Richard II.," "Don César de Bazan," "Othello," "The Merchant of Venice," "Richelieu," "Much Ado," "Richard III.," "Ruy Blas," "Julius Cæsar," "Lear," "Katharine and Petruchio," and "Macbeth." On November 6, 1880, Booth appeared at the Princess's

Theatre, London, in "Hamlet." Henry Irving was acting at the Lyceum in the same play, and the newcomer was gazed at somewhat askance by loyal Londoners. Sympathy and enthusiasm developed, however, for his Richelieu, Bertuccio, Iago, and Lear. On May 2, 1881, Booth appeared at the Lyceum as Othello, Irving being the Iago, Ellen Terry the Desdemona, William Terriss the Cassio, and Arthur Wing Pinero the Roderigo. Later Irving acted Othello and Booth Iago. Iago was declared one of Irving's best parts, but he was less successful as Othello. While Booth and Irving were appearing together, John McCullough was also acting in London. One night he hurried from his theatre to see Irving's death scene as Othello. McCullough said nothing until the curtain fell at the end of the play. Then he arose slowly in his seat. "Good God!" he exclaimed. "If they can stand that, they can stand me. I'm going to play Othello." And he did the next week, to houses that applauded him to the echo.

On January 11, 1883, Booth played in Berlin, where he was finely received as Hamlet, King Lear, and Iago. A successful tour of



Germany followed. On November 5, 1883, he again began his work in the United States, opening at the Globe Theatre, Boston. On May 7, 1885, he played Macbeth to the Lady Macbeth of Adelaide Ristori at the Academy of Music, New York. The first Booth and Barrett season began on September 13, 1887, at Buffalo with the production of "Julius Cæsar." The repertory included "Julius Cæsar," "Othello," "Hamlet," "Macbeth," "King Lear," "The Merchant of Venice," "Katharine and Petruchio," "The Fool's Revenge," "Don César de Bazan," "The King's Pleasure," and "David Garrick." Booth acted Brutus, Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear, Shylock, Petruchio, Bertuccio, and Don César. Barrett acted Cassius, Laertes, Macduff, Edgar, Bassanio, Gringoire, and David Garrick. Othello and Iago were alternated. On May 21, 1888, at the Metropolitan Grand Opera House, Booth gave a performance of "Hamlet" for the benefit of Lester Wallack. John Gilbert played Polonius and Joseph Jefferson the First Grave Digger. During the season of 1889-90, Booth appeared with Modjeska, who played Portia, Ophelia, Cordelia, Desdemona, and Lady

Macbeth. Booth did not take a formal farewell of the stage. During the season of 1890–91, he was again with Lawrence Barrett. Barrett's sudden death occurred on March 20, 1891, and Booth's last appearance on the stage was made at the Academy of Music, Brooklyn, on April 4 as Hamlet. The last four years of his life Booth lived in rooms on the third floor of the Players' Club, his gift to the profession. There he died on June 8, 1893.

The art of Edwin Booth has been treated with such unanimity by various writers that I have not thought it necessary to enlarge or expound their estimates of Booth's conceptions and acting. I knew Booth only during the last years of his career, when his power was not at its full flow. Nevertheless, at that time, there were qualities in his acting never to be forgotten, and moments of such dramatic fervour and absolute conviction as I have never since found equalled. The thrill of the anathema climax in "Richelieu" is to-day as vivid in my remembrance as ever. His Shylock, with eyes that flashed lightning, contempt, and rage, has never been effaced. The malignant

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charm of his Iago and the immense impression of devilish cunning that it conveyed remain the most positive of my theatre-going experiences. In Booth was found the sympathetically ideal, which is the foundation of all poetry. The salient attributes of his art were imagination, insight, grace, intense emotion, and melancholy refinement.

According to William Winter, who had studied him profoundly, Booth could not at all times summon the fire of inspiration; he was, on some occasions, frigid and formal; but when thoroughly aroused,—as in the arras scene of Hamlet, the anathema scene of Richelieu, the frantic threat scene of Lear, the supplication scene of Bertuccio, the imprecation scene of Brutus, the tent scene of Richard, and the fight of Macbeth,—he rose to sublime passion, and he overwhelmed the auditor equally with the copious volume of his feeling and the splendour of his artistic utterance.

Mr. Winter continued that in Hamlet, Richelieu, Richard II., Bertuccio, and the lurid parts of Brutus, Booth was certainly one of the first tragedians of the world. He con-

sidered that in Lear Booth was at his best of passion and pathos, and declared that had not Booth fascinated his public with Hamlet and Richelieu, Lear would have been regarded as the greatest of his works. "He surpassed his father in that part," added the critic, "and his father, according to Hazlitt, surpassed, in Lear, that writer's idol, Edmund Kean."

The Shakespearian character with which Booth was most thoroughly identified in public opinion was Hamlet; and so absolute did that identification become that in an odd way Booth, the man, was held to be almost one with Hamlet, the imaginary character. In fact, Booth did possess, in a certain definite way, the Hamlet atmosphere. His habitual air was one of sweet melancholy; his habitual thought was less on the things of the present than on the things of a great, incomprehensible hereafter. He brooded over death with a pessimism that was too charged with sentiment ever to be gross and cynical. Booth intuitively felt and unwittingly embodied the individuality of Hamlet, as no other actor, of whom there is any record, had done, for it is only by living Hamlet in some measure



**EDWIN BOOTH**  
**As Hamlet.**



that the salient fibre of Hamlet can ever be reached.

The excellence of Booth's reading of Shakespearian blank verse has been generally granted, the single dissenter thereto being Alfred Ayres, whose claim has consistently been that Booth was careless of emphasis. Probably Booth did not read blank verse as Mr. Ayres would read it, but there is ample evidence that Mr. Booth's reading was wonderfully effective as an interpretative agent, wholly natural yet without a hint of the commonplace, and eminently satisfactory to those best acquainted with the Shakespearian text.

"A faultless pronunciation, an enunciation distinct, clean, and clear, without formalism or apparent effort, an exquisite feeling for the sweetness of words, and a perfect sense of their relation one to another, united to give to his delivery exemplary distinction, and to make it a model and a standard," was the testimony of Henry Austin Clapp. Mr. Clapp also remarked that Mr. Booth never seemed to find any serious difficulty in putting into practice the theory to which all the great actors and critics before his day had subscribed,—that

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in Shakespeare's blank verse sound and sense are as a rule so united that what adds to the effect of the one adds to the effect of the other; for the master poet uses the melody and the flow of his measure as an adjunct to the expression of the idea or the emotion, almost as if he were a composer of music, employing words instead of tones.

"I have no means of knowing what Mr. Booth's ability and desire were on other lines of study," continued the critic; "but of Shakespeare and the other English dramatists he was a close, intuitive, and discriminating student, often showing scholarly ability in judging of texts and readings, and constantly displaying such a mastery of the great playwright's thought in sum and in detail, as is possible only to a vivid and refined intelligence working strongly and assiduously. Justly to conceive, as an actor should conceive, a character like Hamlet, Iago, or Shylock is a true intellectual gift, and has been given to a comparatively small number of performers."

Booth was the connecting link between the old and the new in the theatre. He began on a stage where the actor was supreme in the



formulation and presentation of his character. He ended in a theatre where the dramatist and the stage-manager were the real creative agents, and the actor but the mouthpiece of their thought and the expression of their study and drill. Booth disliked rehearsals and methodical business, nor was it ever easy for him to keep his attention concentrated upon any one subject for a great length of time. While staging the play "If I Were King," E. H. Sothern made the remark that he would not use a new pen on the stage without a rehearsal. Booth would scarcely have comprehended what was meant by such an assertion. Even in tragedy, Booth was accustomed and ready to take things very much as they came. George W. Wilson, the comedian, who succeeded William Warren at the Boston Museum, told me an incident thoroughly illustrative of this. He was rehearsing with Booth at the Museum, and in one scene he asked the star where he should stand.

"Where do you usually stand?" said Booth.

"Mr. Barrett had me over there," answered Wilson.

"Yes?" mused Booth. "I usually have him

there," indicating the other side of the stage, "but never mind. Suit yourself. I'll find you wherever you are."

Precision and mechanical accuracy is insisted on in the modern theatre, and the result is perceived in performances that taken as a unit are incomparably better than the average performance under the happy-go-lucky system of the old times. The art of stage management has been developed to a degree undreamed of by the old-timers. But in the meantime the actor has lost much of the authority, of the professional pride, of the originative power, that were found in competent players of the old stock companies. Players of that day did know their business, and Booth was finely representative of those actors of originality and resource.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE JULIETS OF A CENTURY

**W**HEN that gallant Irishman, Richard Lalor Sheil, liberally fascinated with the feminine charm of his adorable countrywoman, Eliza O'Neill of Covent Garden, and, striving hard to provide her with a character that would fit perfectly her personality, created Florinda, the heroine of "The Apostate," in which were assembled all the virtues and all the graces, a character that has been ironically described as "the most affectionate and dutiful of daughters, the most romantic of maidens, the sweetest and most ardent of lovers, the most noble and heroic of women," — when Sheil thus publicly bowed before Miss O'Neill, feminine loveliness enshrined, he at once declared himself the willing victim of a species of heroine worship that probably existed before his day, and certainly has continued to exist to the present moment.

The class of women players who inspire this heroine worship habitually manifest their tragic powers in the type of characterisation of which Juliet is the loftiest example; and, in addition to this especial quality of tragic portrayal, they possess a decided capacity for mingled humour and pathos, which makes potently delightful their comedy as set forth in their Rosalinds and their Violas. In their ranks are to be found ten of the most winsome women of the century, — Eliza O'Neill, Mary Ann Duff, Frances Ann Kemble, Ellen Tree (Mrs. Charles Kean), Anna Cora Mowatt, Helen Faucit (Lady Martin), Adelaide Neilson, Mary Anderson, Helena Modjeska, and Julia Marlowe. All of these, with the exception of Miss O'Neill and Helen Faucit, have been quite closely connected with the theatre in the United States, though only three of them, Anna Cora Mowatt, Mary Anderson, and Julia Marlowe were the direct products of the American stage.

ELIZA O'NEILL

Eliza O'Neill (1791-1872), whom Washington Irving called the "most soul-subduing" actress that he ever saw, made her London

début just at the time that Mrs. Siddons left the stage. It was indeed an auspicious moment for this new actress, so entirely different from the Siddons, that imposing representative of impressive majesty and awesome dignity. Miss O'Neill was the embodiment of appealing loveliness and pathetic tenderness, and she came, I dare say, as a not unwelcome relief to the Londoners, somewhat unduly depressed by the ponderousness of the Kemble family. Certainly they fell at the feet of Miss O'Neill with an unanimity and an abandon most remarkable. To John Philip Kemble belongs the credit of "discovering" Eliza O'Neill. He found her acting in a Dublin theatre, and he wrote home about her thus: "There is a very pretty Irish girl here, with a small touch of the brogue in her tongue. If she accept the offered terms, I shall sign, seal, and ship herself and clan off from Cork direct. She is very pretty, and so, in fact, is her brogue; which, by the bye, she only uses in conversation; she totally forgets it when with Shakespeare and other illustrious companions."

So, on October 6, 1814, Miss O'Neill made her first appearance in London at Covent Gar-

den as Juliet to the Romeo of Charles Kemble. And such a furore as she created with this character and with her Desdemona, her Mrs. Haller in "The Stranger," and her Belvidera in "Venice Preserved," to say nothing of her Mrs. Beverley in "The Gamester," which made strong men forthwith forswear the cards and the dice for ever! Richard Lalor Sheil, with countless others, was violently in love with her, and inasmuch as she returned not an iota of his tender passion, but nevertheless was willing to make him just a little happy, she originated his Evadne, his Florinda, and his Adelaide regarding which he soulfully protested, "In adapting it, I endeavoured to combine beauty, innocence, and feeling, as I knew that your representation of such a character would not be an effort of art, but the spontaneous effusions of nature." For five years Miss O'Neill's vogue continued unabated. On July 19, 1819, she was announced to play Mrs. Haller, "her last performance before Christmas;" but it proved to be her last performance on the stage, for she was soon married to William Wrixton Becher, who later became a baronet, thus making Miss O'Neill for the rest of her days, Lady Becher.

Miss O'Neill's path had not always been so strewn with roses, however. Who her mother was, there is no record. Her father, the manager of a strolling company in Ireland, was an eccentric and half-crazy individual. In 1803, when she was twelve years old, "O'Neill's Eliza" made her first appearance on the stage in the town of Drogheda as the Duke of York in "Richard III." Five years after that she acted in Belfast, and in 1810, she went to Dublin to play Juliet. The "girl from the North," as she was called, became at once the pet and the pride of the Dublin theatre, and continued so until John Philip Kemble plucked the Irish rose to adorn his London garden.

MRS. MARY ANN DUFF

In the following glowing terms has Joseph N. Ireland eulogised Mrs. Mary Ann Duff (1794-1857), who, a native of England, early came to the United States, where she was the first actress to achieve a reputation at all noteworthy: "Acknowledged without dispute for many years as the first tragic actress of our stage, it is certain that she had never been equalled by any predecessor and very doubtful

if she has been surpassed, even by a Rachel or a Ristori, among those who have succeeded her." So much praise makes one incredulous, and evidently Mr. Ireland anticipated something of that sort, for he proceeded to fortify his contention in this forcible manner:

"Pronounced by the elder Booth to be the best actress in the world; rebuked by the elder Kean for attracting from him his proper share of the night's applause; complimented by Cooper and Forrest as the most desirable co-adjutress with whom they had ever been associated; playing with the elder Conway to be proclaimed his superior; . . . honoured by Horace Greeley's printed opinion that her Lady Macbeth has never since been equalled; . . . Mrs. Duff possessed higher testimonials of ability than have ever been awarded to any other actress on the American stage; and these have been reinforced by the testimony of that glorious artist and thoroughly competent judge, John Gilbert, who at the present day (1882) asserts that she was, without exception, the most exquisite tragic actress he ever saw."

Was this superlative estimate warranted, or was there here, as in Miss O'Neill's case, the



blinding dust of personality? It is difficult absolutely to decide, for practically all the evidence we have is that gleaned by Mr. Ireland to support his great admiration for the actress, whom he had seen during the impressionable years of his youth. However, we can at least suspend judgment until we have examined the facts. In 1809, three sisters were dancing themselves into favour in Dublin. Their names were Dyke, and one of their admirers was Thomas Moore, the poet. Moore's affection inclined toward Mary, the oldest, but she preferred a youthful Irish actor named John R. Duff, and to him she was married. So Moore consoled himself with Elizabeth, the next oldest, making her his wife. The Dyke girls were the daughters of an Englishman in the service of the East India Company, who had died abroad while they were young, leaving them but a scanty heritage.

