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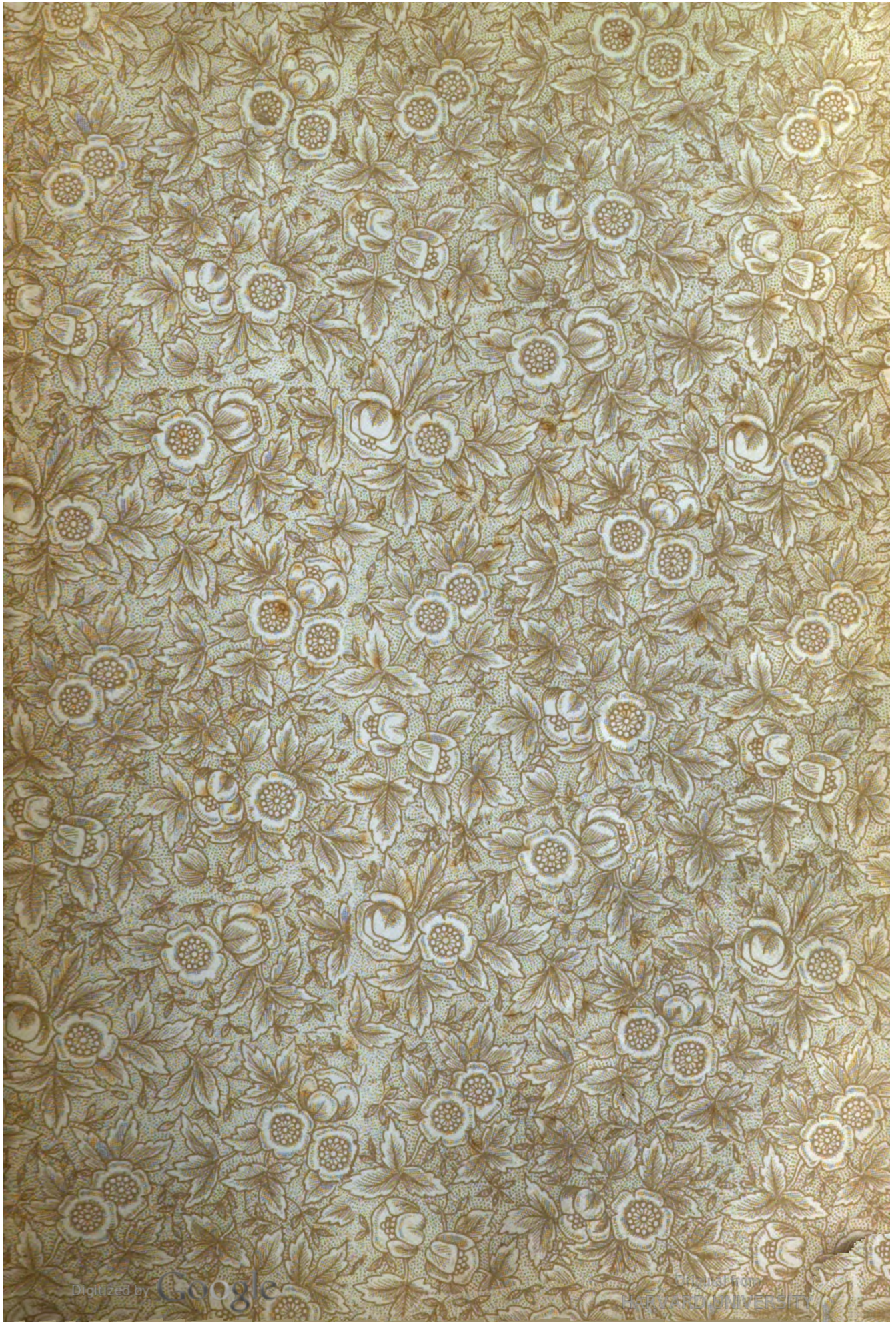
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MEMORIES
OF AN
OLD ACTOR.

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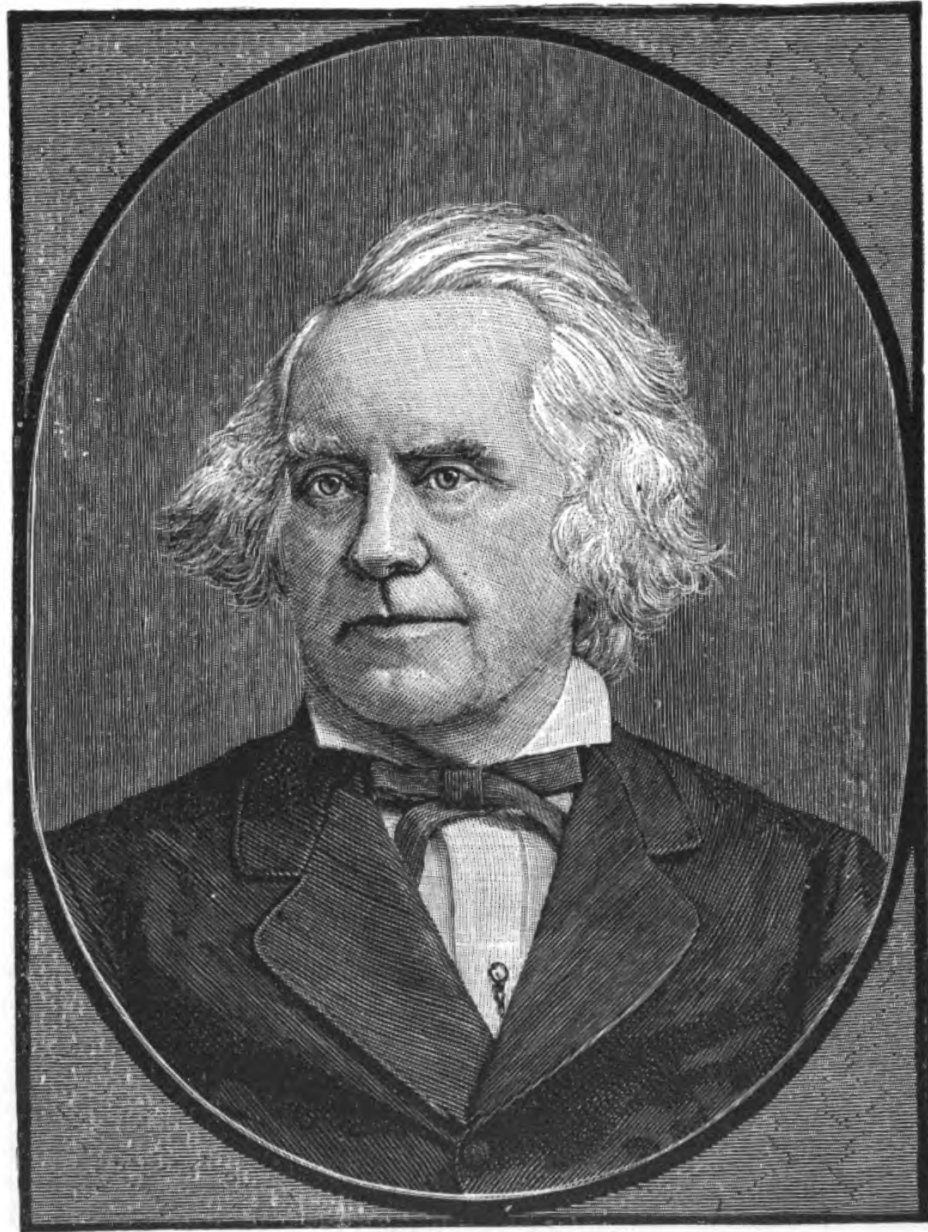


