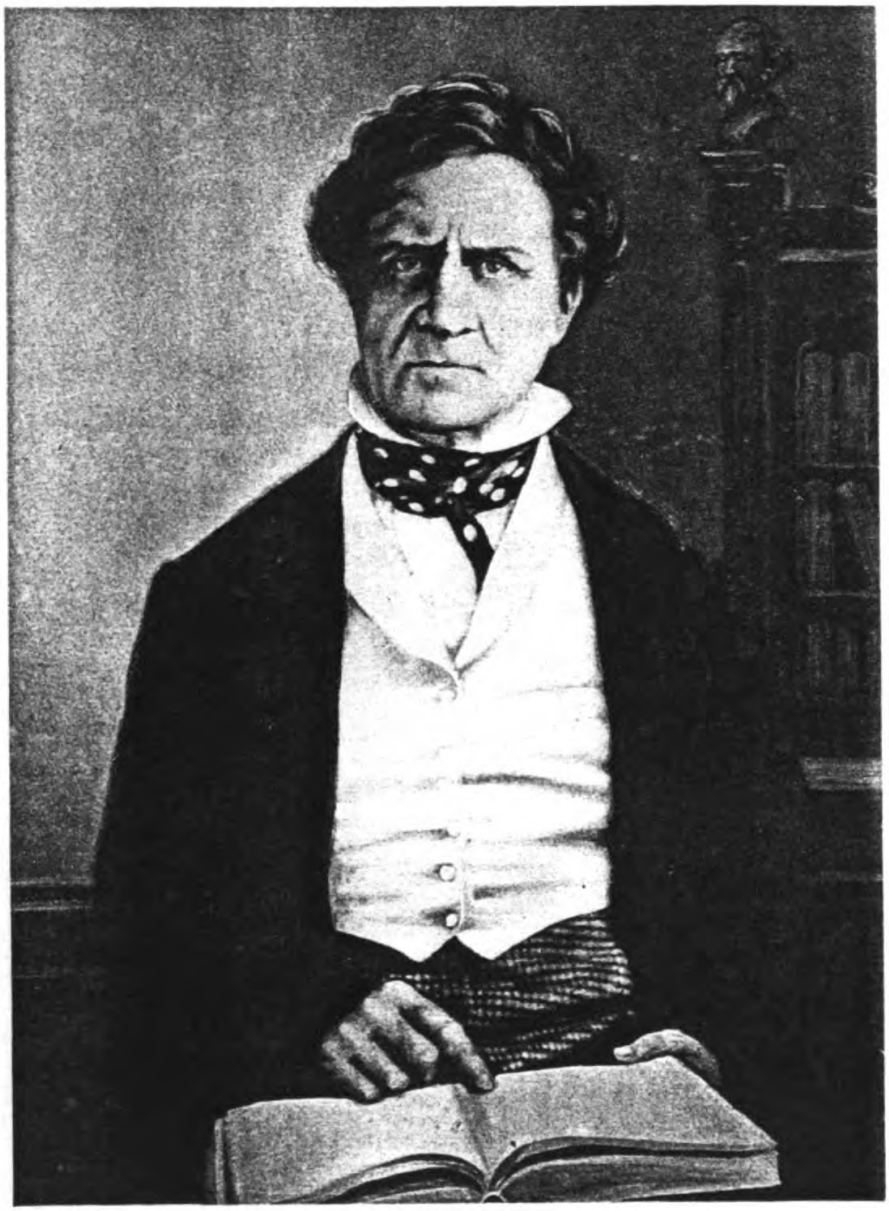
American Actor Series

EDITED BY LAURENCE HUTTON



AMERICAN ACTOR SERIES

THE ELDER AND THE YOUNGER BOOTH

By ASIA BOOTH CLARKE

BOSTON
JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY
1884

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

PART I.

THE ELDER BOOTH.

1796–1852.

"And Booths were created for the entertainment of the people, and were much resorted to." — VIEW OF LONDON.

Booth's Theatre

Lessees and Managers - - JARRETT & PALMER

ARCADIAN NIGHT

LAST NIGHT of the FAREWELL ENGAGEMENT of the illustrious Tragedienne, Miss

CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN

And her Final Appearance on the Metropolitan Stage.