Mrs. Duff came to the United States with her husband in 1810, making her first appearance at the Federal Street Theatre, Boston, on December 31, as Juliet. She made but an indifferent impression. The couple stayed two years in Boston and five more in Philadelphia.

"At this time," declared W. B. Wood, the Philadelphia manager, "she (Mrs. Duff) was very pretty, but so tame and indolent as to give no hope of the improvement we afterward witnessed." In the fall of 1817, however, when Mrs. Duff acted Lady Macbeth at the Boston Theatre, a great advance in her work was noted. Still further gain was remarked upon, when in February, 1818, she played Juliet to the Romeo of the admirable actor, Thomas Abthorpe Cooper. On November 30, at the time that James W. Wallack made his first appearance in Boston, her Cora to his Rolla again increased her reputation. So it continued until October, 1820, when she followed the presentation of Jane Shore with an impersonation of Hermione in "The Distrest Mother," that brought her the reward of unanimous praise. She seemed to throw aside all tameness and restraint and to act with fire and passion never before attained. It was after playing this part to the Orestes of Edmund Kean in February, 1821, and fairly dividing the honours with him, that he declared her the superior of any actress on the British stage.

On May 10, 1822, Mrs. Duff played Ophelia

to the Hamlet of Junius Brutus Booth, and so pleased him that he pronounced her without an equal either in Europe or America, and later, in a letter to George Holland, described her as the greatest actress in the world. The following August Mrs. Duff acted Katharine in "The Taming of the Shrew" for the first time, and that proved her most effective comedy impersonation. She had before tried Rosalind, but apparently without success, for the performance was not repeated. The following spring, in Baltimore, Mrs. Duff added Florinda to her repertory, and it became perhaps the most popular of her characters. The actress made her first appearance in New York at the Park Theatre, on August 30, 1823, as Hermione to the Orestes of Booth. After this came Calanthe in "Damon and Pythias," Lady Macbeth, Tullia, Roxana, Imogen, and Mrs. Beverley. For her benefit, on September 24, she played Florinda in "The Apostate." Her New York engagement was not a popular success. The newspapers praised her highly, and her audiences were enthusiastic, but the fashionables would have nought to do with her. Three years later, however, there was a differ-

ent story, for then Mrs. Duff, as the leading woman of the Bowery Theatre, playing with Edwin Forrest, a newcomer in New York, scored a series of notable triumphs.

March, 1828, found Mrs. Duff in London, and on the 28th she appeared at Drury Lane as Isabella in "The Fatal Marriage" with Macready. The child was played by Louisa Lane, afterward Mrs. John Drew, who was then eight years old, having been born on January 10, 1820. In spite of her youth, she had already been on the stage for two years, her *début* having been made in Liverpool, and she had also acted in America, having played the Duke of York in "Richard III." at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, in 1827. Mrs. Duff's first London performance was followed on April 14 by her appearance in "Adelgitha" with Charles Kean. Then she suddenly left for America, precisely why no one could imagine. She had been fairly well received, better on her second performance than on her first, and she would likely enough have won, in time, full recognition. Probably, however, professional matters had nothing to do with her action. It is said that on her arrival in Eng-



MRS. JOHN DREW.  
*From a portrait published about 1864*



land, her sister, the wife of Thomas Moore, did not come near her, but sent word from a fashionable English watering-place that she could not conveniently receive an actress. Mrs. Duff's mother and younger sister were dead, and her husband's health was failing, and it is probable that the combination of griefs made the actress long for her adopted land, where there were friends and sympathy.

Until the arrival of Fanny Kemble in America in 1832, Mrs. Duff retained unchallenged her superiority in tragedy. The brilliancy and the novelty of the newcomer forced Mrs. Duff into the background. Her husband had died the year before, and the responsibility for the support of a large family coming entirely on her, she found the burden almost too much. Indeed, for a time she was on the verge of insanity. Recovering her health, Mrs. Duff played her last engagement in New York in 1835. Not long after that she married Mr. J. G. Seaver, and went with him to New Orleans, where she lived for many years and where she made her last appearance on the stage at the St. Charles Theatre on May 30, 1838. Renouncing the Roman Catholic faith, in which

she had been reared, she became a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Her last years were passed in obscurity. She and her husband left New Orleans in 1855, and she came to New York to live with her daughter, Mrs. I. Reillieux, at 36 West Ninth Street, where on September 5, 1857, she died. There seems to have been a deliberate endeavour to conceal the identity of Mrs. Seaver with Mrs. Duff, and until 1874 the circumstances of the passing away of this remarkable woman were not known.

Unquestionably Mrs. Duff was an actress of remarkable personal fascinations. Bathed in tears she was absolutely irresistible. But her power was probably magnetic rather than mental, and her acting intuitive rather than definitely artistic. She embodied gentle grief perfectly, and she was wonderfully effective as the grief-stricken heroine; but as regards the force and the conviction of her tragedy one may well doubt. The essentially personal quality in her acting accounts for her loss of prestige toward the end of her career. When the potency of her magnetic charm was diminished, she had nothing else to give. Mental brilliancy



being absent, the essentially physical allurements that were the basic elements of her work could no longer banish ingrained monotony.

MRS. FANNY KEMBLE

Frances Ann Kemble (1809–93), “Fanny,” as she was always called, whom Mr. Harness said looked like Mrs. Siddons seen through the diminishing end of an opera-glass, was the daughter of Charles Kemble. She did not go on the stage because she wanted to, nor did she ever call herself a genuine artist. While she always had a fondness for acting, she thoroughly detested the theatre, for, as she wrote in “Records of a Girlhood,” “a business which is incessant excitement and fictitious emotion seems to me unworthy of a man; a business which is public exhibition, unworthy of a woman.”

“The dramatic element inherent in my organisation must have been very powerful,” she remarked in the same book, “to have enabled me without either study of, or love for, my profession to do anything worth anything in it. But this is the reason why, with an unusual gift and many unusual advantages

for it, I did really so little; why my performances were always uneven in themselves and perfectly unequal with each other, never complete as a whole, however striking in occasional parts, and never at the same level two nights together; depending for their effect upon the state of my nerves and spirits, instead of being the result of deliberate thought and consideration." After reading that one perceives why Macready declared that she did not know the rudiments of her profession.

Yet Fanny Kemble could act a bit when the mood was on, as this description by Thomas Noon Talfourd of a passage in her Juliet plainly shows: "What a noble effect she produced in that scene where the Nurse, who has hitherto been the partner of all her counsels, recommends her to marry Paris, and to her astonished exclamation, 'Speak'st thou from thy heart?' answers, 'And from my soul, too, or else beshrew them both.' At that momentous passage, Miss Kemble erected her head, and extended her arm with an expressive air which we never saw surpassed in acting, and with a power like magic, pronounced 'Amen!' In that attitude, and look, and



**FANNY KEMBLE**

**As Juliet**

*From an old print published in 1832*



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word, she made us feel that Juliet, so late a nursling, was now left alone in the world — that the child was gone, and that the heroic woman had begun her part. That there was such a change in Juliet we have always felt, but to mark its precise moment was reserved for this accomplished actress, in a single tone.”

In 1829, Covent Garden Theatre, of which Charles Kemble was part owner, was advertised to be sold, and to stave off financial ruin Kemble brought out his daughter in the character of Juliet. This occurred on October 5. Her success was remarkable, and she appeared in the part more than a hundred and twenty times. During this season and the two succeeding ones, Miss Kemble acted Belvidera in “Venice Preserved,” Mrs. Beverley in “The Gamester,” Euphrasia in “The Grecian Daughter,” Portia in “The Merchant of Venice,” Isabella in “The Fatal Marriage,” Mrs. Haller in “The Stranger,” Calista in “The Fair Penitent,” Lady Teazle, Lady Townley in “The Provoked Husband,” Bianca in “Fazio,” Beatrice, Lady Macbeth, Constance in “King John,” Camiola in Massin-

ger's "Maid of Honour," revived especially for her, Louise in her own play of "Francis I.," and Julia in the first production of "The Hunchback."

Miss Kemble came to the United States with her father in 1832, making her first appearance at the Park Theatre, New York, on September 18, as Bianca. She remained on the stage in this country for two years, acting for the last time on September 20, 1834, two weeks after her marriage to Mr. Pierce Butler, of New York. In 1841, she went back to England, and in 1846 returned to the stage. Two years later she played with Macready at the Princess's Theatre, her last appearance as an actress. A year after that she was divorced from her husband and took the name of Mrs. Kemble, by which she was known as a Shakespearean reader until 1869. Mrs. Kemble did considerable literary work, her publications being "Journal of Frances Ann Kemble" (1835), "A Year of Consolation" (1847), in 1844 a volume of poems, plays in 1837 and 1863, "Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation" (1863), "Records of a Girlhood" (1878), "Records of Later Life" (1882).

ELLEN TREE

It is an anomaly of the career of Ellen Tree (1805–80), — after 1842 the wife of Charles Kean, — that she never succeeded in portraying a Juliet that was in the least above the ordinary. The merriest of Rosalinds, the most sweetly pathetic of Violas, the tenderest of Ophelias, and the most womanly of Desdemonas, yet as Juliet, a character seemingly so suited to an actress of such winsome personality and capable art, Ellen Tree never entirely met the requirements. Still, her experience was not absolutely unique, for Ellen Terry, from whom one might expect a Juliet both fascinatingly feminine and tragically effective, also failed to attain any more than respectable mediocrity, when she played the part at the London Lyceum on March 8, 1882.

Westland Marston called Ellen Tree's "qualified success" as Juliet one of "those results which baffle anticipation, and for which it is hard to assign a cause." "With her excellence in characters of sweetness and devotion," he continued, "and her power of passionate expression, one would have said in

advance that this was, above all, a part in which she would have triumphed. It proved otherwise. Of course, experience, taste, and, in a degree, sympathetic feeling, veiled her want of vital individuality in the character. The spectator, nevertheless, went away disappointed. Perhaps, because Juliet is not, after all, eminently a character of self-sacrifice; perhaps, because the performer had concentrated her mind upon the acting difficulties of the character, and striven to master them as isolated effects, rather than by entering into Juliet's nature—she did not carry the audience with her, as she had done in many parts offering meaner opportunities.”

Although she could not act Juliet, Ellen Tree was a Romeo worthy of consideration—the best Romeo she ever acted with, so Fanny Kemble declared, and Mrs. Kemble adds that Miss Tree's long, lithe legs and square shoulders gave her quite a masculine appearance in the part.

Ellen Tree's fame was fully established before she was married to Charles Kean. Indeed, that event marked the end of her most notable triumphs, though she continued to act with



him until he left the stage in 1867. Miss Tree was the daughter of one of Charles Lamb's contemporaries in the East India House. Her oldest sister, Mrs. Quin, was a dancer, and another sister, Maria Tree, was the first one to sing "Home, Sweet Home" in public. A third sister, Ann Tree, was a popular "singing chambermaid" or soubrette. Ellen Tree made her first appearance on the stage in Edinburgh when she was eighteen years old. Her London début was made at the Drury Lane on September 23, 1826, as Donna Volante in "The Wonder." This was followed by Letitia Hardy, Albina Mandeville in "The Will," Rosalie Somers in "Town and Country," Charlotte in "The Hypocrite," Miss Hardcastle, and Christina in "The Youthful Queen." She played her first tragic part at Covent Garden in 1829, Françoise de Foix in Fanny Kemble's play, "Francis I." It was there, too, that Miss Tree acted Romeo at her benefit to Fanny Kemble's Juliet. Sheridan Knowles wrote Mariane in "The Wife" for Miss Tree, and she acted the part, when the play was first produced at Covent Garden on April 24, 1833. When Sergeant Talfourd's "Ion" was pro-

duced at Covent Garden on May 26, 1836, Miss Tree played Clemanthe to Macready's Ion, but later she assumed the title part with unusual success. Miss Tree first visited the United States in 1836, making her first appearance on December 12 as Paulina in "The Ransome" and as Rosalind.

MRS. ANNA CORA MOWATT

Mrs. Mowatt (1819-70), who also has a place in literature as author of "Autobiography of an Actress," was born in Bordeaux, France, of American parents. Her maiden name was Anna Cora Ogden. She was married when very young to Mr. Mowatt, a New York lawyer. Mrs. Mowatt's first inclination was toward literary work, and before her husband became financially embarrassed, she had written a five-act play, "The Persian Slave," which had been acted in New York. Her first appearance in public was as a reader in Masonic Temple, Boston, on October 28, 1841. She was successful, but shortly after, her husband having started a publishing business, she again took up writing, bringing out, under the pseudonym of Mrs. Helen Berkley, a novel called "The



ANNA CORA MOWATT.



Fortune Hunter." Again her husband was unfortunate, and Mrs. Mowatt once more tried play-writing, her "Fashion" being fairly well received in New York. Mrs. Mowatt made her début as an actress on June 13, 1845, at the Park Theatre, New York. The part was Pauline in "The Lady of Lyons," and her naturalness and freshness of style immediately challenged attention. Before this first engagement was completed, her position as a star was firmly established. For nine years she acted with constant success in both the United States and England. She bade farewell to the stage at Niblo's Garden on June 3, 1854, as Pauline. Mrs. Mowatt's other prominent parts were Lady Teazle, Mrs. Haller, Lucy Ashton, Katharine in "The Shrew," Julia in "The Hunchback," and Juliet. She was the first American actress to gain a place as an interpreter of the essentially feminine tragic characters both in Shakespeare and other plays.

HELEN FAUCIT

When Helen Faucit (1820-98) visited Paris with Macready in December, 1844, and acted in succession Ophelia, Lady Macbeth, Juliet,

and Virginia, the French critics were surprised at her success in disguising her own personality and in her giving marked individuality to such widely different characters. This ability to get into the skin of the part she was playing seems to have been one of the marked features of Miss Faucit's acting. Mrs. C. Baron Wilson described her form as graceful, her eyes as of beaming softness, and her features, though neither Greek nor Roman, as striking and agreeable. "Her voice," continued Mrs. Wilson, "is confined in compass but rich in tone."

Henry Morley called Helen Faucit "an actress trained in the school of the Kembles, careful to make every gesture an embodiment of thought,—too careful sometimes, as when, after the cry ('Cymbeline'), 'What! Ho! Pisanio!' she remains with upraised arm throughout half the speech of Iachimo that begins, 'Oh, happy Leonatus!'"