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MEMORIES OF AN OLD ACTOR.



Dear yours.
Walter H. Leman

MEMORIES
OF
AN OLD ACTOR

BY

WALTER M. LEMAN

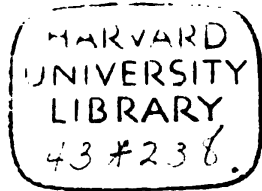
"They are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time"

SHAKESPEARE

SAN FRANCISCO
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1886

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By WALTER M. LEMAN.

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DEDICATION.

To the Memory of

NATHAN PORTER,

Whose human sympathies embraced not kindred and friends alone, but went out to and beyond the circle of the legal profession which he dignified by his virtues and adorned by his talents, and to that great brotherhood which found in him the truest exemplar of their motto: "Friendship, Love and Truth," and took in mankind at large; who dared oppose Wrong though it were clad in silk and purple, and befriend Right though groveling in wretchedness and rags; upon whose escutcheon as husband, brother, father, friend and man there is neither spot nor blemish—this volume is dedicated by the writer who knew him long and loved him well.

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MEMORIES OF AN OLD ACTOR.

CHAPTER I.

School Remembrances — Juvenile Theatricals — Competition
Status of the Theatre in the United States sixty years
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Sloman—Miss Clara Fisher—The Federal Street Theatre
—Mrs. Powell—Mrs. Papanti—The Kean riot—Joe Cowell
—Watkins Burroughs—Flynn.

WITH the opening of the Tremont Theatre,
in the city of Boston, in the year 1827,
commenced my theatrical life; but my remem-
brances of the theatre and the players antedate
that event by some three years, when, a restive
youth of fifteen, I returned to my parental home
from Bradford Academy, which, under the direc-
tion of the distinguished mathematician and

not more startled, years after, by Miss Cushman's creation of "Meg," than by that of Mrs. Powell, but I was but a boy when I saw Mrs. Powell, and had been familiarized by long experience of the "trick of the scene," and personal acquaintance with Miss Cushman, it was perhaps the glamour of a first impression. Mrs. Powell was an exemplary mother, and stood in the highest social regard — her annual benefits often netted \$1,000.

Mrs. Papanti was another member of the old Boston Company, and was one of my chief idols. She was a piquante and fascinating actress, and esteemed as of a higher order of merit as a vocalist than any predecessor for many years. I remember her first appearance as Rosalvini, in the opera of "The Devils Bridge." Her husband, Signor Papanti, was a member of the orchestra. He became subsequently a teacher of dancing, and for several seasons managed the celebrated Boston "Almacks," these famous assemblies were composed of the *crème-de-crème* of Boston society. The lady patronesses were as rigid in their rules of admission to the charmed circle as their London predecessors. Signor P. subsequently married a Boston lady of dazzling beauty, an aunt of the present wife of Mr. Laurence Barrett.

The Kean riot which occurred in the fall of 1825, is one of the vivid memories of my early

days—it was the parallel in many respects of the Astor Place riot, which occurred many years later, but unlike that it was attended with no loss of life. Mr. Kean is one of the great actors of old, whom I can not boast of having seen act, for on that stormy night the *acting* was monopolized by his opponents. He appeared upon the stage in citizens private apparel, but met by the howling tempest of popular fury was driven with every species of opprobrium from the boards.

Another great remembrance of my stage-struck era, was the production of the romantic spectacle play, “Cherry and Fair Star.” I could never, if I would, forget “Cherry and Fair Star.” Perhaps not one of my readers ever saw “Cherry and Fair Star” — great their loss if they chanced to be boy or girl in their “teens”! When the great gilded galley swept the circle of the stage on the billowy surface of that ocean of cotton cloth (it was to my charmed eyes an ocean of real water), whose waves beat higher and wilder than any I have since seen in the theatre. When “Sanguinbeck” (Sanguinbeck, does not the very name bespeak what kind of a man he was), when “Sanguinbeck” flourished his bloody dagger; when “Topac” ran after his enchanted snow-ball; when “Cherry” thriddled the forest glade with hunters horn and boar spear, and woke the echoes for the charming “Fair Star.”

palace, William Rufus Blake, in full dress, and enveloped in the ample folds of a rich black silk toga, advanced to the front and spoke the address.