This, Saturday Evening, November 7, 1874

When will be presented Shakspere's sublime tragedy,

MACBETH,

With the following ASSIGNMENT OF PARTS:

LADY MACBETH.....Miss CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN
MACBETH.....Mr. GEORGE VANDENHOFF
MACDUFF.....Mr. FREDERICK B. WARDE
DUNCAN.....Mr. EDWIN SHEPPARD
BANQUO.....Mr. CHARLES WHEATLEIGH
MALCOLM.....Mr. CHARLES ROCKWELL
HECATE.....Miss ANNIE KEMP BOWLER
ROSSE.....Mr. D. E. RALTON
LENOX.....Mr. E. K. COLLIER
SEYTON.....Mr. STUART BOLTON
FLEANCE.....Miss LILLY NAYLOR
DONALDBAIN.....Miss JENNY BYRON
PHYSICIAN.....Mr. JOHN WEAVER
GENTLEWOMAN.....Miss EMMA GRATTAN
FIRST WITCH.....Mr. CHARLES LeCLERCQ
SECOND WITCH.....Miss MARY WELLS
THIRD WITCH.....Mr. J. W. BRUTONE
FIRST APPARITION.....Mr. FRANK LITTLE
WOUNDED OFFICER.....Mr. H. C. BRIDGES
FIRST MURDERER.....Mr. J MAJOR
SECOND MURDERER.....THOMAS CONNER
OFFICERS.....Messrs. CARPENTER, TORRIANI, RANON, etc.

MATTHEW LOCKE'S ORIGINAL MUSIC will be interpreted under direction of Mr. MICHAEL CONNELLY, leader of the orchestra, and the songs, incantations, &c., will be by Miss Annie Kemp Bowler, Miss Mabel Lyndon, Miss Pauline Rutherford, Miss Maria Newman, Miss Jennie Dallimore, Miss Tilly Getchell, Miss Therese Phillips; Mr. Charles Pike, Mr. J. C. Chamberlain, Mr. W. E. Phillips, Mr. Charles Telbin. And the choruses by members of the

CRESCENT SINGING SOCIETY

For this eventful occasion the following appropriate ceremonies, supplementary to the play, have been arranged, and will be under the auspices of the ARCADIAN CLUB;

1. MUSIC by the ORCHESTRA, Mr. MICHAEL CONNELLY, Conductor.
2. READING by PROFESSOR ROBERTS, New York College, of an original ode, written for the occasion by the poet, R. H. STODDARD.
3. ADDRESS TO MISS CUSHMAN by the eminent citizen, WM. CULLEN BRYANT. Presentation of a Floral Tribute from the Arcadian Club.
4. RESPONSE by Miss CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN.

During these proceedings the stage will also be occupied by the ARCADIAN, ARMY AND NAVY, PALETTE, LOTOS, and MANHATTAN CLUBS: managers of the principal metropolitan and suburban theatres, with the leading members of their companies, and the journalistic profession.

tools; thus blending pleasure with instruction, he strove to excite in their minds a love of mechanical pursuits, quoting "*Laborare est orare.*" Before leaving for California, he placed them under the careful guardianship of excellent teachers.

Prior to any anticipation of this voyage, he was erecting a handsome cottage on the Farm, where he purposed to pass the summer months of every year. The building was designed in the Elizabethan style, arranged to suit his own peculiar fancy. The site selected is near the old cabin which had then for many years been occupied by the servants.

Occasionally his children were permitted to visit the theatre, but were never allowed a free indulgence of promiscuous plays. On one occasion he took every member of the family to witness Mr. Macready's "Werner." The writer can remember only a sombre man with peculiar brows and guttural voice, dragging through what seemed to her a very dismal tragedy; but Mr. Booth pronounced it "a most exquisite performance."

He was always a deep student, and would set himself tasks, committing them to memory like a schoolboy. Late in life he acquired the part of *Penrudduck*, and performed it perfectly; but, failing to retain it for a future rendition, he acknowledged, almost sadly, that "time was gaining on him."

A striking peculiarity in his character was the contrast between his assumption of democracy by which he sought the level of the humblest, and encouraged even the low and vile to approach him as friends, and

that innate dignity which would exalt him as a peer above the herd, and check all attempt at undue familiarity. There was an awe about him that neither his deep learning, age, nor position elicited, but which the natural demeanor of the man inspired.

One of the most beautiful qualities of his nature was *humility*, — that lowliness of soul which emanates from a disregard of self, and, while elevating its possessor, causes him to appreciate in others all that is truly great and good, unaffected by the meaner passions. Perhaps it was the daily exercise of this self-abnegation that rendered him so childlike yet so noble in the eyes of all who loved him, while, in the pursuance of his profession, it left him free from the petty malice and jealousies of an actor's life, and enabled him justly to award praise to the meritorious, and discern true worth in any garb.

All forms of religion and all temples of devotion were sacred to him, and he never failed to bare his head reverently when passing a church. He worshipped at many shrines; he admired the Koran, and in his copy of that volume many beautiful passages are underscored. Days sacred to color, ore, and metals were religiously observed by him. In the synagogues he was known as a Jew, because he conversed with rabbis and learned doctors, and joined their worship in the Hebraic tongue. He read the Talmud, also, and strictly adhered to many of its laws.