As a matter of fact, Miss Faucit received her first instruction from Charles Kemble during her first season at Covent Garden in 1836. Next she came under Macready's care, continuing with him at Covent Garden,

the Haymarket, and Drury Lane, until 1843. During these seven years she played Juliet, Beatrice, Constance, Imogen, Cordelia, Desdemona, Miranda, Rosalind, Katharine, Hermione, Mrs. Haller, and Mrs. Beverley. She was the original Pauline, Julie de Mortemar, Clara Douglas in "Money," the Duchesse de la Vallière, Countess of Carlisle in Browning's "Strafford," Mildred Tresham in his "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon," Margaret in "Separation," Mabel in Westland Marston's "The Patrician's Daughter," Nina Sforza in Troughton's tragedy of that name, and Marie de Méranie in Marston's tragedy "Philip of France and Marie de Méranie." After she was married to Theodore Martin in 1851, she played Iolanthe in her husband's version of Hertz's "King René's Daughter." Her last appearances were at Stratford in April, 1879, when she acted Beatrice at the opening of the Stratford Memorial Theatre, and at Manchester the following October, when she played Rosalind at a benefit. Lady Martin, as she became after her husband was knighted, also made a notable addition to Shakespeariana with her book, "Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters."

It was the most natural thing in the world for Helen Faucit to go on the stage. Her father, John Saville Faucit, was an actor and dramatist, and her mother and sister Harriet were both players. Helen's first appearance was made when she was only twelve years old, and the part was Juliet. It happened in Richmond in the summer of 1833. Helen and her sister were playing on the stage of the theatre one afternoon, and they improvised the balcony scene from "Romeo and Juliet." The manager heard Helen recite Juliet's lines and induced her father to let her appear in public. She was billed as "A Young Lady," and gave several performances. Her formal *début* was not made, however, until January 5, 1836, at Covent Garden. She intended to play Juliet on that occasion, but there was difficulty in properly casting the play, and so Julia in "The Hunchback" was the part selected. Her success was sufficient to warrant her engagement for three years as the leading woman of the theatre. Although Helen Faucit was the child of player-folk, all her impersonations were original with her. Up to the time she began the representation of Shakespeare's heroines



she had never seen the parts acted, and she was also ignorant of the stage traditions regarding conceptions and business.

ADELAIDE NEILSON

How strange, and how much more sad than strange, is the life story of her who is known and honoured as Adelaide Neilson! Born into the world a nameless waif, she lived for thirty-two years, — a score of them overburdened with shame and wretchedness, a precious few treasured mementos of triumph, the end of it all a tragedy! Blazing at her zenith a star of unrivalled brilliancy, her light, so pure, so clear, so true, was quenched in the abyss with appalling suddenness. It was a tragedy, — to die thus at the moment when strife and struggle were fading, and joy and peace, positive achievement and coveted ambition, were secure. There was but the span of a decade from the night of Adelaide Neilson's first success to the day of her death. A single decade! And yet there is her name, inscribed highest on that Shakespearian scroll, which confers assured immortality, — Adelaide Neilson, the incomparable Juliet.

Born in Leeds, England, March 3, 1848; died in Paris, France, August 15, 1880. Within so little is encompassed the life of Adelaide Neilson, whose mother, a Miss Brown, was afterward married to a man Bland, a labourer living in Guiseley, a village near Leeds; whose father remains absolutely unknown, except for the unauthenticated claim that he was an actor and of Spanish descent. Lizzie Bland was the name by which the child was known during her early years, when she worked in a factory, stealing such moments as she could to read the playbooks that were the relics of her mother's unfortunate stage career. Passages from these the child would declaim to an audience of dolls, every one of them the handiwork of her own fingers. When she was not working, she went to the parochial school, and afterward her teacher, Mr. Frizell, recalled her as a studious pupil with an excellent memory and an aptitude for recitation. On Sundays she attended the Methodist church.

So she quietly and in the main happily lived amid her commonplace surroundings, until she was about thirteen years old, when for the first time real sorrow came into her life. She acci-

dentally learned the facts regarding her birth. She left her home after that, and for two years worked as a nurse-maid. But discontent, unhappiness, and shame grew with the cherishing, and at length she decided to quit the village where she had always lived. She planned to leave behind her no trace, and so she ran away, going first to Leeds, and from there to London. A child fifteen years old, beautiful, — “the Spanish girl,” they called her, — with hot blood in her veins and despair in her heart, without guidance of any sort, she was quickly engulfed in the maelstrom, and for three years her life was hard and her experience miserable. She became finally a barmaid in a French café in the Haymarket, and from there she reached the stage as a chorus girl or novice in the ballet.

Lilian Adelaide Lessont was the name she adopted after she got to London, and as that she made her first appearance as Juliet at Margate early in 1865. In the summer of the same year she was seen in the same part at the Royalty Theatre, London, but with no particular success. However, when she played Gabrielle in “The Huguenot’s Daughter,” at

the Princess's Theatre a year later, one critic called her "remarkably pretty and interesting." Later at the London Adelphi, as Victorine in "Victorine," and as Nelly Armroyd in "Lost in London," she gained considerable popular attention. In Edinburgh, in 1868, she acted Rosalind for the first time, and soon after added Julia in "The Hunchback" and Pauline in "The Lady of Lyons" to her repertory. When in March 1869, she appeared as Lillian in "Life for Life," Joseph Knight gave her her first real encouragement.

In September, 1870, Miss Neilson acted Amy Robsart at Drury Lane, and was hailed by another critic as a "true dramatic genius." On December 19, 1870, still at Drury Lane, she gave the notable impersonation of Juliet which immediately ranked her at the head of all English-speaking actresses. In the same character she made her first appearance in the United States at Booth's Theatre, New York, on November 18, 1872. Her success was remarkable. The following spring she acted Rosalind at Booth's Theatre, and on her second visit to this country, in 1874, she played Beatrice in "Much Ado" at the Lyceum The-



**ADELAIDE NEILSON.**



atre, New York. She subsequently abandoned that character. Isabella in "Measure for Measure" was first given in London in 1876, and on her third American tour, begun at Daly's Theatre, New York, on May 12, 1877, Miss Neilson presented two more new parts, Viola in "Twelfth Night" and Imogen in "Cymbeline." Miss Neilson's last tour of the United States started at the Brooklyn Theatre on October 20, 1879, and her last appearance in New York occurred at Booth's Theatre on May 24, 1880. She then went to San Francisco, where she acted from June 8 until July 13. She sailed from New York on July 28, and eighteen days later she died in Paris.

"Such a nature might easily go to shipwreck and ruin," wrote William Winter. "She out-rode the storms of a passionate, wayward youth and anchored safe at last in the haven of duty. Her image, as it rises in memory, is not that of the actress who stormed the citadel of all hearts in the delirium of Juliet, or dazzled with the witchery of Rosalind's glee or Viola's tender grace; but it is that of the grave, sweet woman, who, playing softly in the twilight, sang — in a rich, tremulous, touching voice —

the anthem on the man of sorrows acquainted with grief.”

Mr. Winter regarded Shakespeare's Juliet as the most effective, if not the highest, of Adelaide Neilson's tragic assumptions. It carried to every eye and to every heart the convincing and thrilling sense of her beauty and her power.

“Adelaide Neilson was one of those strange, exceptional natures that, often building better than they know, not only interpret ‘the poet's dream,’ but give to it an added emphasis and a higher symbolism. Each element of her personality was rich and rare,” added Mr. Winter.

To write down on paper the subtle charm of a beautiful woman is hopelessly impossible. Even if one succeed in describing her personal appearance with sufficient vividness and accuracy to create an impression of reality, he has not fully attained his end. Beauty is not a mere matter of feature, form, and colouring; it is essentially a factor of individuality. Unquestionably, Adelaide Neilson was a marvelously beautiful woman, who exercised a fascination of personality seemingly irresistible. “Her voice,” — such is the declaration



of Laura C. Holloway, — “than which there is no surer indication of genius in man or woman, was soft and sweet as a child’s, and had a cadence in its maturer years which touched the ear of all who heard it; it was appealing, pathetic, melodious. Her mouth was more beautiful in expression than in outline; and this was true of all her features, with the exception of her eyes, which were large and lustrous. Her head was small and shapely, and her ruddy brown hair well suited the pale olive-tinted complexion. She was slight of form and queenly in bearing.”

Really valuable criticisms of Miss Neilson’s acting are exceedingly rare, for the reason that practically every writer, in considering her work, felt so potently the intoxication of her personality that he could do nought but deal out adjective after adjective in an herculean effort sufficiently to sound her praises. An article in the *Galaxy*, written by L. Clarke Davis in 1873, during Miss Neilson’s first tour of the United States, is not open to that objection. It breathes an atmosphere of calm, impartial, carefully weighed judgment, and it interprets Adelaide Neilson as one can well

imagine she was, and not entirely as her ardently partisan admirers thought her to be.

“ Miss Neilson is an actress who thinks. . . . On her table we one day found a pocket volume of ‘As You Like It.’ Between the well-worn leaves were scraps of paper, torn note sheets, and fragments all written over, in her clear, bold hand, with such conclusions as she had evolved from almost every passage in the part of Rosalind. . . . In Juliet she does the same thing. And though she is a woman whose beauty is as boundless, whose love is as deep as Juliet’s, whose passions are as strong, whose deep-set, black eyes seem Tragedy’s own interpreter, her conception of Juliet is a mistake. She has *studied and felt it too much*, and has so imbued herself with its more sombre elements, that she sees from the first meeting with Romeo what Juliet could not see—the end, which is death. . . . Her art strives most to present effectively the gloomier characteristics of the tragedy. Yet they have no part in it until Tybalt is slain and Romeo is banished. Till then all is the ecstasy and intoxication of love. . . . She does not read well at all times, her emphasis is frequently misplaced,

and occasionally she is so melodramatic as to seem not herself. . . .

“ Her merits are great and many. We do not use the word lightly when we say that Miss Neilson has genius, and that it — which some of her critics have called ‘personal magnetism’ — so enfolds her beautiful art, as to hide from the casual observer its defects. . . .

“ It was not alone the glamour of youth, beauty, and classic grace which filled the spectator’s mind with pleasurable emotion, but adding to the charm of the character and the completeness of the artist’s triumph were the intelligence to recognise the subtle wit, dignity, and tenderness; the exuberant vitality, the delicate refinement, and the masterful power to portray them all. In the famous scene with the nurse in ‘Romeo and Juliet,’ the actress gave only a hint of her ability to discharge the severest demands of the most exacting comedy; but as Rosalind she proved her right to all her transatlantic praises by art that was not only without trick, but almost without a flaw. In the more tender and emotional passages of the play her quiet pathos appealed irresistibly to every heart, for underlying all she did there

was a wondrous sweetness of womanly dignity and an adherence to nature which rendered the performance altogether worthy of her fame. . . .

“We said that we were to judge for ourselves whether Miss Neilson deserved the fame that preceded her to America. We have judged her faithfully as we could; for the glamour that this great actress sheds upon the stage may in some degree be reflected on these pages. But, be that as it may, her art is true art; for it not only occasionally reminds us of Shakespeare, but it makes Shakespeare real to us.”

ANDERSON, MODJESKA, MARLOWE

Three notable Juliets followed the Juliet of Adelaide Neilson on the American stage, those of Mary Anderson, Helena Modjeska, and Julia Marlowe. Regarding the value of Mary Anderson's Juliet there was the same dispute that was waged around practically every one of her impersonations. There is no question that, to many critics, Mary Anderson's acting was without life or thrill. But she had, nevertheless, her full retinue of implacable advocates, who rejoiced to hurl at the unappre-

ciative ones irritating insinuations about lack of "soul," of insight, and of spiritual intuition.


The Juliet of Helena Modjeska manifested all the delightful and fascinating qualities that were inherent in the characterisations of the Polish actress, when she was at the acme of her power. Modjeska was ever an artist, and by means of her art she polished those gems in her histrionic casket,—an insinuating and delicate personal charm, a dainty appreciation of naïve comedy, and a persuasive and insistent quality of pathos that often had the effectiveness of tragic strength,—until they shone with delightful sparkle. Her Juliet was a symposium of all that was best in Modjeska's acting, a lovely creation, girlish, and still intensely moving.

On the Juliet of Julia Marlowe it would be absurd at this time to pass anything approaching final judgment. She has not appeared in the part—more's the pity—for a number of seasons, and during that period she has been constantly gaining authority, even if she has not been adding greatly to her artistic reputation. Some fine day, Julia Marlowe may arouse herself with reawakened ambition.

When that day does come, she is likely to re-create a Juliet that will cast wholly into the shadow her former impersonation. Yet, that was in no sense a mediocre realisation of the Capulet. Its personal qualities were beyond cavil; it was poetical and idealistic, and at the same time it was simple and natural; its girl-ishness was infinitely charming, its flashes of comedy delicious, and its pathos true. What it chiefly required was a background of strong and positive individuality, and such a background the Julia Marlowe of to-day could assuredly provide.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE FUTURE OF THE SERIOUS DRAMA

UT of extraordinary violence grew the English theatre. It was bred and nurtured by a people of tremendous passions and crude life, of enormous animality and shocking brutality. From murder and rapine, from a paradoxical notion of honour, from a powerful sentiment of loyalty, and from a genuine reverence for that which was pure and sweet and tender in woman, was gradually deduced the art of the men of Elizabeth's time, — Shakespeare, Marlowe, Beaumont, Fletcher, Jonson, Webster, Massinger, Ford, Middleton, and Heywood. They were born into an environment, of which the natural conditions were turmoil and strife, and they rubbed elbows constantly with those diametrical opposites, the Cavalier and the Puritan. They had great things to write about, these Elizabethans, things which they themselves

had seen and even had lived, astounding deeds by astounding men, broad contrasts of light and shade, superlatives both of evil and of self-sacrifice. Their splendid audacity in telling the truth regarding their day and generation, far more than the enchanting sway of their imagination or the positive beauty of their fancy, wrought the charm that enchained the tragic drama within the compass of their conceptions even to the very dawn of the twentieth century. If these Elizabethan writers were melodramatic, they were also sincere; if they were almost unendurably brutal, they were also prolific in sentiment of the most fragrant delicacy. Their feet were in the mire, but their heads were in the clouds. They did not compromise. When they portrayed a man, he was a man through and through, strong, passionate, masculine. So, too, were their women really women, the highest types of them to this day unapproached in their idealism, the well-nigh perfect embodiments of all that is fascinating, lovable, and truly feminine.