Mr. Blake had been for some time before the public. He was a light comedian of great ability. He had a compact and shapely form, a face of manly beauty, and an irrepressible hilarity, which combined with a pleasant voice and graceful bearing made his acting peculiarly pleasing in genteel comedy—in serious parts he was not so effective; in his later years he was an admirable representative of the “old men” of the drama, and his performance of “Bonus,” “Kit Cosey,” “Lord Duberly,” “Sir Peter Teazle,” and the like characters, was far superior to his contemporaries. There was a ripeness, an unctuousness, so to speak, that captivated his auditors, and in the “old men,” he exercised the same power, which in his youth had made his “Floriville,” “Young Rapid” and “Charles Surface” the delight of theatre-goers.

In private **Mr. Blake** was a delightful companion. He was not especially noted for prudence in money matters; he loved life and loved to enjoy it, and loved to see others enjoy it. If he had been a millionaire he would have spent his income like a prince. When he could command money he spent it like a gentleman, and, truth to say, he sometimes spent it like a gentleman when he had none to spend (save in expectancy).

From the first he took a great fancy to me, and in after years would pleasantly recall the days when he first knew "Walter," in Boston. He was stage manager of the Walnut St. Theatre in Philadelphia some years later, when I was attached to the company, and it was his especial delight to have a Sunday dinner-party with the young actors around him, and I was always an invited guest. He was full of fun, and kept us all in a roar of merriment. "Why?" he asked on one occasion, "why do some of these newspaper fellows sometimes say that I'm not a good actor? Ask Charlotte."—This was said with a chuckle, referring to Charlotte Cushman, who had been his predecessor in the stage management, and with whom his relations had been almost belligerent—"She knows; she'll say it's because I'm a Blue-nose." He was born in Halifax, N. S. "Ask Walter, here; he'll tell you what they think in Boston. He'll tell you that there I was the *pet* of the ladies—the pride of the *Irish*ocracy and the idol of the *pox vopuli*." And then came out that merry laugh, whose influence no one could resist.

Mr. Blake died some years since, in Boston. He was suddenly stricken down, I think, while playing "Sir Peter Teazle," and soon passed away. Looking back over the changeful memories of the past, among the pleasantest I find

those of my first stage manager and old friend, William Rufus Blake.

The poem spoken, the curtain drew up for the play, which was Mrs. Inchbald's comedy of "Wives as they were, and Maids as they are." Blake played "Bronzley," in his sparkling champagne-y manner. Mr. Charles Webb was the "Sir Wm. Dorrillon" of the cast. Mr. Webb was an actor of great ability; he had graduated from the "Mortonians," a society of juvenile amateurs in Philadelphia, of which Edwin Forrest was a member. In the dignified gentlemen of Reynolds and other authors whose plays were popular in the early part of the century, he appeared to great advantage, and equally so in depicting the "Tyrants" of the stage, but he had one failing which, strange to say, hardly lessened his dignity. Though sometimes a tipsy gentleman, he was never a tipsy *boor*, and he was never tipsy excepting from the waist downwards. All his inebriety seemed to settle in his extremities. The alcoholic indulgence weakened his pedal props, but seemed to have little effect upon his brain. The pugilistic demon of drink always hit him "below the belt," and his blows were emphatically staggering ones. It is but justice to say that his periods of indiscretion were not of frequent occurrence or long duration, and, like many others, he bitterly lamented his want of self-control.

When Matthews got thus far, and looked at the great *square* shield which the "noble Norval" held awkwardly aloft, and then to the audience, before introducing the "ought to have been," the mirth was irresistible—the whole audience was in a roar.

Mr. Matthews returned to England and died within six months.

In the following April, Boston witnessed the first musical efforts of a lady who afterwards became the acknowledged queen of tragedy, with no rival near her throne—Miss Charlotte Cushman. She was a native of Boston, but for some years previous had been a resident of the adjoining town of Charlestown. I remember her well as a girl, and a vocalist in the choir of the Bulfinch street church. Miss Cushman appeared as the "Countess," in the opera of the "Marriage of Figaro." In the year following, she appeared as "Lady Macbeth," and surprised the public, who had hitherto known her only as a singer. Miss Cushman had a fondness for male parts, and played at this time, "Fortunato Falcone," "Henry," in "Speed the Plough," and "Patrick," in the "Poor Soldier." She might, perhaps, have become a great singer, had she not ruined a naturally fine voice by overtaxing it; and it may truly be said that she became a great tragedienne by the force of circumstances. Miss Cushman's

voice always retained a coarse and harsh tone, the probable result of her over-strained vocal efforts. Breaking down as an opera-singer, in New Orleans, she became the pupil of Mr. Barton, an actor of the Macready school, and made an instantaneous success as "Lady Macbeth," a part to which she had devoted the most careful study. Subsequently she supported Macready; his influence assisted materially in her rapid rise to fame and fortune, and her constant professional association with him, no doubt, led to a certain mannerism and tone that made her appear a female copy of that gentleman, pure and simple. There was little of feminine softness in anything Miss Cushman did upon the stage, but there was a perfect mine of depth and power. She loved society and fame and money, and she had them all.

I knew at this time, another lady, the heroine of a famous run-away affair with the violinist, Paganini. He had preceded her to Paris, where she was to join him, in accordance with the arranged plan; but on reaching Boulogne, she found not Paganini, but papa.

Miss Watson was a "pretty little singer," nothing more.

John Reeve, who, like John Dunn, was known as the "Rascal Jack," I also well remember. It used to be said of the late William E. Burton,

that he was an imitator of Reeve; but he declared that Reeve copied him. I think the two comedians were naturally very much alike, and certainly, in point of personal beauty, neither had the advantage of the other. John Reeve, as "Cupid," was a funny sight.

Another memory of the past time, the old Drury Lane veteran, Dowton, a great actor. I can see him now, "in the mind's eye," the very absolute realization of "Sir Robert Bramble," "Old Dornton," "Sir George Thunder," and a half-dozen more of the old fellows of comedy that delighted the public. Mr. Dowton was at that time seventy-one years old, and, as a capable critic declared, "His representations of choleric humanity were carried to the summit of perfection."