Several fathers of the Roman Catholic Church recount pleasant hours spent with him in theological discourse, and aver that he was of their religion because of his

knowledge of the mysteries of their faith. Of the numerous houses of worship to which he went, the one he most loved to frequent was a floating church, or "Sailor's Bethel." The congregation was of the humblest kind, and the ministry not at all edifying. The writer remembers kneeling through a lengthy impromptu prayer, which contained no spirit of piety to her childish ears; but looking around wearily at her father, she beheld his face so earnestly inspired with devotion, that she felt rebuked, and it became pleasant to attend to that which was so devoid of interest before.

His reverence for religion was universal and deep-rooted. It was daily shown in acts of philanthropy and humane deeds, which were, however, too often misdirected. He was not a sectarian, but made many creeds his study; and although the dogmas of the Church might have yielded him a more enduring peace, yet the tenderness of his heart, from which emanated his loving-kindness and great charity, afforded strength to his declining years.

"Why then doth flesh, a bubble-glass of breath,
Hunt after honor and advancement vain,
And rear a trophy for devouring death,
With so great labor and long-lasting pain,
As if his days forever should remain?
Sith all that in this world is great or gay,
Doth as a vapor vanish and decay."

PART II.

THE YOUNGER BOOTH.

1833.

"*At my birth*
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes."

1 HENRY IV., Act III. Sc 1.

THE YOUNGER BOOTH.

EDWIN THOMAS BOOTH was born at the Booth Farm in Harford County, Maryland, on the 13th of November, 1833, a night remarkable for a brilliant meteoric shower. It is at least pleasing to think that from an errant planet came to earth so bright a star. In negro phraseology, Edwin Booth was said to have been "born lucky" and "gifted to see ghosts," because of the meteoric phenomena and of his having been born with a caul. He was named after two of his father's friends, Edwin Forrest and Thomas Flynn, although the former actor was always somewhat piqued that Edwin did not retain the *Forrest*, which he insisted had been bestowed upon him.

Edwin Booth's earliest recollection of his father was in connection with sombre woods and darkness; they had travelled a whole day together, reaching the Farm late at night; a man who had accompanied them, to take back the saddle-horses hired at a distant country-place, was heard going away in the dark, as Mr. Booth, raising his little son in his arms, lifted him over the crooked snake-fence around his own woodland, and, placing him securely in the grass, said, "Your foot is on your native heath."

In a very interesting book, called "Shadows on the Wall," by that talented and well-beloved citizen of Baltimore, John H. Hewitt, the following passage occurs: —

"Not less distinguished, but in a different way, stands out the name of Edwin Booth before his countrymen and the world. He was a comely lad, as I remember him, dressed in a Spanish cloak (among the first to display that style), giving promise of the man he has turned out to be. Inheriting his father's genius for the mimic stage, he has achieved the first rank upon it, and it has been his good fortune to have lived in an era of larger prices and more numerous audiences. He is so far different from his father, in style and execution, that his greatest successes have been achieved in different rôles; and while he stands unsurpassed in 'Hamlet,' he will not find fault with an old friend of Junius Brutus Booth for standing by *him* as the greatest *Richard*, *Sir Giles*, and *Iago*, that ever trod the American boards. He is still young enough to have a long career of success and usefulness before him. His fame is already the property of his country and cannot be taken from him."

Edwin Booth's education was commenced under the care of Miss Susan Hyde, a young lady whose capabilities were unanimously acknowledged in the neighborhood of "Old Town." Hers was one of those old-fashioned schools for girls and boys now almost unknown, where the rudiments of a sound education were well inculcated, and where the gentle mistress presided as the Minerva of her little circle. Miss Hyde

is at present the Secretary of the Peabody Institute in Baltimore, and a fervent admirer of the genius of her distinguished pupil, who holds her in affectionate remembrance. Subsequently, Mr. Booth placed his son with an old Frenchman, a West-Indian naval officer, Louis Dugas, who had gathered around him a few young persons in their teens. He afterward went to a university, and studied at intervals of time with a Mr. Kearney, who wrote all his own school-books and encouraged dramatic representations among his boys. On one occasion Edwin and John S. Clarke, dressed in the white linen trousers and black jackets then in fashion, enacted or recited, with appropriate gestures, the quarrel scene of *Brutus* and *Cassius*. The elder Booth entered the crowded school-room unobserved, and, placing himself on the corner of a bench near the door, witnessed and enjoyed the performance.

Edwin began to travel with his father on one of those periodical tours which it was customary for him to make, and relates, as among the earliest of his theatrical reminiscences, the first appearance in Boston of the now famous William Warren. Mr. Booth, after his performance of *Shylock* at the Howard Athenæum, seated himself with Edwin among the audience to witness Mr. Warren's acting of *Jacques Strop* in the play of "Robert Macaire." It was an exceptional thing for him to make one of the auditory, but the débutant was a favorite of his; he always manifested great interest in his career, and seemed to be thoroughly pleased with his performance on that evening. Between these protracted theatrical tours Edwin usually resumed his school duties in Baltimore.