Consistently as this tragic drama of extremes and contrasts has been imitated in the



English theatre, it has never been reproduced. The Elizabethans exhausted for all time the possibilities along that particular line. Although the Elizabethan drama was in most of its phases grossly material, yet there was in all of it that has lived till modern times the vitalising spark of the spiritual. In the imitative drama that came after the Elizabethan, materialism alone flourished, and spirituality vanished entirely. Instead of truth there was formalism. As a necessary sequel to such conditions, there followed a bloodless era of cold classicism, during which literary interest, which had been centred exclusively on the theatre, finding the drama unprogressive and hampering, at length shifted entirely from the play to the novel. The loss of its position as literature marked the rapid decline of the tragic drama, a decline that began in the middle of the eighteenth century and ended in the total collapse of English tragedy in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The old tragedy is dead, eternally and inevitably. Outside of Shakespeare's plays, which, inscribed with a pen dipped in fire, transcend all classifications and all deductions, the

work of not a single one of the old tragedy writers is acted to-day, nor could it be acted to any advantage, except before an audience whose interest was historical rather than dramatic. It is, however, superficial criticism to declare that the passing away of the old tragedy has been due to degeneracy in the public taste, or to claim, because the old tragedy is not acted, that there is no demand to-day for good plays and for good acting. It is not the degeneracy, but the thorough change, in public taste that has brought the present dramatic conditions. Man has no more use for a tallow candle after he gets an electric light; and in like manner, man has no more use for the old tragedy, now that he has found a literature that appeals more potently to his artistic sense. The fact that this literature is not at the present moment installed in the theatre does not alter the circumstance that there is a bigger public than ever before ready and anxious to appreciate good plays and good acting. Nor is it any longer true, as Sir Henry Irving, Richard Mansfield, E. H. Sothern, and Henrietta Crosman have ample reason to know, that Shakespeare, if presented

with fair adequacy, spells ruin. The truth is that the theatre is earnestly awaiting the renaissance of the serious drama, and the way has been marvellously prepared for such a renaissance. The old has been outgrown and cast aside. The novel has, momentarily at least, degenerated to the level of the unliterary drama. The demand for plays is insistent and unmet. One thing alone will satisfy, — a master idealist with a living message that forces its own utterance.

In the criticism of acting, it should never be forgotten that the player always follows the dramatist. First must come the matter to be interpreted, and then will follow the interpreters. Thus the Elizabethan dramatists were succeeded by that brilliant series of great actors, which, receiving fresh life from the genius of Garrick, was closed with the death of Edwin Booth. Oliver Goldsmith and Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the great comedy writers of the eighteenth century, were the instigators of that broadly humanitarian and versatile school of comedy actors, of which William Warren was a supremely illustrious representative. As the direct result of the

intimate light comedies and farces, which were first ushered into popularity by Robertson, there is found to-day a theatre filled to overflowing with light comedy actors of remarkable skill, delightful finesse, and sparkling suggestion. In their especial, though somewhat restricted lines, players like N. C. Goodwin, John Drew, and Maude Adams — to mention three of the leading exponents in the American theatre — have probably never been excelled.

What the stage is demanding, therefore, is not a public nor actors, but a dramatist, who has something new and something true to say. We have plenty of dramatic writers who are sufficiently skilled in play-building, — among them, Pinero, Henry Arthur Jones, R. C. Carton, and occasionally, Clyde Fitch, — but we have not a single dramatist (nor have we had one for many, many years) who has a really comprehensive view of life to elucidate; a dramatist whose spirituality is positive and must be expressed; a dramatist who is working in accordance with a fixed ideal, and who actually knows what he is talking about. Probably not until to-day has the world been ready for such a dramatist, but it is ready now. It

has threshed out materialism, classicism, realism. It is prepared to consider intelligently and seriously the last thing of all, and the only enduring thing, — absolute idealism.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMEDY

**S**CHOLASTIC classifications, by which the endeavour is made to reduce art to a formula, declare for three varieties of comedy,—the comedy of incident, the comedy of manners, and the comedy of character. Of these, the comedy of character is claimed as the highest and noblest and most lasting form. Like all formulæ, however, this one regarding comedy is incomplete. No single form of comedy can contain all the highest artistic possibilities; they will be found only in a comedy uniting, with the finest art and the greatest truth, all comedy forms. Thus immortal plays, like “She Stoops to Conquer” and “The School for Scandal,” are not comedies of incident, though their incident is highly entertaining; nor comedies of manners, though their manners are extremely diverting; nor comedies of



**GROUP OF OLD-TIME PLAYERS**

Thomas A. Cooper, John Drew, J. B. Booth, Charles Burke, Thomas Hamblin,  
Laura Keene, J. W. Wallack, Gustavus V. Brooke, Lucille Western,  
J. W. Wallack, Jr., Charlotte Cushman, Edwin Forrest, Julia Dean, Edwin Adams,  
W. R. Blake, Anna Cora Mowatt, E. L. Davenport, Mathilde Heron, D. Marble,  
Susan Denim, W. E. Burton, Tyrone Power, Eliza Hamblin,  
J. H. Hackett, John Cothus, Ben DeBar, Barney Williams, John H. Scott.





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character, though their characters are exceedingly interesting. But incidents, manners, and characters all bear their necessary part in the action; all are essential, though none is paramount. Such comedies transcend classifications and mock at limitations.

Nothing is more fatal to creative art than the restrictions of formalism, and in no more evident particular is the modern stage preparing for a brilliant future than in the spontaneous independence which causes it to refuse to recognise the trammels of scholastic criticism, and which makes it insist on perfect freedom of expression. That this freedom does lead to excess in some instances — as in those strange anomalies of comedy and tragedy by Clyde Fitch, “Nathan Hale” and “Barbara Frietchie” — is true; but far better a few such “freaks” than a drama that is written to be measured by the yardstick and compass of artificial laws and unities. However, this new English dramatic tendency is only of a few years’ growth. It is still in its swaddling-clothes and still undetermined as regards which way to go.

Comedy is the vehicle of the humourist, and,

quoting George Meredith, "the stroke of the great humourist is world-wide, with lights of tragedy in his laughter." What is meant by the comic? Not the farce nor the burlesque; neither one of them expresses anything deeper than the rude "haw-haw" of the buffoon. The comic, however, is projected upon a serious background, without which it cannot be fully effective. There is always purpose in the comic; it serves to entertain, but it likewise strives to teach and to bring forth in contrasting lights some great truth in human experience. Thus the clown in the circus is from the view-point of farce only a ludicrous figure; but the comic removes the chalk from the clown's face and presents him sympathetically as a fellow creature. In order to do this, it places the clown, superficially so ludicrous, in contrasting surroundings. It shows the clown as he actually is, possibly as a man cherishing a great ambition and rebelling fiercely against his labour of buffoonery, perhaps as the father jesting while his child is ill. In every instance the comic labours to force the reality of life through the shell of what seems to be. Comedy, therefore, in its noblest form,

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is the stating in dramatic terms of the aspiring, the loyal, and the true in humanity. In the vastness of its possibilities, comedy advances to a future far more lofty and far more enduring than that which is open to any tragedy of which I can conceive.

Shakespeare's comedies, with the exception of "The Merry Wives of Windsor" and "The Taming of the Shrew," are essentially romantic. They are comedies of incident, which occurs in an environment afar from ordinary human experience. The main interest is not fixed on the characters themselves, nor in the way that they do things, but on the growth of the action. Shakespeare's comedies do not revolve around any single personage, but as a rule there are at least two plots in the unfolding of the action, in which the spectator is equally interested. Shakespeare only began the development of the comedy of character, of which Ben Jonson was the real originator, and by which he firmly established his reputation in 1598, when his comedy, "Every Man in His Own Humour," was acted by the company of which Shakespeare was a member. This was the first important comedy of character seen

on the English stage. It was written largely in prose, and in it were set forth that military braggart, Captain Bobadil, the coward who assumes the dignity of calm courage, and the water-carrier, Cob, a type of the clown so fully developed in later English drama. But although eminently a comedy of character, "Every Man in His Own Humour" had no small merit as a comedy of manners, for in it the London life of the time found full and faithful reproduction. This comedy was revived during the Restoration, was given in a revised form in 1729, was played by Garrick in 1751, when he made Kitley, the jealous usurer, one of his most famous parts, and was occasionally seen during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Charles Dickens as an amateur acted Bobadil with an excellence that gave him no little repute.

The contemporaries of Shakespeare and Jonson, as well as their direct successors, busied themselves almost entirely with formulating ingenious plots and developing diverting situations. Their observations of human character did not extend below the surface, and they produced merely a limited series of types,

to which Thomas Dekker (1570–1640), George Chapman (1559–1634), and Philip Massinger (1583–1640) were the only ones to add anything new. One of Massinger's characters remained on the stage until modern times,— Sir Giles Overreach in "A New Way to Pay Old Debts." Massinger, its originator, after a life of poverty was buried in 1640 with no other notice than the inscription in the parish register of Bankside, Southwick, "Philip Massinger, a stranger." "The Virgin Martyr," "The Bondman," "The Fatal Dowry," "The City Madam," and "A New Way to Pay Old Debts" are the best known of the eighteen plays of his that have been preserved. "A New Way to Pay Old Debts" was produced before 1633, at which time it was first printed in quarto. The character of Sir Giles Overreach was probably drawn from life. John Henderson appeared as Sir Giles at Covent Garden in 1781, and John Philip Kemble also acted the part. Its vogue during the nineteenth century, however, was due entirely to Edmund Kean, who played it at Drury Lane on January 12, 1816, with such effect that women in the boxes had hysterics, Lord Byron

was thrown into a "convulsive fit," and a veteran actress on the stage was so overpowered by the dying speech that she fainted away.

With James Shirley (1596–1666) and the fall on the theatre of the Puritan wet blanket came the end of this brilliant comedy period in the English drama. The Restoration under Charles II., which followed, was a rich time for the comedy of manners, which began as George Meredith indicates, "as a combative performance, under license to deride and outrage the Puritan, and was here and there Bacchanalian beyond the Aristophanic example." The leaders among these Restoration dramatists were Thomas Otway (1651–1685), accounted the best English tragic poet of the classic school, author of "The Orphan," "Venice Preserved," and, in addition, various borrowings from Shakespeare, Racine, and Molière; John Dryden (1631–1700), who penned some extravagantly indecent comedies and then produced "The Indian Queen," "All for Love, or the World Well Lost," a tragedy on the subject of Anthony and Cleopatra, and "Don Sebastian," the last two being the best of his dramatic works; Nicholas Rowe (1674–

1718), the author of "Tamerlane," "The Fair Penitent," "Ulysses," and "Jane Shore," and Nathaniel Lee (1650–1692), collaborator with Dryden in the writing of "Ædipus" and "The Duke of Guise," and author of "The Rival Queens" and "Theodosius." Nor must Sir John Vanbrugh (1666?–1726) be omitted. "The Relapse" and "The Provoked Wife" were his two greatest comedy efforts.

William Congreve (1670–1729) was the best comedy writer of his time; indeed, one of the best that the English drama has produced. His five plays were "The Old Bachelor," "The Double Dealer," "Love for Love," and "The Way of the World," all comedies, and "The Mourning Bride," a tragedy. Congreve excelled his contemporaries in his literary force and in his pointedness and conciseness of style. His judgment of effect was sure, and his readiness of illustration led to dialogue that was both fluent and natural.

Rivalling Congreve in the comedy field was William Wycherley (1640–1715), "the typical Restoration dramatist," master of repartee, the point of which was never dulled by any oversensitiveness or prudery. Wycherley's most

famous comedy was "The Country Wife," which, remodelled, rewritten, revised, and produced under the title of "The Country Girl," was a feature in the repertory of the Augustin Daly company with Ada Rehan in the title part. A colabourer with Congreve and Wycherley in comedy was George Farquhar (1678–1707), dramatist of "The Constant Couple," "Sir Harry Wildair," and "The Beaux' Stratagem." Farquhar had neither the wit nor the brilliancy of Congreve, and his characters were on a lower level; but he did have a fine faculty in securing stage effect. His plays acted well, and it was probably on that account that Oliver Goldsmith ranked him higher than Congreve and took him for a model. The last dramatist on the Restoration list was a woman, Mrs. Susanna Centlivre (1667–1723), three of whose comedies, "The Busy Body," "The Wonder," and "A Bold Stroke for a Wife," had long life. She was an audacious borrower from Molière and the old English dramatists, and her comedy scenes, while usually telling, were none of them overcharged with delicacy.

During this period the influence of Molière, the great Frenchman, was paramount in Eng-



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lish comedy, and after that time it was Molière, fully as much as the more virile and cruder Elizabethans, who modelled English comedy. The French influence was quickly seen during the Restoration by the growth of formalism in tragedy and the complete separation of tragedy and comedy. Thoroughly English, however, was the development of the comic prose dialogue which gave such flexibility and adaptability to the comedy form, and vitalised it to such an extent that it withstood the attacks of the novel and the newspaper far more stubbornly than did the tragic drama. The immorality of the Restoration comedy, wholly a reaction from Puritanism, received its quietus when Jeremiah Collier issued his "Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage," precipitating thereby a controversy that lasted ten years, but which resulted in the cleaning of the Augean stables. In Mrs. Centlivre, Colley Cibber (the only actor-dramatist who secured lasting fame), and Sir Richard Steele (1672–1729) were found the beginnings of sentimental comedy, which ever since has been an affliction of the English theatre.

From Garrick to the close of the eighteenth

century, tragedy was at a complete standstill, but in comedy this thirty odd years saw such achievements as Oliver Goldsmith's "The Good-Natured Man" (1768) and "She Stoops to Conquer" (1773); Richard Brinsley Sheridan's "The Rivals" (1775), "The School for Scandal" (1777), and "The Critic" (1779); Arthur Murphy's "Know Your Own Mind" (1777); Mrs. Cowley's "The Belle's Stratagem" (1780); Holcroft's "Road to Ruin" (1792); O'Keefe's "Wild Oats" (1794); George Colman the Younger's "Heir-at-Law" (1797), "Poor Gentleman" (1801), and "John Bull" (1805), and Tobin's "The Honeymoon" (1805). These plays, — the "old comedies," so called, — it should be noted, are the picked ones among hundreds, and therefore it is manifestly unfair to compare them with the day to day drama of the modern stage.