At this time it was my privilege to form the acquaintance and friendship of one whose name is bright in the remembrance of all who ever knew him on either side of the Atlantic; the polished and perfect comedian, the grand and impressive tragedian, the graceful and finished elocutionist, the successful and practical farmer, the candid, honest and upright man—James E. Murdoch. He was a member of the "Tremont" company during two seasons, and in 1840-41 was stage manager of the "National Theatre," in Boston. It would be superfluous to attempt in

Scott being the "Macbeth." It took but little time for me to know that I was misplaced, and stating frankly to Mr. Hamblin that I wished a release, he courteously granted it; and I immediately joined Mr. E. A. Marshal, with whom I had been in correspondence. I remained at the "Bowery" Theatre but two weeks; proceeding immediately to Philadelphia, I was enrolled by Mr. Marshal as a member of the "Walnut St." company—the "Chestnut St." Theatre being at the same time under his control. My old friend William Rufus Blake was stage manager, and the acting manager was Miss Charlotte Cushman. The company was a strong one, including among the ladies—Miss Susan Cushman, Miss Alexina Fisher, Mrs. Thayer, Mrs. Blake, Mrs. Wm. Jones and Mrs. Mossop, and among the gentlemen—W. R. Blake, J. M. Field, better known as "Straws"—the father of Miss Kate Field—Henkins, Hadaway, E. L. Davenport, and others. In October, Mr. W. H. Macready, made his first appearance at the Chestnut St. Theatre as "Hamlet." This was the first time I had been brought into professional association with this famous actor—born, one might say, almost in the theatre. His father being a well-known provincial manager, he had every opportunity for studying his art and its professors, and he stood confessedly at the head of his school of acting, which was founded rather

on the Kemble theory, than on the system of Garrick, or Mossop, or Kean. I had seen Mr. Macready nearly twenty years before, when I was but a boy, and the remembrance of that first night, when as "Virginius" he stirred my senses, and awoke my admiration, which was blended with a kind of stage-fright at acting with one who had the character among the profession of being so particular and methodic that a breath mis-breathed would put him off his balance, and a syllable mis-placed would stop the action of the whole machine. This feeling was more or less prevalent with all the members of the company. Miss Charlotte Cushman played the "Queen" to Macready's "Hamlet," and he was so well pleased with the lady, that he chose her as his female support in his subsequent engagements, and thus made the way to her London career feasible and plain.

Mr. Blake, knowing Mr. Macready's peculiarities, was especially anxious that all should go right while Mr. Macready was with us, and indeed all went very well, even to the satisfaction on the whole of Mr. Macready himself, although there were one or two little accidents during that memorable engagement, that to Kean, or Booth, or even Forrest, would have been as nothing, but came very near upsetting Mr. Macready. One of these I have a right to mention, as I was the

innocent delinquent. It occurred towards the close of the engagement, when "Hamlet" was repeated. But first I will allude to the experience of my friend Mr. William Wheatley, who played the supporting seconds to the star.

It happened almost every night that on the fall of the curtain, Mr. Macready would send his dresser to the stage manager with a desire that Mr. So-and-So, whoever it might chance to be, should be sent to Mr. Macready's dressing-room, and, with more or less of fear and trembling, the actors would go to hear what Mr. Macready had to say; and from the expression on their faces when they emerged, the inference was drawn that Macready's remarks had not been over complimentary.

Mr. Blake, as I have said, was extremely anxious that everyone should do all in his or her power to please the exacting star, and before the rising of the curtain would come into the green-room and say: "Now, gentlemen and ladies, let us all take care to have everything go right with Mac.; be very particular that everything is done exactly as it was rehearsed"—and when the actors came forth from Macready's room, would meet them with a satiric smile on his handsome face, and ask what "Mac" had said, assuring them that, "of course, Mr. Macready had only sent for them to compliment their performance."

Mr. Wheatley generally escaped these interviews, but on one evening Blake came running into the green-room with: "Wheatley, Mac wants you—it's *your* turn now;" and Wheatley went as desired, to the great man's room; he remained there an unusually long time, and on coming out, Blake, who had all the time been on the watch, wanted to know what kept him so long, and what Mac had been saying to him. From Mr. Wheatley's constrained manner and unpleased look, it was quite apparent that the interview had not been altogether satisfactory; but he got away from Blake as quickly as possible by saying, with an enforced tone of cheerfulness, that "*he had a delicious half-hour*" with Mr. Macready. Blake gave a chuckle, which bespoke his misdoubt of Wheatley's report; and on the following evening, the "Hamlet" night, when dressed for "Polonius," came into the green-room, and in his inimitable manner, looking at Wheatley, wondered who would have the *delicious half-hour* with Mac to-night.

I played the "King of Denmark," and between the last two acts had taken off my sword, and forgetfully had left it in my dressing-room. Just as the last scene was being drawn, Miss Cushman said to me, "Mr. Leman, where's your sword? Your sword—you've forgotten your sword. Here, somebody bring Mr. Leman a

sword!" And the property man had barely time to place in my hands a fencing-foil as the scene opened. The play progressed to its close—Hamlet disarmed and slew the King, and the curtain fell. I went to my room and was beginning to disrobe, when Blake came trotting to the door, and with his wicked grin, said "Walter, Mac wants you; you've escaped a good while, but it's your turn for a delicious half-hour now," and following me out, to my extreme annoyance, added, "Egad! I'll go, too; I'm stage manager, and I'll hear what he says;" and we went together to Mr. Macready's room. On the way, I asked myself, "did I by any possibility drop a word—did I misplace or give a wrong cue?" I could recall no such error.

I entered, with Blake behind me, and asked Mr. Macready's pleasure. He was sitting on the sofa, and after a gasp he began—"Mr. Leman, I—I have always found you—found you exceedingly careful, and—and very attentive; but where did you get—where, sir, did you contrive to get"—here he gave a great gasp—"that awful tool, that skewer, that—that—a—a kitchen spit, to draw it on me for a regal weapon, whipping it out from beneath your robe like a ramrod; oh, sir!"—with another gasp—"it so affected my nerves that—" Here I said, "Mr. Macready, will you allow me to explain"—and he broke in, hold-

ing up his hands in horror—"My dear sir, it can't be explained"—with another gasp—"it admits of no explanation. Have you got the tool about you? You knocked me up in my dying speech; I—I was completely unnerved." Here he paused long enough for me to say that as it was a momentary thing, the *quality* of the weapon could be of little consequence; that being so far from the audience, and so quickly passing in action, the sword was, in fact, hardly seen. Here he rose up aghast. "My dear Mr. Leman, hold, enough! enough! no more! When, in your futile explanations, you tell me 'tis of no consequence, because the audience could not see its quality, you shock my sensibilities; you—you—" and he fell with another gasp upon the sofa. I was still anxious to excuse the mishap, and was about to speak again, when Blake, who had been enjoying the scene with ill-suppressed mirth, whispered, "Come along, Walter," and we were leaving, when Mr. Macready, having partially recovered from his emotions, spoke again. "Mr.—eh—Mr.—Mr. Blake!" Blake had enjoyed my rebuke, and I thought I'd enjoy his; so, when he paused I did the same. "Mr.—Mr. Blake—sir; I regret to say it, sir, but *you* nearly destroyed my best scene! I was paralyzed at the impropriety which you committed! I was shocked in the play-scene to see what you did!

You laid—yes, sir, you absolutely laid your hand upon the king's chair; upon—the—king's—chair! If the play is repeated, I hope—I—do—hope, Mr. Blake, that such a flagrant—flagrant outrage on regal dignity will not be committed." Mr. Blake didn't think, after seeing the fruitlessness of my attempted explanation, that it was worth his while to offer any, and we left the presence.

In after years he made a very laughable story of that interview, and confessed that his friend Leman, didn't have all of the delicious half-hour to himself. In reality, I do not think that, apart from Mr. Macready, anyone in the house noticed that Mr. Blake chanced to put his hand on the back of the king's chair, or knew that the king drew a foil instead of a sword. It was a ridiculous fuss about nothing.

Many stories were in vogue during Mr. Macready's professional visits to America, of annoyances to which he was subjected, in one of which, Mr. Decius Rice, the "Jupiter" who spoiled Sinclair's satin dress, figured. Mr. Rice's business, in the last scene of "Werner," was to catch Mr. Macready as he fell, and support him while he uttered his dying speech. At rehearsal, Mr. Macready said—"You will hold me, thus, while I am speaking, and do not lay me down upon the stage until you have mentally counted twenty.

You will please understand, sir ; and be particular, no matter what I do, whether I speak slowly or otherwise, you are not to lay me down until you count twenty ; thus, one, two, three ”—indicating the rapidity with which the mental numeration was to be made. At night, Rice got Macready into his iron grip, and either because the actor had been too rapid in his speech, or Rice had been too slow in his counting, he had only reached to about *ten*, when Macready said to him, *sotto voce*, “ Lay me down, sir.” Rice responded, “ Oh, no, sir,” and continued slowly, “ eleven, twelve, thirteen.” Macready, in a fume, repeated, “ Eh—good G—d, sir ; lay me down !” Rice again replied, “ Oh, no, I don’t ; you told me to count twenty, and I mean to do it,” and slowly went on to “ eighteen, nineteen, twenty,” and then laid the tragedian down coolly upon the stage. When the curtain fell, Macready was speechless with anger, but “ Jupiter ” rather enjoyed the joke.

Another story was current of Mr. Macready’s experience with a company whom he chanced to play with, in which discipline was the exception, and negligence the rule. Mr. Macready had depended on the *supporting* gentleman who traveled with him, to see that the rehearsals were properly gone through with ; but in consequence of neglect and inattention, departed on one occa-

sion from his ordinary rule, and came to the theatre in person for rehearsal, which progressed a little way, when Mr. — was missing. Macready was told by the prompter that Mr. — had gone out, and requested him to read his part. Macready horrified at such a violation of discipline and dramatic propriety, stopped the rehearsal for fifteen minutes, when Mr. — returned with a jaunty air, and to Mr. Macready's angry comments excused himself by saying that he only "went out to get his *hat ironed*." Macready looked at him in amazement, gave a suppressed groan, and the rehearsal was resumed; when, in a few moments more, another gentleman, Mr. —, was missing; again the rehearsal was suspended. Mr. Macready impatiently dancing the "Mouchoir," which met with Mr. Forrest's disapprobation in Hamlet, and the manager almost equally angry. After a stop of a quarter of an hour the delinquent returned, *his* excuse for causing the delay was, that he went out for a "snifter." With a despairing groan, Mr. Macready addressing the manager, said: "Mr. — I do not, sir, understand the—the customs of America; but I—I—really this neglect is very—eh, very extraordinary. One gentleman tells me, after being guilty of gross neglect, that he went out to get his 'hat ironed,' and another gentleman offers as an excuse—that he only went out for a

‘snifter.’ As I said I—I—eh—I am not familiar with American customs or phrases, and—I—I—don’t know what a ‘snifter’ is—but I—eh, if I might ask a favor, I would request the gentlemen who iron hats and dispense ‘snifters,’ to suspend business during rehearsal.”