After them began in earnest the decline of the English drama because of a growing lack of dramatists. The success of Sir Walter Scott in broadening the zone of the novel, and the rapid development of journalism attracted literary aspirants from the theatre to the printer. For a time the dearth of new plays was not

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particularly felt, and John Kemble was perfectly content to stick to the old ones. In the course of time, however, the public wearied of repetitions, and the demand for novelty became insistent. From 1805 to 1830 not a comedy was produced that lived. Although Sheridan Knowles with "Virginius" (1820), "The Hunchback" (1832), and "The Love Chase" (1837); Bulwer-Lytton with "The Lady of Lyons" (1838), "Richelieu" (1839), and "Money" (1840); Dion Boucicault with "London Assurance" (1841) and "Old Heads and Young Hearts" (1844); Charles Reade and Tom Taylor with "Masks and Faces" (1852); and Taylor with "Still Waters Run Deep," (1855) responded to the public requirement of novelty, they were totally unable to supply the demand; and the lack was made up by a flood of plays imported from other lands. Up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, the English stage had kept the balance of this sort of trade in its favour, but during the nineteenth century the debt against the English theatre became one of disgraceful proportions.

The first borrowings were from Germany, whence came Kotzebue's "The Stranger" and

“Pizarro,” but this field being exhausted, attention was turned to the French, released in 1830 by Victor Hugo’s “Hernani” from the shackles of classicism, and revelling in the thrilling delights of the romanticism of Hugo and the elder Dumas. Their lively plays, modelled somewhat on the Spanish, somewhat on Shakespeare and somewhat on Scott, found a ready acceptance on the English side of the Channel, and from there across the Atlantic in the United States. Romanticism was succeeded by the melodrama of D’Ennery, as expressed in such plays as “Don César de Bazan,” “The Sea of Ice,” and “The Two Orphans;” while supplementing romanticism and melodrama were the sparkling, machine-made comedies of Scribe. The English stage was thus seized and held for nearly a half a century. However, the decline in French influence has been marked since early in the eighties. “La Dame aux Camélias” of Dumas, *filis*, has not yet been wholly dethroned, and Victorien Sardou, the apostle of Scribe, continues fairly consistent as regards success in the English theatre. Edmond Rostand made a decided impression with his “Cyrano de

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Bergerac." But, aside from these, there has not been for years any marked nor lasting success from the French. Some may point to plays like "Zaza" and "Du Barry" as refutations of this statement. They do not contradict it, however. In the first place, neither one of those was a play; each was a vehicle built for a specific purpose. In the second place, neither one of them was successful as a dramatic product; each was utilised for the exploiting of an actress, and they existed only so long as she had use for them.

The influence of Ibsen on the English drama has been particularly felt in some of the work of Pinero, but Ibsen's influence, as already stated, is not likely to continue long active, except in so far as it may affect the technique of dramatic construction. Ibsen's plays themselves have but infrequent hearings in English, and then only as an appeal to the curiosity-seeker or the student of the drama, or as they are made to serve the especial purpose of some star. The same thing is true of the dramas of Herman Sudermann, whose "Heimath" alone is familiar to English audiences, and of the plays of Gerhart Haupt-

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mann, none of which has made any permanent impression on the English theatre.

The leading factors in keeping alive the English dramatic traditions during the blank years of the nineteenth century, when the English stage was but a reflection of the French, were Shakespeare and the so-called "old comedies." These latter performed a noble service in this particular; and if only in gratitude for that service, their traditions should be kept alive by an occasional airing of them in public. They established, as well, a noble school of comedy acting, now unfortunately practically extinct, but on the solid groundwork of which has been built much that is authoritative and permanent in the comedy acting of to-day.

## CHAPTER X.

### SOME NOTABLE COMEDIANS

**F**OR a long time after the tragic and comic drama became definitely separated in the days of the Restoration, actors continued to play as a matter of course both tragic and comic characters. Thus Betterton and Mrs. Barry were not only eminent in Shakespearian tragedy, but they also created the leading parts in most of the comedies of Congreve, Rowe, and Davenant. It was of Betterton that Doctor Doran wrote: "He was as mirthful in Falstaff as he was majestic in Alexander; and the craft of his Ulysses, the grace and passion of his Hamlet, the terrible force of his Othello, were not more remarkable than the low comedy of his Old Bachelor, the airiness of his Woodville, or the cowardly bluster of his Thersites." Although Thomas Doggett, who died in 1721, was a low comedian of some reputation, and sprightly Kitty Clive

(1711–1785) won no honours in tragedy, still, not until the time of Garrick, who was himself popularly depicted as continually wavering between tragedy and comedy, did the comic actor become a distinct feature and an important factor in the theatre.

#### SAMUEL FOOTE

One of the first was Samuel Foote (1720–1777), who passed a joyous third of a century before the public at the same time that Garrick was doing his best work at Drury Lane. Foote, however, was not in the highest sense either a comedian or a farceur; he was a remarkable mimic, an ingenious buffoon, and something of a satirist, — in short, the first prominent name in the long list of variety entertainers, which includes Charles Mathews (1776–1835), John Baldwin Buckstone (1802–1879), Frederick Robson (1821–1864), E. A. Sothern (1826–1881), John Brougham (1810–1879), and John Sleeper Clarke (1833–1899). Many of these players were eminent also in straight comedy, none more so, perhaps, than Brougham, whose Sir Lucius O'Trigger, Jack Bunsby, and Joey Bagstock were fine charac-





E. A. SOTHERN IN HIS LEADING RÔLES



terisations. Yet, even as Brougham was best known for his burlesques, such as Pow-Ha-Tan in his "Pocahontas," so each one of these players was by nature an entertainer, even when the entertainment was presented through the mediumship of such an original character conception as Sothern's Dundreary. These actors made sport by fitting their parts to their peculiar personalities, and by illustrating their characters with their especial collections of quips and quirks and mannerisms.

#### MRS. FRANCES ABINGTON

It was not until the comedies of Goldsmith and Sheridan required interpreters that a genuine school of comedy acting was developed. Mrs. Frances Abington (1737-1815), the original Lady Teazle, a comedy actress whose predominating excellence was "largeness of style," fixed for all time the "tradition" of Sheridan's conception, and all kindred parts in "old comedy." Just where Mrs. Abington, whose maiden name was Barton, got her "grand manner," is something of a mystery. She was born humbly enough in the slums of Drury Lane, and as a girl used to win her

pocketful of pennies by reciting Shakespeare in Covent Garden taverns. Yet, after she retired from the stage in 1799, this actress, who in her youth was "Nosegay Fan" to every taphouse loungee in London, took her place in unprotesting society, "giving her card-parties and receiving persons of quality."

#### JOSEPH SHEPHERD MUNDEN

Due chiefly to the zealous admiration of Charles Lamb, the name and fame of the leading comedian of Mrs. Abington's time have been safely preserved for the edification of posterity, though it must be confessed, after duly inspecting the facts regarding Joseph Shepherd Munden (1758-1832), that one is in doubt whether he was an actor or only a marvellous maker of grimaces. Still, to Munden belongs the credit of having been the first to dignify the character of Polonius, who had long been treated as a buffoon; and this service in later years caused Byron to remark that "Polonius would die with Munden, as Lady Macbeth died with Mrs. Siddons." When "The Heir-at-Law" was produced at the Haymarket in 1797, Munden was the original

Zekiel Homespun, and he was also the original Sir Robert Bramble in "The Poor Gentleman," Ephraim Smooth in "Wild Oats," Caustic in "The Way to Get Married," Old Rapid in "A Cure for the Headache," and Abel Handy in "Speed the Plough."

ELIZABETH FARREN

Elizabeth Farren (1758–1829), Mrs. Abington's successor as Lady Teazle, had the fortune in 1797, after she had been on the stage something like twenty-five years, to marry Lord Derby, whose wife had died only some six weeks before. The noble earl's haste may have bordered on the indecent, but "Betsy" Farren apparently made him a good wife, bore him three children, and died at a ripe old age, full of respectability, with her name duly inscribed in Burke's Peerage. Elizabeth Farren, native of Cork, Ireland, made her London debut in 1777 as Miss Hardcastle in "She Stoops to Conquer." Later she acted at both Drury Lane and Covent Garden, and inspired a serious passion in Charles James Fox, who, it is said, was on the point of proposing matrimony, when her appearance in a "breeches"

part revealed a scantiness of physique that discouraged him. Miss Farren was considered beyond compare as a representative of "fine ladies," and it was that fact which caused the following outburst by Tate Wilkinson: "I cannot recall to my mind's eye, such fashion, ease, pleantry, and elegance, in the captivating coquette and the lady of fashion all conjoined, as when I view the alluring, the entertaining, the all-accomplished Miss Farren."

#### HENRY PLACIDE

The first American-born comedian to gain a prominent place on the theatrical roster was Henry Placide (1799–1870), who was born in Charleston, South Carolina. His father was a French gymnast and rope-dancer, and his mother a dancer and pantomimist. The boy Henry early became one of the family troupe, appeared in various ballets, finally being elevated to the position of giving imitations of actors. His histrionic career began in 1823, when he became a member of the stock company of the Park Theatre, New York, his first parts being Zekiel Homespun and Doctor Dablanceœur, the French physician in "The



**JAMES H. HACKETT**  
As Falstaff in "King Henry IV."





Budget of Blunders." Placide was for twenty years a member of this company, and after that, until his retirement in 1865, he was a popular star. In a criticism of Placide, written in 1829, the *New York Mirror* said: "There are three distinct classes in which he is without an equal, namely, old men, or rather middle-aged gentlemen, drunken servants, and kind-hearted, simple country lads. As a sample of the three we would instance the marquis in 'The Cabinet,' Antonio in 'The Marriage of Figaro,' and Zekiel Homespun in 'The Heir-at-Law.'"

## JAMES H. HACKETT

James H. Hackett, considered one of the worthiest delineators of Falstaff, was also a comedian of American birth. His father, Thomas G. Hackett, was of gentle blood, half Irish and half Dutch, a lieutenant in the Life Guards of the Prince of Orange until he resigned his commission on account of poor health and migrated to America in 1794. In 1799, he married the daughter of a Jamaica, Long Island, clergyman, and on March 15, 1800, James H. Hackett was born in New

York. His father died when the son was three years old, and the boy grew up in Jamaica. When he was fifteen years he entered Columbia College; but his work there was interrupted by illness. This caused him to drop the classical course and start the study of law. Blackstone did not appeal to the lad, however, and in 1817 he entered on a mercantile life, in the counting-room of one of his relatives.

In 1819, Hackett married Catherine Lee Sugg, an actress and singer, and removed to Utica, where he was successful in business. In 1825, however, he returned to New York, and there he lost everything that he had made. This misfortune sent his wife back to the stage, and it was with her, in the opera "Love in a Village," that Hackett made his first appearance on the stage at the Park Theatre, New York, on March 1, 1826. He was too nervous, however, to be much of a success. He tried again at Mrs. Hackett's benefit on March 10, when he gave imitations of Kean, Mathews, Hilson, and Barnes, and was well received. In June, he appeared once more, that time in a Yankee part, which took immensely

with the house, and settled him finally in the profession of acting. Hackett's first presentation of Falstaff occurred on May 13, 1828, when "King Henry IV." was given at the Park Theatre, though in his autobiography he does not acknowledge any performance of the character until May 31, 1832, in Philadelphia, when for the benefit of Charles Kean he acted Falstaff to Kean's Hotspur. Mr. Hackett several times visited England, and his Falstaff was there acknowledged, after the death of Dowton, to be the only successful one on the stage. Mr. Hackett died on December 28, 1871.

Although remembered chiefly for his Falstaff, Hackett was a thoroughly versatile actor. Thus the *Galaxy* said in 1868: "His Sir Pertinax McSycophant in 'The Man of the World' is a perfect study, and exhibits a Scotchman of the world in colours supremely vivid. His Rip Van Winkle is far nearer the ordinary conception of that good-for-nothing Dutchman than Mr. Jefferson's, whose performance is praised so much for its naturalness." Hackett always had a desire to act tragedy, and he even went so far as to attempt

Lear and Hamlet in public. He found no encouragement for this ambition, however. Hackett conceived Falstaff as a *bon vivant*. He softened as much as possible the grossness and the sensuality of the fat knight, and thus brought him within the limitations of stage representation. A Falstaff thus refined doubtless was not the Shakespearian idea of Falstaff, but it was probably as nearly Shakespearian as the nineteenth century would stand for.

WILLIAM E. BURTON

William E. Burton (1804–1860), after having been on the English stage for nearly ten years, came to the United States in 1834, making his first appearance in Philadelphia as Doctor Ollapod in “The Poor Gentleman” and Wormwood in “The Lottery Ticket.” His repertory was an extended one and included Doctor Pangloss, Farmer Ashfield in “Speed the Plough,” Goldfinch in “Road to Ruin,” Billy Lackaday in “Sweethearts and Wives,” Tony Lumpkin, Sir Peter Teazle and Sir Oliver Surface, Dogberry and Verges in “Much Ado,” Launcelot Gobbo in “The Merchant of Venice,” and Bob Acres. He was, as well, a writer of farce, and




**WILLIAM E. BURTON**  
As Autolycus in "Winter's Tale."



later he managed theatres in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, finally opening, on July 10, 1848, Burton's Theatre on Chambers Street, New York. This was closed in 1856, after eight years of remarkable history. There were produced "Dombey and Son" and "David Copperfield," with Burton's famous impersonations of Micawber and Captain Cuttle; "The Serious Family" and "The Toodles," with the creations of Aminadab Sleek and Timothy Toodle, and, in addition to all the standard comedies, there were seen elaborate revivals of "A Midsummer-Night's Dream," "Twelfth Night," "The Tempest," "A Winter's Tale," and "The Merry Wives of Windsor," with Burton as Bottom, Sir Toby Belch, Caliban, Autolycus, and Falstaff. The last appearance of Burton in New York was at Niblo's Garden on October 15, 1859, in the afternoon as Timothy Toodle and in the evening as Mr. Sudden, Toby Tramp, and Micawber.

## CHAPTER XI.

### GILBERT, OWENS, JEFFERSON, AND FLORENCE

F the many comedians who have gained noteworthy positions on the American stage, no four secured more widespread reputations than John Gilbert, John E. Owens, Joseph Jefferson, and William J. Florence. With the exception of John E. Owens, they were all native born. Of the quartette Joseph Jefferson alone is now living, and Jefferson, too, is the only one that is not entitled to rank as an unusually versatile player. John Gilbert, during his entire career of sixty years, was a stock company actor. John E. Owens played many years in stock before he became a star, and his repertory was extensive and varied. William J. Florence was not only skilled in old comedy, but he was a splendid dialect comedian as well. Joseph Jefferson in his early days acted many parts, but forty years of his professional life were devoted almost exclusively to a single



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part. On that part his reputation as an artist chiefly depends.