In September, the company was transferred to the Walnut St. Theatre; where, in the series of old comedies with which the season commenced, I remember the names of Miss Cushman and her sister Miss Susan Cushman, Mr. Edward Davenport and Mr. Spear. Mr. Davenport I had known since the early days of the Tremont, to which he was attached for one season. He became a prime favorite in Philadelphia, went thence to New York, and eventually to England, attaining high artistic rank, and at his death, which took place some years since, was lamented, not only as a man and gentleman, but also, as one of the foremost actors on the American stage. George G. Spear, I had also long known; he was another Boston boy, a graduate of Mr. Pelby’s, and a participant in our Waltham summer theatricals, and also in our Waltham winter balls, at the Central House in that pretty village—now city—which still stands, or did a year ago, as in the days of yore. I remember, very well, on one occasion, how we started from the theatre, at the close of the performance, in a “one-horse shay”—

the common driving vehicle of the time to go to the ball—it was but an hour and a half from the city, and a light snow-storm coming on. Old Spear—he was never called anything else but Old Spear—who would insist on driving, although he knew nothing about it, got the lines crossed, turned the horse round, and swore he was “all right,” against my assertion that he was “all wrong,” until the lights on East Cambridge bridge convinced him that he was going back to Boston, and not to Waltham. Mr. Spear was for some years attached to the “Walnut,” and afterwards went to California in the early days. He is now an inmate of the “Forrest Home.”

Miss Charlotte Cushman withdrew from the theatre, I think, before the close of the season—there was always a something—which if not belligerency was at least *armed* neutrality between Miss Cushman and Mr. Blake. Pre-eminent as the lady was, even at that time, in tragic power, she was not so happy in comedy; and she played all the best of it; indeed, she played the best of *everything* in the female line. In all the comedy scenes between the lady and gentleman, Blake had the “call” with the audience. Miss Cushman possessed a large amount of personal ambition, and never missed a chance to obtain or wield a social sway. Her sister had become a member of a certain female organization

presumably in furtherance of this object, and Blake would come into the green-room and make ludicrous inquiries about the prospects of the "organization for promoting the entrance of actresses into the upper ten sphere," and ask about the income and prospects of "the female sacred button-hole society." Miss Cushman would give Blake a very meaning look at such times. I think that it would have been almost impossible for them to dwell in professional unity, and no doubt the separation was agreeable to both.

Mr. Peter Richings succeeded Mr. Blake in the position of stage manager. There is probably no actor better known, traditionally, than Mr. Richings; indeed, theatre-goers of this generation cannot have forgotten the tall, finely-built, dignified, scholarly gentleman, who when young was for years a New York favorite, and at a later period starred through the length and breadth of the land with his accomplished daughter, the fine singer, and perhaps the most thorough musician of her day, Miss Caroline Richings. Mr. Richings was a versatile actor, and noted as one of the best dressers on the stage. I knew him for a long time, and met him in after years on the Pacific Slope—ever and always a perfect gentleman.

Another "memory" of that season is the "Bateman Children;" they were two—Ellen and Kate; the youngest was certainly one of the most comical little midgets I ever saw, and was as clever as she was small. Both of these little girls grew up into fine actresses, and one made a noise in the dramatic world. Their father became famous as a manager in England and America.

It is pleasant to remember that the writer's benefit at the close of the St. Louis season was a pronounced and complimentary success. The "Millionaire" was the play. The company again went down the great river, and on the 13th of November, the St. Charles Theatre opened with the "Millionaire," which was played three nights. The "Dimple" of the cast on this occasion was Mrs. Chapman, late Miss Julia Drake, a cousin of Julia Dean, a most piquante and merry little actress, who maintained the reputation of the "Drake" family for dramatic ability. This season was notable for a brilliant engagement of Miss Charlotte Cushman, whose acting of "Lady Macbeth" and "Meg Merriles," impressed the public most profoundly. Miss Jenny Lind sang under the management of the famous Barnum, and packed the theatre to the roof, and Burke and the Seguins added to the attractions of a prosperous season, which came to a termination

early in April. I took the steamer for Louisville, and saw the Queen City of the South for the last time. At Louisville I first met with Mrs. Coleman Pope; this lady had an established reputation at that time as a capable artiste, but was hardly recognized as a tragedienne. The feature of that short season in Louisville was the production of the tragedy of "Nina Sforza"—"Nina Sforza," Mrs. Coleman Pope; "Spinola," Walter M. Leman; "Grimaldo," Charles Hill. This gentleman was the father of Mr. Barton Hill, with whom I was afterwards associated in the California Theatre in San Francisco. Mr. Hill was a very eccentric gentleman, full of the old ways and traditions of the stage; he has been long dead.

From Louisville, with Mrs. Pope, I went to St. Louis, and there met H. A. Perry, whom I had first known as a beginner in the Walnut St. I knew him subsequently on the Pacific Coast. Harry Perry at that early period gave evidence of his wondrous facial powers, his imitations were remarkable, and he was at home in all he attempted. I recall the names of Mr. Graham, a tragedian of great ability, who died very suddenly during the season, and of Mr. Charles Bass, the old-time New York favorite; with Silsbee, Mlle. Franck and others; but all, including the manager Mr. Bates, and Mr. Malone Ray-

mond the stage manager, have passed to the "far beyond." At this time I received an offer from the managers of the National Theatre in Boston, and returned to my "native heather" after an absence of ten years. Mr. Pelby, my first manager was dead, and the theatre was opened under the management of Messrs. Wright and Fenno. The opening night presented Miss Fanny Wallack in the character of "Martha Gibbs," and myself as "Stephen Plum," in the comedy of "All that Glitters is not Gold." Miss Wallack is a kinswoman of the Wallack family, but I know not in what exact relation. In speaking of her opening performance, an accomplished critic of the day, after summing up the points of merit, declared that she "astonished every one by the force and brilliancy of her acting." "Martha Gibbs" and "Stephen Plum" were called before the curtain, and speech-making was the order of the evening.

The "Prairie Bird" was produced and ran a week, and this is another pleasant memory, for my old friends up to this period had known me only as an *actor*. At this time I first knew Mr. Barney Williams, of whom I shall have more to say anon. In December the "Millionaire" was presented, and my pardonable pride was again gratified, for it was received well by the audience, and pleasantly spoken of by the press.

After twenty years' absence, Mme. Celeste reappeared with an English reputation, and was warmly received; and Miss Fanny Wallack played a second successful engagement, followed by one, cut off subsequently in the prime of his powers, who was acknowledged to stand in the front rank among the great actors of his time—Mr. Gustavus Vaughn Brooke. He opened in "Sir Giles Overreach," and made a most marked impression. There was an intensity, a fire of energy in his representations that took captive the auditor, whether he would or no; and he was always so essentially in earnest that he inspired those who acted with him with the same feeling. The magnetism of an earnest actor is more likely to develop what is worthy of development in the histrionic Neophyte, than the chilly, arms-length manner and spirit which says, "stand at a distance; be a nonentity; do nothing." The Macready theory was the very reverse of the Booth school; the one said, "I'll do all the acting," the other said, "Act up to me." Brooke was a disciple of the Booth school. His end was a tragic one; he perished at sea.

On the 19th of April the season was brought to an abrupt close by the destruction of the theatre by fire. Mr. George Vandenhoff and Mrs. Sinclair were playing an engagement at the time. Mr. Vandenhoff was a highly educated

gentleman, and had, I believe, in the earlier portion of his life, been a practitioner at the bar. He would have been thought a great actor, had he not been preceded by a *greater* Vandenhoff. Mrs. Sinclair had become famous from the notoriety of the Forrest divorce. She subsequently became a manageress in San Francisco.

This lady and gentleman had appeared in the "School for Scandal" on the night of the conflagration, and the piece announced for the following evening was represented on the stage of the old "Boston Theatre," which was courteously offered to the burnt-out "Thespians." The destruction of the "National Theatre" was complete. Of all that it contained, nothing was saved, and the only relic of paper, book, or manuscript found, was a play-bill with a charred border, of the "Prairie Bird," which was picked up in the vicinity and given to me as a "memory" of the old "National Theatre" fire.

I accompanied Mr. Vandenhoff and Mrs. Sinclair to Portland for a few nights, which were supplemented by a few more with Miss Kimberley. This lady aspired to the position of a star, but she shone with a feeble light.

The manager of this adventure was Mr. J. P. Addams. Mr. Addams is one of my memories, and, on the whole, a very merry one. I first knew him as a handsome page in the spectacle

of "Cinderella," in the time of the "Woods." He grew up more inclined to be a tragedy hero than a comic one, but he had the elements to make a successful comedian. He was a younger brother of Augustus Addams, who, if he had lived, would have been the "dramatic Cæsar," but he died young. J. P. Addams was always ready for anything, and equal to anything. I think he would have been a successful rival to the most eminent itinerant "Napoleon" that ever tramped through England in the strollers' palmy days. With a black cloak and a black wig; with a black cloak and a red wig, he was ready for any tragic or comic part at ten minutes notice. I met Mr. Addams after a lapse of more than a quarter of a century, on the Pacific coast. He had just returned from Australia, where Fortune, he informed me, had been fickle; his appearance confirmed the truth of his words. He returned, I believe, to the Atlantic coast, and, I think, is still alive. I hope he is, at any rate, and prosperous, for he is, indeed, a pleasant old memory.

Within the following six months I played occasionally at Bangor, Belfast, Orono and Oldtown, in the State of Maine, and at Worcester and Lowell, in Massachusetts. With the exception of Lowell, none of these towns boasted of a theatre, and the "temple of the muses" was the town or some other hall. At Orono, the

teachings of the drama were dispensed from the vestry of the Universalist church, and at Oldtown from the vestry of the Episcopal church, and the priestesses were Mrs. English and her two daughters, Lucille and Helen Western; both of these young girls became good actresses, and Helen, especially, made a great reputation in after years; both are now dead, and their mother, Mrs. English, is an inmate of the "Forrest Home."

Almost immediately upon the destruction of the "National," steps were taken for the erection of a new theatre upon its site, and on Monday, November 1st, 1852, the new structure, though far from completion, was opened to the public. Mr. Joseph Leonard, a well-known auctioneer, was the head and front of the enterprise, and was the first manager of the "New National;" he was a lover of the drama; liberal, but inexperienced and over-confident, and soon found to his cost that every man cannot "run a theatre" any more than a hotel.

The address for the opening was from the pen of Mr. W. O. Eaton, a brother of Charles Eaton, and I was selected to deliver it. The programme included the comedy of the "Heir-at-Law," and a farce; and the "Dr. Pangloss" of the play was a gentleman who afterwards rose to fame and fortune by his remarkable performance of the

most remarkable character of the idiotic drama ever exhibited.

Mr. Douglas Steuart, or Mr. E. A. Sothern (I do not know which was his true name) was announced as from the "Theatre Royal, Birmingham—his first appearance in America," and his debut, which was expected to be a success, proved a sad failure. By mutual agreement with the manager he soon after withdrew from the theatre, and subsequently played juvenile tragedy in Wallack's Old Theatre in New York, and was, I believe a member of Laura Keene's company when a *sketch* part in that burlesque of New England character called "Our American Cousin" gave the opportunity, which with great tact he improved, to build up that most laughable monstrosity, too ridiculous for thought, too absurd for criticism, utterly unlike any creature with the human form ever seen under the heavens above or upon the earth beneath—"Dundreary." Mr. Steuart, or Sothern, affected other characters, but he never played anything but "Dundreary."

Mrs. Vickery and Mrs. Archbold were also new importations by Mr. Leonard. The first was a tragedienne, who did not become popular; the second was a comedy "Old Lady," who did. I last saw Mrs. Archbold some years ago, when

on a visit to St. Johns, New Brunswick ; she is in my list of pleasant memories.

Mrs. George Barrett, whom I have mentioned in a previous chapter as being "*eternally young*," re-appeared as "Lady Teazle," and continued as the support of Mr. J. W. Wallack, who astonished the old friends of thirty years before by his acting, which possessed its old artistic finish unimpaired by time. Brooke followed Wallack, and Forrest followed Brooke, and a large amount of money was received, but the expenses outran the receipts ; Mr. Forrest demanded and received a clear half. In March, Mr. Murdoch appeared in conjunction with Miss Matilda Heron, who had not yet become famous, but was on the way to fame, and Miles' play of "De Soto" was produced.