### JOHN GILBERT

John Gilbert (1810–1889) was born in Boston on Richmond Street, in the house next to that in which Charlotte Cushman was born; and as boy and girl these two famous actors were playmates. Gilbert's parents thought that the dry-goods business was about the correct thing for him, but the young man, who had been praised in school for his declamations, was determined to go on the stage. He secretly joined the company of the Tremont Theatre, Boston, with which, on November 28, 1828, he made his *début* as Jaffier in "Venice Preserved," the *Belvidera* being Mrs. Mary Ann Duff. A few nights later he acted Sir Edward Mortimer in "The Iron Chest," and after that Shylock. Regarding these first appearances W. W. Clapp wrote: "The attempt was crowned with the greatest success. There was the awkward gait of the novice, and some crudities of expression, but his readings were correct, evincing a discriminating mind and an originality which pleased the most critical,

and gave promise, which has been fully realised, of his becoming one of the most sterling actors of the day."

Gilbert remained at the Tremont Theatre for the season. In the fall of 1829, he became a member of James H. Caldwell's Camp Street Theatre Company, New Orleans, acting in that city and in towns along the banks of the Mississippi River for five years. He played every variety of character, though, even then, his predilection for old men was being manifested. Returning to Boston in 1834, Gilbert appeared as Old Dornton in "The Road to Ruin," for the benefit of George Barrett, and then was engaged by Thomas Barry for the company of the rebuilt Tremont Theatre. During his engagement of several seasons with Barry, Gilbert acted Master Walter, Isaac of York, Sir Peter Teazle, Pizarro, Iago, Sir Edward Mortimer, Admiral Kingston, Lieutenant Worthington, Sir Robert Bramble, Polonius, Uncle John, Tom Noddy, Macduff, Old Dornton, Squeers, Henry VI., Adam, Malec, Kent, Damas, and Rolanio.

Barry's management of the Tremont Theatre continued through the season of 1838-39, dur-

## Gilbert, Owens, Jefferson, Florence 255

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ing which theatrical affairs in Boston were at a low ebb, the curtain rising some nights with less than ninety dollars in the house. In the fall of 1839, Doctor J. S. Jones, the author of "Solon Shingle" and other theatrical ware, was established as manager, and under him Gilbert became the stage-manager of the house. During the season of 1841-42, George H. Preston and John Preston had the house, and on December 20, 1841, Gilbert played Sir Harcourt Courtly in "London Assurance." The impersonation was not liked. W. R. Blake, considered the best Sir Harcourt on the American stage, was therefore announced to succeed Gilbert in the character, whereupon Gilbert retired in anger from the company, going to the Bowery Theatre, New York, where he finished out the season under the management of Thomas Hamblin. In September, 1842, Doctor Jones returned to the Tremont Theatre, and with him came Gilbert. The season closed on June 23, 1843, with a benefit to Doctor Jones. After the performance Gilbert made a speech, and his words were the last spoken by an actor from the stage of the old Tremont Theatre. The build-

ing was purchased by a church society, which renamed it Tremont Temple. The house was totally destroyed by fire on March 31, 1852.

After the Tremont Theatre went out of business, William Pelby's National Theatre was the only one in Boston, and John Gilbert joined the company there. When the old Boston Theatre on Federal Street was reopened, on August 24, 1846, under the management of Oliver C. Wyman, Gilbert became the stage-manager, and on the first night delivered the prize address of welcome, written by Mrs. Frances Sargent Osgood. Mr. Wyman's venture was a losing one, and he closed his season on March 15, 1847. In April, Gilbert sailed for London on a pleasure trip, and it was in the English theatres that he received the finishing touches to his acting. Old Farren was at that time the leading comedian on the London stage, and him Gilbert took for a model. The American was invited to appear at the Princess's Theatre and acted Sir Robert Bramble in "The Poor Gentleman" so successfully that he was engaged for a season, during which he played with Macready. After acting with him, Gilbert considered that he had served his

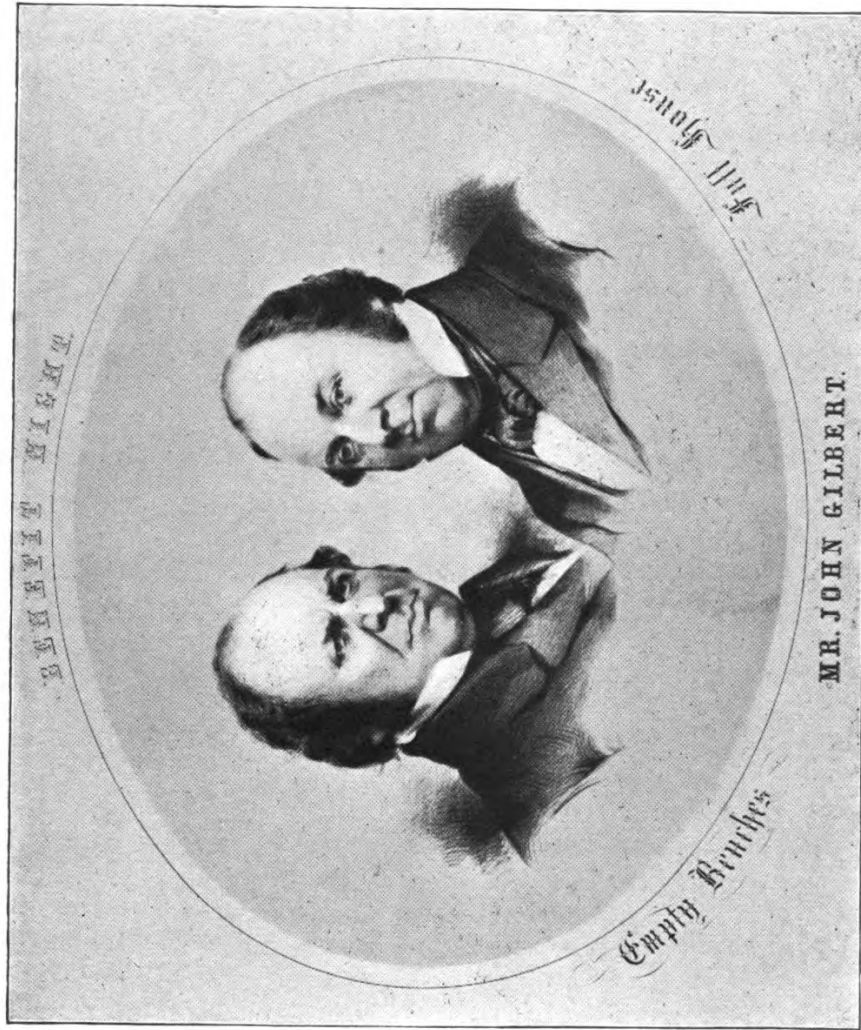
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apprenticeship; he felt that he understood both himself and the technicalities of his profession, and never after that would he submit to instruction or domination. During his stay abroad Gilbert also visited Paris, where he studied the acting of the artists of the Théâtre Français, — Rachel, Rose Cheri, Lafont, Frédéric Lemaître, Bocage, and Fechter.

On his return to the United States, Gilbert was engaged for the Park Theatre, New York, where his first part was Sir Anthony Absolute, without a question his finest impersonation. He remained at this theatre until it burned down on December 16, 1848. Gilbert, as Admiral Kingston in "Naval Engagements," spoke the last lines given on its stage. Until 1854, Gilbert divided his time between the Bowery Theatre, the Boston Howard Atheneum, and the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia. When the present Boston Theatre was opened, in 1854, Gilbert was engaged for the stock company by Thomas Barry. On the first night he delivered the welcoming address, written by T. W. Parsons, and also acted Sir Anthony Absolute. Gilbert played principally old men at the Boston Theatre,

although he attracted considerable attention by his impersonations of Bottom and Caliban. He became a strong favourite, and at one of his benefits the regard felt for him was expressed by the public gift of a costly service of silver plate.

Gilbert went to the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, in 1858, and there he remained until he was engaged by the elder Wallack, when Wallack's Theatre, which afterward became the Star, was opened at the corner of Broadway and Thirtieth Street, New York. Gilbert's first part there was Sir Peter Teazle. From that time forth the comedian was a fixture in New York, and from 1861 to 1888, when Wallack's Theatre passed out of existence, he was the leading member of the Wallack companies. For him, Lester Wallack created a special position, that of acting manager. This carried an extra salary, but no extra work. On November 30, 1878, Gilbert's fiftieth year on the stage was observed at the Lotos Club, New York. The public celebration occurred on December 5, when there was a special *matinée* at Wallack's Theatre. It is quite probable that John Gilbert's life was



*From a cartoon published in 1855*





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shortened by the disappointment that he experienced over the failure of Wallack's up-town theatre, for he died in Boston, on June 17, 1889, within a month after its final performance. His last appearance on the stage was at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, on November 10, 1888, as Sir Anthony Absolute in Joseph Jefferson's version of "The Rivals."

### JOHN E. OWENS

Writing of John E. Owens (1823-1886), William Winter said: "His comic power was elemental, and the natural manifestation of it inevitably resulted in comic effect. He could indeed play serious parts, for he possessed a true vein of pathos, and he lacked neither authority nor repose; but his distinctive gift was that of comic power, and as long as he acted from the distinctively humorous impulse he never went astray from nature, and he never failed to touch the heart. His embodiment of Caleb Plummer, in which there was an exquisite sense of spontaneous and involuntary tenderness, was the perfection of humour, and the eyes that smiled always smiled through love and tears. It was only in those

moods when he was critical of himself, and chose to act from precept rather than from instinct, that Owens sometimes marred the beauty of his art and left his hearers unmoved. At those times he thought it essential to be what is styled 'true to life,' and in becoming literal and photographic he became monotonous and dry. The excess, for example, to which he sometimes carried the coarser traits of Solon Shingle was one result of that critical caprice. No dramatic embodiment was ever funnier; but it would have been just as funny, and it would have been more endearing, if it had not been quite so true."

John E. Owens was born in Liverpool, England, and his professional life covered the period between 1840 and 1882. His best parts were, besides the two mentioned, Doctor Pangloss in "The Heir-at-Law," Joshua Butterby in "Victims," Henry Dove in "Married Life," Grimaldi in "The Life of an Actress," Doctor Ollapod in "The Poor Gentleman," Horatio Spruggins in "Forty Winks," John Unit in "Self," Mr. Gilman in "The Happiest Day of My Life," Graves in "Money," Meddle, Toodle, Paul Pry, and Silky



JOHN E. OWENS



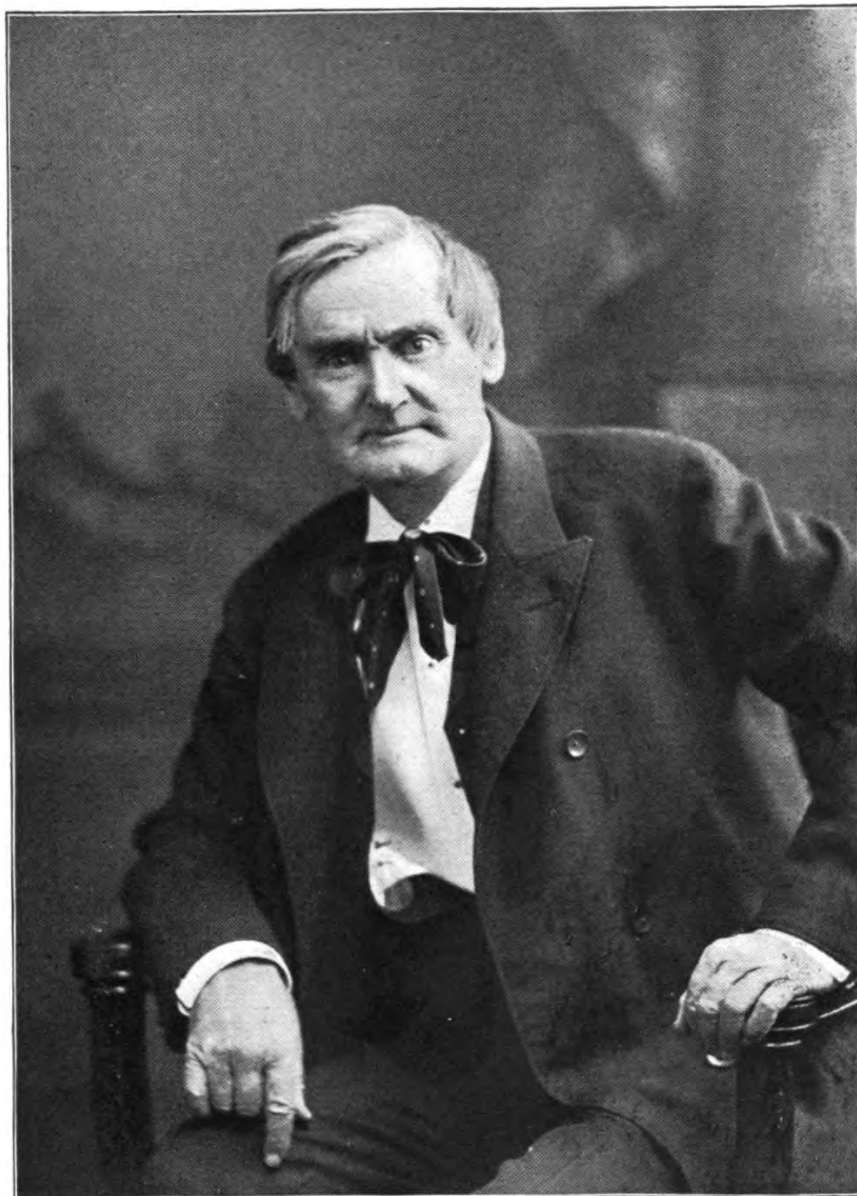
in "The Road to Ruin," of which he was called the best representative on the American stage.

JOSEPH JEFFERSON

Joseph Jefferson occupies a unique position on the stage to-day. He is rarely beloved by a public, which has ceased entirely to bother itself about the actor's artistic standing. It declares Joseph Jefferson a great comedian, and of the truth of the declaration it is absolutely convinced, while with Jefferson himself it is thoroughly satisfied. Indeed, Joseph Jefferson is a great comedian — great as Rip Van Winkle, great as Bob Acres (a character of which Richard Brinsley Sheridan never heard), and great as Doctor Pangloss and Caleb Plummer, always remembering that he always plays Mr. Jefferson's Doctor Pangloss and Mr. Jefferson's Caleb Plummer and no one else's. Joseph Jefferson's ability to impersonate is perfect within the determined range into which he drags all his characters. His pathos is positive and his sincerity complete, his humour rich and universal, and his comedy marvelously spontaneous. Yet, should one resolve seriously to consider Mr. Jefferson as an in-

terpreter of characters and of plays, what is there to say in his favour? The fact of the matter is, Mr. Jefferson never interpreted anything in his life; he knew too much to try. He early tested his abilities as an entertainer. He found them ample, and he thereafter wisely utilised, for the definite purpose of exploiting these wonderful qualities of personality and method, every part that he ever undertook.