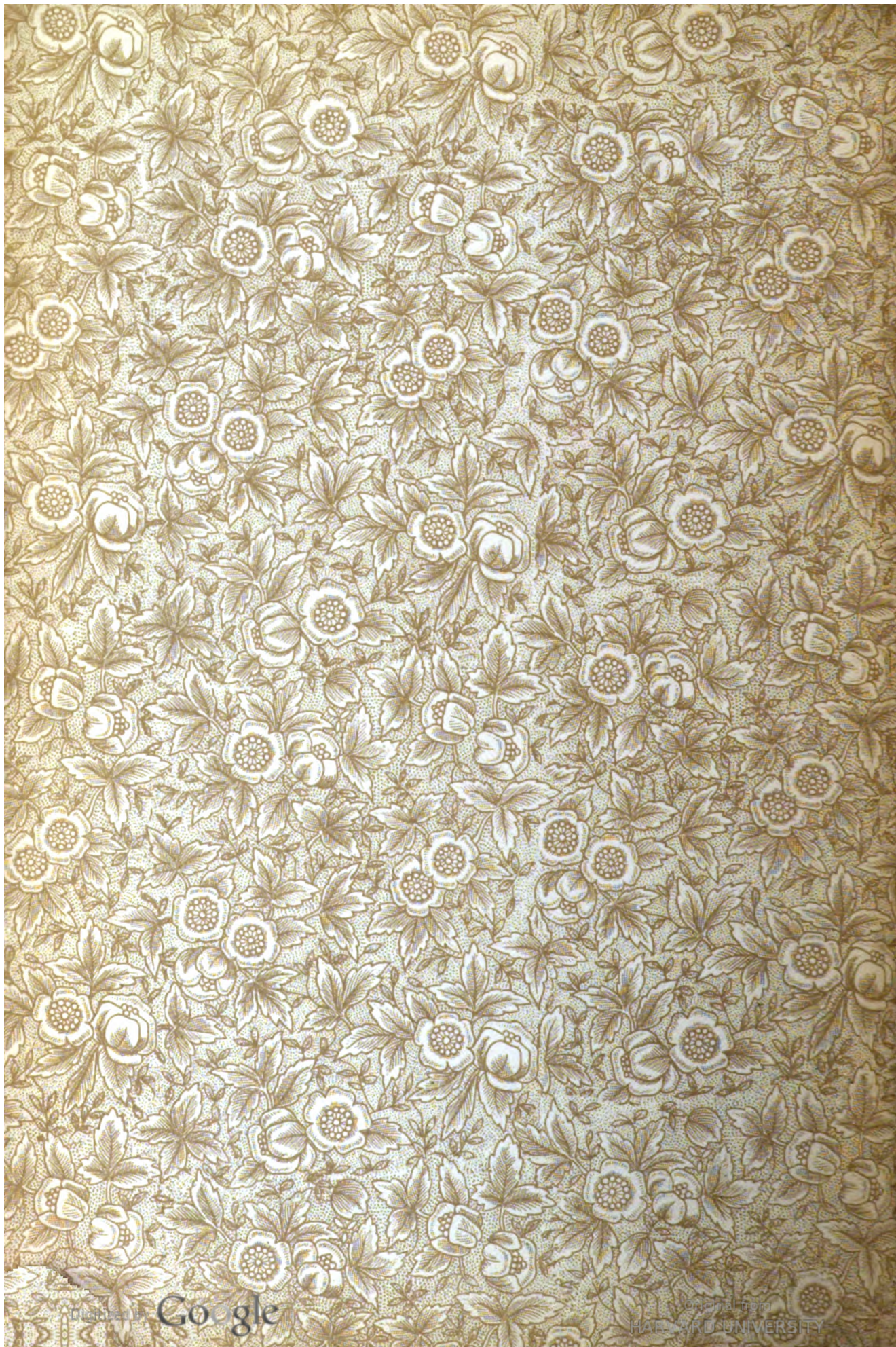
At the close of the month the financial pressure caused a disintegration of the large company, and I was among those who left. During the summer I acted at intervals in the New England cities, and first played with Mrs. Anna Cora Mowatt, at Worcester. This lady, whose name was so familiar to the theatrical world of thirty-five years ago, was born in Bordeaux, her maiden name was Ogden ; she had been married at an early age to Mr. Mowatt, a lawyer, and was known as the authoress of a number of fugitive poems, and as a public reader, prior to her ap-

pearance on the stage, some ten years before I met her. With youth, beauty, a musical voice, and a fair share of talent, her career had been a social and dramatic triumph, and her success upon the stage had been supplemented by her success as a dramatist; her two plays "Fashion" and "Armand the Child of the People," having a considerable popularity, though since forgotten. She had visited England in company with Mr. Edward Davenport—whose subsequent brilliant career is well known—and was at her zenith when I acted with her. She was pronounced a faultless "Parthenia" by her admirers, but I have played "Ingomar" to many I thought her superior. Mrs. Mowatt soon after married Mr. Ritchie of Richmond, and left the stage.

Mrs. Melinda Jones is another "memory" of those summer days. She was the wife of George Jones, the "Count Joannes," from whom she had been a long time separated. Mrs. Jones was a very good actress of the *heavy* calibre, but she was nevertheless fond of playing sylph-like parts. I think she was a Richmond lady, and like most Virginians was an expert politician. I know that from her conversation in those days, I fancied she was in correspondence with every Senator and Representative from the Middle and Southern States. She was almost as fond of what in old days were called breeches parts as

Charlotte Cushman, and played "Claude Melnotte," and "Romeo," and "Richard III," with a great deal of spirit. I met Mrs. Jones many years after in California, and traveled with her daughter, Miss Avonia Jones, who took high rank as an actress, and I think went to Australia with Mr. G. V. Brooke. Mrs. Jones has been long deceased.

Another "memory" of that summer is Mr. James H. Warwick; he was a tragedian, and went to California soon after, I think. I knew him well, and frequently acted with him in the Golden State, of which I shall have occasion to speak in a future chapter.



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