Born in Philadelphia on February 20, 1829, the fourth Jefferson in direct line from the one that first made the name famous in Garrick's time, Joseph Jefferson made his début on the stage in Washington, at the age of three years, as a miniature "Jim Crow" at a benefit given to Thomas D. Rice. Jefferson's youth and early manhood were passed with barnstorming companies that wandered throughout the South and West. During the Mexican War he shared the fortunes of General Taylor's army, acting wherever night found him, and selling coffee and cakes to the soldiers when acting was not profitable. After that, Jefferson went to Philadelphia, and during the next ten years, from 1846 to 1856, he worked in New York, Philadelphia, and Rich-



JOSEPH JEFFERSON





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mond chiefly, sometimes as a stock actor, sometimes as a star, and sometimes as a manager. In 1856, he made his first trip abroad, but did not act. On his return, he became the principal comedian of Laura Keene's Theatre, New York, where he played Doctor Pangloss and Asa Trenchard in "Our American Cousin." Next at the Winter Garden, he acted Caleb Plummer in "The Cricket on the Hearth" and Salem Scudder in "The Octoroon," two of Dion Boucicault's dramatic efforts.

Jefferson first became interested in Rip Van Winkle in 1859. He had seen Charles Burke as Rip, and he knew the several versions of Irving's story that had been presented by Burke, Hackett, and Yates. The first Rip was probably Thomas Flynn (1804-1849), who acted the part on May 24, 1828. However, all these players simply made the Dutchman a drunken vagabond. It was Jefferson's idea to elevate the character and make it half-real, half-unreal, to invest it with fantastic indefiniteness that should soften the besottedness, retain all the humour and the humanity, and still give it an atmosphere suggestively supernatural. His

first version of "Rip Van Winkle" was made from Burke's play, Jefferson furnishing the idea of arranging the mountain scene so that none of Hudson's strange men should talk. The play made no especial success. Jefferson then went to Australia, returning home by way of London, where he met Dion Boucicault, who rearranged "Rip Van Winkle," without having himself, however, the least faith in the play. Jefferson first gave the new version in London, where it made an immediate hit. Later it was accorded a similar reception in this country.

#### WILLIAM J. FLORENCE

Pleasant features of the dramatic season of 1889-90 and 1890-91 were the performances of what was known as the Jefferson-Florence combination, the two principal factors of which were Joseph Jefferson and William J. Florence (1831-1891). These two actors first appeared together at the Star Theatre, New York, on October 15, 1889, in "The Rivals," in which Jefferson acted Bob Acres, Florence Sir Lucius O'Trigger, and Mrs. John Drew Mrs. Malaprop. They also presented "The Heir-at-



WILLIAM J. FLORENCE



Law," with Jefferson as Doctor Pangloss and Florence as Zekiel Homespun. As Sir Lucius, Florence's broad Celtic humour gave a richness and an amplitude to the impersonation that made it extremely delightful. His Zekiel Homespun was a simple, straightforward presentation of the country lad, a strong comedy study, which was flooded with sincere, elemental pathos, and which was dramatically positive whenever there was occasion for it.

Florence's real name was Conlin, and he was born in Albany, New York, of Irish parentage. His theatrical career began in December, 1849. The following year he played Macduff to Booth's Macbeth at Providence, Rhode Island, and a little later he was presenting Irish parts in Brougham's Lyceum, New York. For the season of 1852-53, Florence was at the old Broadway Theatre, and it was during this engagement that he married Mrs. Littell, a dancer, whose maiden name was Malvina Pray, and who was a sister of Mrs. Barney Williams. Shortly after, Mr. and Mrs. Florence started out for themselves, playing Yankee girl and Irish boy characters in imitation of Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams. One

of their most popular plays was "The Irish Emigrant." Occasionally also they took part in burlesques. In 1856, they appeared successfully in London. In 1861, Florence acted Captain Cuttle and Toodle at Wallack's, and in 1863 he played Bob Brierly in "The Ticket-of-Leave Man" at the Winter Garden. In 1867, he produced "Caste" at Wallack's, Florence playing D'Alroy, Mrs. Florence Polly Eccles, and Mrs. G. H. Gilbert the Marquise St. Maur. The greatest of the Florence successes was "The Mighty Dollar," by Benjamin E. Woolf, which was first acted at the Park Theatre, New York, on September 6, 1875.




JOHN BROUGHAM





## CHAPTER XII.

WILLIAM WARREN

O one, intelligently familiar with the acting of William Warren, who for thirty-five years graced the stage of the Boston Museum as a member of the stock company of that house, will deny that he was, beyond a reasonable doubt, the greatest comedian that the American theatre has produced. It is, of course, natural that those who know nothing of William Warren — who perhaps have never even heard his name — should consider preposterously absurd this sweeping and positive claim of supremacy. It is plain, also, that the confessed ignorance of such possible objectors really makes valueless any opinion on the subject that they may offer. However, for the sake of the cause, let their right to protest be admitted. What are their arguments against William Warren? Whom would they present as superior, or even equal, to Mr. Warren in

the broad field of comedy? This latter question is readily answered, for the same two actors always show forth whenever it is asked, — John Gilbert and Joseph Jefferson.

Were one not so thoroughly inured to the proposition as to regard it as quite commonplace, he would surely pause in dismay, perplexed why Joseph Jefferson, who never in his life tried to act anybody but himself, should be put forth as the rival of an actor whose range included every variety of character from the most dignified personages of old comedy to the least inconsequential butterflies of wildly ludicrous Morton farce. Joseph Jefferson is an eccentric comedian of rare art in a limited field. He is an extraordinary actor, whose positive merits are his bubbling joyousness and his marvellous verisimilitude. His lifework has been the elaboration of one remarkable character study, into which he has fused all the charm of his personality and all the whimsicality of his vivid imagination. Jefferson's Rip Van Winkle is a wonderful thing, a unique achievement, an astonishing exhibition of virtuosity, a creation impossible to any one but Joseph Jefferson.

Nevertheless, Rip Van Winkle proves noth-

ing except that Joseph Jefferson is great as Rip Van Winkle; while Jefferson's Bob Acres, Caleb Plummer, and Doctor Pangloss do prove that the length and the breadth, the height and the depth, of Joseph Jefferson's art are measured by that single Rip Van Winkle conception. As played by Mr. Jefferson, Bob Acres is not Bob Acres, Caleb Plummer is not Caleb Plummer, Doctor Pangloss is not Doctor Pangloss; but each and every one of them is Rip Van Winkle, absolutely and entirely. And what, pray, is Rip Van Winkle? Rip Van Winkle, I strongly suspect, is Joseph Jefferson,—at least, in the essential essence and peculiar individuality of his being.

I beg that I be not misunderstood in one particular. This is not an argument against the superlatively entertaining qualities found in all of Mr. Jefferson's personations. From the standpoint of enjoyment and pleasure, they are practically perfect; but we are not considering Mr. Jefferson's rank as an entertainer, nor as a popular player. What we are trying to get at is his rank as a comedian,—that is to say, as a versatile, sympathetic, in-

telligent, and truthful indicator and interpreter of those phases of human nature that are found in the character conceptions of the dramatists. One is bound to acknowledge that Jefferson's Bob Acres, Caleb Plummer, and Doctor Pangloss are all splendid exhibitions of spontaneous acting, and all thoroughly entertaining presentations. Indeed, one is not going too far to declare them flawless, if one be willing to limit himself to viewing them entirely from Mr. Jefferson's restricted area. Yet, has one the right thus to contract his vision? Whose Bob Acres was first, Jefferson's or Richard Brinsley Sheridan's? Whose Caleb Plummer was Charles Dickens writing about, his own or Joseph Jefferson's? Did George Colman, the younger, have in mind a simple-souled and harmless Doctor Pangloss, such as Mr. Jefferson's, when he portrayed a disgusting and hypocritical old wretch? For that matter, whose Rip Van Winkle is the real Rip Van Winkle, Jefferson's or Washington Irving's?

These questions are not mere sophistry; they probe the very source of good acting, and they deal directly with the ethics of his-

trionic art. Mr. Jefferson had a right to act any character he pleased in any way that he pleased, and, if he succeeded in making his way acceptable to a sufficient number of persons, he justified himself to his day and generation. He received his immediate reward,—an income in exact proportion to his success as an entertainer. But there is in the immortal halls of fame a great gallery of impersonal art, in which are hung the works of the masters. In this gallery Joseph Jefferson's Rip Van Winkle will have a place, for that is a true expression of Joseph Jefferson even if it is not of Washington Irving; but from this gallery will be barred rigorously Jefferson's Bob Acres, Caleb Plummer, and Doctor Pangloss, for the simple but sufficient reason that not one of them is true.

John Gilbert and William Warren were two actors in their superficial aspects strikingly alike. Joseph Jefferson, nearly all his life, was a soloist, playing, on the only instrument of its kind in the world, the single tune for which that instrument was perfectly adapted. Consequently, because it was a fascinating tune, and because there was no one else to

play it, Joseph Jefferson was kept on the go all of the time, playing his tune in many places before divers conditions of men. Gilbert and Warren were all their lives members of a great orchestra. They knew tunes without number, but they played them, not as soloists, but as integral parts of a unified whole. Occasionally there came little arias, which they played alone, but these were the exceptions. The great bulk of their labour was done in furnishing solid support for the whole, so that the entire orchestra, of which they were vital elements, should sound as one complete and perfect instrument.

In acting, the personal equation is so strong, that it often settles at once the question of superiority and inferiority. That, I think, will be found the case with Gilbert and Warren. It will be perceived that, as they differed as men, so they differed as actors. John Gilbert's greatest part, and the one in which he was unexcelled by William Warren or by any one else, was Sir Anthony Absolute, a specimen of the stern, choleric, unreasonable, selfish, and obstinate old man. John Gilbert was superlatively excellent in that part, because

the leading points in Sir Anthony's character, while, perhaps, not precisely approximated in the actor's own disposition, at least were qualities that he could thoroughly comprehend, and, therefore, could manifest as realities. Gilbert was not a man who displayed any great amount of disinterested affection, or who naturally was especially warm hearted or generous toward his co-workers. He had many of the traits of the modern actor in the insistence with which he maintained his rights in matters of professional interest. He did not feel that it was incumbent upon him to encourage beginners, or to praise another's efforts.

The foregoing is not to be taken as in any sense a condemnation of John Gilbert; it is merely a statement of impersonal facts, which are necessary to a satisfactory comprehension of the artist, who was the outgrowth of the man. In connection with these facts, one should not fail to recall that John Gilbert was a man of high ideals and clean living, that he was honestly devoted to his profession and faithful in his service of it,—that he was a worthy type of gentleman. But, as is the case with every artist, whether he be painter or

poet or player, Gilbert had his peculiar disposition and temperament, and these influenced vitally his work.

John Gilbert's particular limitations were emphatically set forth in his impersonation of Sir Peter Teazle. Like every truthful replica of human character, Sir Peter is capable of grades of interpretation within the range of certain positively stated conditions. Thus Sir Peter is an old man who has married a young wife, a country girl with no dowry whatsoever. Sir Peter, moreover, is a fussy old man, with a scolding tongue when things do not go just to suit him, but an old man of whom his young wife stands not a bit in awe, nor in the least fears. How did Mr. Gilbert embody Sir Peter? He made him stern, unrelenting, harsh, provided him, in fact, with very much the same mental and physical habiliments that he gave to Sir Anthony Absolute, thereby portraying a Sir Peter who, as George W. Wilson, the comedian, expressed it, "would not in the first place have married any woman except for her money, and, in the second place, a Sir Peter whom no woman would have married under any conditions."



Moulded, as they were, by a nature that did not express a great deal of love, Mr. Gilbert's impersonations, while clear and intellectually well defined, were always cold, hard, and unsympathetic. However strongly they appealed to the spectator's critical sense and acumen, they did not touch his heart. However much he admired them as compositions and as exhibitions of acting, he was not convinced of their reality, nor did they ever impose themselves upon him as living entities.

The man William Warren was wholly different from the man John Gilbert. While Gilbert cared little or nothing for his associates, Warren was continually fostering the interests of those who were about him, and whom he had learned to love and to trust. He never was happier than when speaking a word of honest praise for another's effort that had seemed to him worthy of the recognition. Without the shadow of selfishness or meanness, generous in his treatment of all men, dignified, honest, confident of his own artistic abilities, yet always modest and unassuming and without affectation, Mr. Warren's life was one

of serenity and peace. He envied no man, and it might truthfully be added that no man envied him. He was conscientious in his work, faithful to the very end in his attendance on rehearsals and the other requirements of his profession. He was distinctly of the old school in his attitude toward his labour. He never thought of asking for any more favours than his part strictly called for; indeed, he often failed to take even those. Nor was he ever dictatorial. If he saw something that he thought could be improved, he would make the suggestion, "Don't you think that such a way would be better?" It always was better, and so the Museum players got into the habit of regarding these suggestions almost as commands.

With all his mildness, however, William Warren would not permit injustice toward himself, nor brook unwarranted familiarity. He could administer an effectual rebuke when there was occasion for it. The story is told that one day Mr. Warren, on entering a public place, was approached by a man, who slapped him on the shoulder and exclaimed:

"Well, well, if here isn't old man Warren,

looking just the same as he did twenty years ago!"

"Yes," answered Mr. Warren, "and you look just the same as you looked twenty years ago—if I knew you twenty years ago, and I don't think I did."

A great comedian must of necessity be an ingrained humourist. He must see life, neither as a tragedy nor as a farce, but as a far-reaching and serious reality, but a reality which is rosy-hued and silver-lined. The real humourist is both a loving and a lovable man, who radiates sunshine and happiness, who knows well enough that there are sombre shadows here and there, but who chooses to illumine the dark places whenever possible rather than to deepen their gloom. William Warren's humour expressed itself in many ways, for it was, in truth, of the very fibre of his temperament. He was remarkable for his fund of anecdotes,—a story to fit every possible circumstance, and never a one of them repeated. His wit was keen, but wholly without the sting of the satirist. His characterisation of Jefferson's version of "The Rivals" as "Sheridan twenty miles away" was an ex-

ample of his aptness of phrase. His buoyant disposition was manifested in the fine geniality, with which he seemed to infuse the very atmosphere, and in the rich sympathy that was inherent in his thought.

All of these splendid qualities entered into William Warren's acting, making it mellow and vibrant with broad, simple, and thoroughly sincere humanity. William Warren really liked to act because he liked to make people happy. His work was never a burden to him as long as he was rewarded with laughter and smiles and beaming faces. So strong was this desire for brightness and joy that he was known to abandon in the midst of a profitable run a part that had an intense vein of sadness. He could not bear to be instrumental in causing even fictitious sorrow.

Up to the time that his fiftieth year as an actor was celebrated on October 28, 1882, Mr. Warren had appeared in thirteen thousand, three hundred and forty-five performances and had acted five hundred and seventy-seven different characters. Thirty-five of these fifty years had been spent at the Boston Museum. Can one ask for more convincing proof of the



WILLIAM WARREN IN 1882



superb quality of his art than the certain fact that he was able to hold for so long a time, and through such a range of impersonations, the favour and the support of the same public? No actor in the history of the stage ever played so continuously in one theatre, and no American actor, at least, ever equalled Mr. Warren's marvellous record of industry and versatility. Such a record indicates something far more enduring than the most potent personal charm or the most compelling dramatic instinct; it means resourceful art, infinite variety of expression, and positive mentality.

That Mr. Warren unfortunately narrowed his fame by remaining thus long in one theatre is undoubtedly true; but he was happy at the Boston Museum. The life of a wandering player he could not endure. Boston was his home, and work there was a genuine pleasure. So he laboured on, always with infinite pains, satisfied with the honour and the affection that each day brought him, contented with the present, not troubling himself over the future, nor fussing about what the world was going to think of him after he had

ceased thinking of the world. And, indeed, could he have lived a better life or a more profitable life by living a less happy one?

According to competent judges of acting and elocution, Mr. Warren was prone to excessive use of the stentorian tones and to unduly forcing his voice on occasion, a fault which Henry Austin Clapp attributes to his early immersion in farce. In the expression of pathos, he was generally sure, though not always directly penetrating. This was largely due to the unfortunate circumstance that the audiences at the Boston Museum became so accustomed to laughing at Mr. Warren in broad comedy parts that they formed a habit of guffawing every time he came on the stage, and that, too, wholly regardless of what the actor was saying or doing. As a specimen of Mr. Warren's range and adaptability as an actor, Mr. Clapp gives the following list of contrasting parts: Pillicoddy and Touchstone, Jacques Fauvel and Polonius, John Duck and Monsieur Tourbillon, Mr. Ledger and Michonnet, Templeton Jitt and Jesse Rural, Sir Harcourt Courtly and Tony Lumpkin, Triplet and Dogberry, Goldfinch and Sir Peter Teazle.



Mr. Clapp then continues: "To a pupil of the highest sensibility, Mr. Warren's deep-hearted Sir Peter Teazle, in whom Sheridan's conception was at once justified, reproduced, and developed, might of itself have gone far to furnish a liberal education. Surely, no decently appreciative spectator who sat at the artist's feet for a score of years could have failed to learn something of the difference between sincerity and affectation, breadth and narrowness, ripeness and crudity, in the practice of histrionic art."

"William Warren belonged to and magnificently exemplified that school of art which counted as failure the inability of an actor to lose his individuality in the character assumed," wrote Mrs. E. G. Sutherland in her sketch of Mr. Warren. "How he lost himself, how he gave to us, flawless, living, rounded and complete, the realisation of a youth-time of ideals, let a hundred thronging memories bear witness. . . . He gave us finished to the fingertips, to the last intonation, to the last detail of costume, to the last queer turn of dialect, not only an infinite variety of types, but an infinite variety in those types. . . . How many Scotch-

men have decently restrained their delight over the sober truth of his Baillie Nicol Jarvie, his Caleb Balderstone, his David Deans! How many Irishmen have vociferously shouted their delight over the unctuous perfection of his Dennis O'Rourke, or paid the more eloquent tribute of tear-dimmed silence to the exquisite tenderness and lofty dignity of his Father Dolan? How many Frenchmen have watched, with keen and thorough appreciation, the Gallic finish and fineness of his Baron de Cambri, his Papa Perrichon, the searching pathos of his Jacques Fauvel and Monsieur Tourbillon! While Yankeedom endures, where will the typical Yankee see the mirror so held up to nature as in Warren's Enos Crumlett, his Jefferson Scattering Batskin, his Salem Scudder, and his Silas Jorgan!"

William Warren had the advantage of belonging to a theatrical family, and of growing up in the theatrical environment. His father, also a comedian of some note, was born in Bath, England, May 19, 1767, and made his first appearance on the stage as Young Norval in John Home's "Douglas," when he was seventeen years old. His *début* in this coun-

try was made at the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, on November 5, 1796, as Friar Laurence in "Romeo and Juliet." He died in Baltimore on October 19, 1832. The third wife of William Warren the elder was Miss Esther Fortune, whose elder sister was married to the grandfather of Joseph Jefferson. She was the mother of William Warren the younger, who was born in Philadelphia on November 17, 1812. Young Warren's education was quite exceptional for an actor, his father intending that the son should go into business. The father's sudden death, however, threw the support of the family on the young man, and he turned to the stage, appearing for the first time at a benefit given his mother in the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, on October 27, 1832, as Young Norval to the Old Norval of Junius Brutus Booth, the same part that forty-eight years before his father had utilised for his début.

The following few years Warren acted part of the time in Philadelphia and part of the time with a barnstorming troupe in the West. This latter was managed by Joseph Jefferson's father. Although limited in size, this

company's ambitious repertory included "Richard III.," "Hamlet," and "The Lady of Lyons," besides old comedies and farces. Warren acted all sorts of parts, sometimes several different ones in the same piece. Thus, when "Richard III." was presented, Warren played Richmond in the fifth act, after having filled three or four minor characters in the earlier scenes. In 1841, Warren made his appearance at the Park Theatre, New York, as Gregory Grizzle in Benjamin Webster's farce, "My Young Wife and Old Umbrella." From New York he went to Buffalo, and then acted in various places in New York State till 1845. That year he took a trip abroad, and while in London made a single appearance in the Strand Theatre, at the benefit of Mrs. Coleman Pope, as Con Gormley in Logan's farce, "The Vermonter."

On his return he was engaged for the company of the new Howard Athenæum, and made his Boston début on October 5, 1846, when the theatre was opened with "The Rivals," in which Warren acted Sir Lucius O'Trigger. In this connection it is related that the part of Bob Acres belonged by right

to Mr. Warren according to the terms of his contract, but W. H. Crisp, the leading man, wanted to play "Fighting Bob" and Mr. Warren was willing to accommodate him. W. W. Clapp in his "Boston Records" said, regarding this first appearance: "No actor ever won the approbation of a Boston audience more rapidly than Mr. Warren." The season at the Howard continued until February 27, 1847, and during the twenty weeks Mr. Warren acted such parts as the Gravedigger in "Hamlet," Peter in "Romeo and Juliet," Dogberry in "Much Ado," the Mock Duke in "The Honeymoon," Fathom in "The Hunchback," Grumio in "Katharine and Petruchio," Marrall in "A New Way to Pay Old Debts" with Junius Brutus Booth as Sir Giles, Launcelot Gobbo in "The Merchant of Venice," Jacques Stropp in "Robert Macaire," Dandie Dinmont in "Guy Mannering," Sir Harcourt Courtly in "London Assurance," and Marquis de Rotundo in "Don César de Bazan." As the Gravedigger in "Hamlet," Mr. Warren, even at that early date, cut aloof from the familiar business of raising a laugh by having the old fellow remove innumerable waistcoats before

setting to work, and the innovation caused not a little comment at the time.

Mr. Warren's connection with the Boston Museum began on August 27, 1847, when he appeared at that house as Billy Lackaday in Pocock's comedy, "Sweethearts and Wives." With the exception of the season of 1864-65, when he starred, Mr. Warren continued at the Museum until May 12, 1885, when his last appearance on the stage occurred. During his first season at the Museum, Mr. Warren played nearly all the characters that he had impersonated at the Howard the year before, and, in addition, Tony Lumpkin in "She Stoops to Conquer," Sir Peter Teazle in "The School for Scandal," Pythias in "Damon and Pythias," Sir Abel Handy in "Speed the Plough," O'Callaghan in "His Last Legs," Jesse Rural in "Old Heads and Young Hearts," Lord Mayor in "Richard III.," Box in "Box and Cox," Doctor Ollapod in "The Poor Gentleman," Paul Pry, Zekiel Homespun in "The Heir-at-Law," and Admiral Kingston in "Naval Engagements." During the season of 1848-49, his principal new parts were Dominie Sampson in "Guy Mannering,"

Baillie Nicol Jarvie in "Rob Roy," John Peter Pillicoddy in "Poor Pillicoddy," Sir Harry Beagle in "The Jealous Wife," Sir William Fondlove in "The Love Chase," John Moody in "The Provoked Husband," Graves in "Money," Flutter in "The Belle's Stratagem," Bob Acres in "The Rivals," John Browdie in "Nicholas Nickleby," Bumble in "Oliver Twist," and Mr. Golightly in "Lend Me Five Shillings."

During the season of 1849-50, the new parts that fell to Mr. Warren were Polonius in "Hamlet," Kent in "King Lear," Touchstone in "As You Like It," and Squire Richard in "The Provoked Husband." During the season of 1850-51, Mr. Warren played Solomon in "The Stranger," the First Witch in "Macbeth," and Dogberry in "Much Ado." The season of 1851-52 opened with Mr. Warren as Doctor Pangloss, and he acted besides Ephraim Jenkinson in "The Vicar of Wakefield," and Jefferson Scattering Batkins in "The Silver Spoon." Sir Andrew Aguecheek in "Twelfth Night" was added to his list during the season of 1852-53 with Penetrate Partyside in "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Goldfinch

in "The Road to Ruin" came the following season, and Gnatbrain in "Black-Eyed Susan" during the season of 1854-55. John Mildmay in "Still Waters Run Deep" and Triplet in "Peg Woffington" were given in the season of 1855-56, and then, until the season of 1858-59, when Autolycus in "A Winter's Tale" and Asa Trenchard in "Our American Cousin" took their places in his repertory, Mr. Warren's new parts were found only in farces. It should be remembered that the parts which have been enumerated were only Mr. Warren's most important ones. In addition he acted in from a dozen to twenty-five new farces every season.

During the season of 1859-60, Mr. Warren played Major Wellington de Boots in "Everybody's Friend" and Caleb Plummer in "Dot." The following season he was seen as Myles Na-Coppaleen in "The Colleen Bawn" and Fanfaronade in "Belphegor, the Mountebank." Benjamin Blinker in "Lost in London" was given during 1865-66, and Eccles in "Caste," Joey Ladle in "No Thoroughfare," and Money-penny in "The Long Strike" during the season of 1867-68. The O'Grady in "Arrah-Na-



Pogue" and Baron de Cambri in "Frou-Frou" were acted in the season of 1869-70, while during the succeeding season Mr. Hunter in "New Men and Old Acres," Digby Grant in "The Two Roses," and Dunscombe-Dunscombe in "M. P." were added. Sadlove in "The Cherry Tree Inn" and Puffy in "The Streets of New York" made the season of 1871-72 an easy one, while Templeton Jitt in "Divorce" and Mr. Lovibond in "The Overland Route" were the principal features of the season of 1872-73. Micawber in "Little Em'ly," Hector Placide in "Led Astray," and Captain Ed'ard Cuttle in "Heart's Delight" were played the following season.

Mr. Warren was seen as Cadwallader in "The Big Bonanza" and Samuel Tottles in "Tottles" during the season of 1875-76, and as Palamedes Parrisol in Sardou's "Ferreol" and Elevator in "Our Boarding-House" in 1876-77. Baby's Tutor in "Baby," Major Gooseberry in "Lemons," Hector Perrichon in "Papa Perrichon," Dennis O'Rourke in "A Celebrated Case," and Saunders in "Harebell" were the leading features of the season of 1877-78. The next season began with Lucien

Fanrolle in "Diplomacy" and included Doctor Primrose in "The Vicar of Wakefield," John Perrybingle in "The Cricket on the Hearth," and Perkyn Middlewick in "Our Boys." Hector Peyrolles in "The Duke's Motto," Josiah Clinch in "Our Girls," and Father Dolan in "The Shaughran" came during the season of 1879-80, with Doctor Delehanty in "Sixes and Sevens," Mr. Butterscotch in "The Guv'nor," and David Deans in "Jeanie Deans" as the new parts of the next season. During the season of 1881-82, Mr. Warren appeared in but two new parts, Lambert Streyke in "The Colonel" and Andrew in "The False Friend." Mr. Warren's last season at the Museum and on the stage began on August 21, 1882, when he acted Dalrymple in "Imprudence" and Mr. Ledger in "The Parvenu." His fiftieth anniversary was observed on October 28, Mr. Warren playing Doctor Pangloss in the afternoon and Sir Peter Teazle in the evening. His last impersonation, which he gave when the Museum season closed on May 12, 1885, was Old Eccles in "Caste." Mr. Warren died on September 1, 1888, at his home, 2 Bulfinch Place, Boston. The last five years of his life were

passed quietly in that city with his old friends and his beloved books, and during the time he was a familiar figure on the streets and in the theatres, which he was fond of visiting.

Such was the uneventful life of a modest gentleman and a great actor. William Warren early decided that the battle with the hurly-burly world for the bubble reputation was not for him, and such honours as are gained chiefly by the loud and insistent tooting of one's own horn he willingly let slip. He valued love and friendship far more than he did fame, and he spoke from the heart and uncovered his honest feeling when he said, addressing the great audience that gathered on his fiftieth anniversary to do him honour, "To have lived in this city of Boston happily for more than five and thirty years, engaged in so good and successful a theatre as this, and cheered always by your favour, and then to have that residence crowned by such an assemblage as I see before me, is glory enough for one poor player. My humble efforts have never gained for me any of the great prizes of my profession until now, but failing to reach the summit of Parnassus, it is

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something to have found so snug a nook on the mountainside."

It was Mr. Warren's nature thus to undervalue his own abilities, and the world, which has a trick of mistaking modesty for a lack of ability, also undervalued them. Even Boston, which really loved him and was always proud of him, was not absolutely convinced of his extraordinary talent until she lost him. Nevertheless, William Warren was a great comedian, in fact, the greatest comedian of his time.

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