He played the violin well, which he had learned under Signor Picioli, and he amused his father by thrumming the banjo, which was becoming a fashionable instrument and had been taught him by a clever negro musician. He accompanied the banjo by singing the native melodies in the broad accent of the Southern negro.

He was envied by his companions because of these trips with his father; but their novelty soon lost all charm for him, and the monotony of school life would have been preferable to the arduous task of watching the health and caring for the safety of his eccentric, though kind-hearted sire. It was a duty requiring the patience and endurance of a woman; but Mrs. Booth, no longer young or strong, was compelled to place the charge into her son's hands; while he, an excitable, nervously organized youth, was often unequal to bear half that was required of him. Sleepless nights and lonely days are not the proper lot of boyhood, yet many such painful experiences were woven into the early life of Edwin Booth. While considering the love he bore his father, and recalling his slight figure, with his imaginative mind sensitively alive to the horrible, particularly impressed perhaps by the great responsibility devolving upon him, we can enter fully into the painfulness of the anecdotes that follow. Stopping once at the Pemberton House in Boston, one of those old hotels built with a square courtyard in the centre after the manner of some ancient Continental inns, a curious incident occurred. Around one part of the ground floor were stables; adjoining these, and opening into Mr. Booth's room, was a dark, unventilated

cupboard, unfitted for use, because of the powerful stable odor, which the actor, however, firmly contended was conducive to health.

One night, returning to his rooms physically exhausted by a heavy performance, he could not rest, and insisted on going into the streets to roam about. Edwin remonstrated with him in vain, — offered to play and sing for him, tried to interest him in other topics than those of the stage; but, finding every effort defeated, he stood up boldly and said, "You shall *not* go out." Trembling at his own temerity, for he knew his feebleness in comparison with his powerful, thick-set father, he was astonished at the result. Mr. Booth gave him one long stare, then vanished into the dark closet, securing the door on the inner side. He remained in darkness and silence for a long time, no entreaty, coaxing, or threat being able to elicit a sound from him, until Edwin, who had endured the greatest distress of mind, fearing that he could not longer exist in that airless, stifling chamber, if indeed he were not already dead, was about to run for help; when his father opened the door, and walking sternly across the room undressed himself, and without speaking went to bed.

In Louisville, on another occasion, after the night's performance of "Richard III.," which he had acted splendidly, Mr. Booth started for home; but, moved by a sudden impulse, he changed his mind, preferring to walk the streets alone. In vain Edwin persuaded him to go to the hotel and rest. Mr. Booth, finding that his son would not leave him, darted off in a contrary direction, and walked rapidly until he came to a long

covered market, which he entered, and began pacing up and down. From one end of the place to the other their walk was kept up without pause until daylight. Edwin soon became exhausted with fatigue, but his father, seemingly untired, would at times slacken his pace abruptly, then start off with increased rapidity, Edwin falling in with his gait as it changed, sometimes angry, and again ready to laugh at the ludicrousness of the situation. Not a syllable had been spoken by either, when the elder pedestrian was at last silently impelled to go home to his bed.

Other occurrences, partaking more of the painful than the ludicrous, could not fail to cloud the youth of one who felt his responsibility as great as his affection.

William Winter says: —

"Between them there existed from the first a profound and fervent, though silent and undemonstrative sympathy. As Edwin grew up, his close companionship seemed more and more to be needed and desired by the parent. . . . As a boy, he is represented to have been grave beyond his years, observant, thoughtful, and rather melancholy, but wise in knowledge of his surroundings, and strong in reticence and self-poise. He was accustomed to accompany his father as attendant and dresser, but in fact he was the chosen monitor and guardian of that wild genius, and possessed more influence over him than was exercised by any other person. This association, operating upon hereditary talent, wrought its inevitable consequence in making Edwin Booth an actor. The strange life that he saw and led — a life in which fictitious emotions, imaginative influ-

ences, and every-day trivialities are so singularly blended — exerted its customary charm upon a youthful, sensitive, and irrepressible nature, at once luring him towards the stage, and preparing him for its profession."

On the 10th of September, 1849, Edwin Booth made his first appearance on any stage, in the character of *Tressel*, at the Boston Museum, under the following circumstances. Mr. Thoman, who was prompter and actor, was arranging some detail of the play, and becoming irritable at having so much to do, said abruptly to Edwin, who was standing near him, "This is too much work for one man; *you* ought to play *Tressel*," and he induced him to undertake the part. On the eventful night the elder Booth dressed for *Richard III.* was seated with his feet upon a table in his dressing-room. Calling his son before him, like a severe pedagogue or inquisitor, he interrogated him in that hard, laconic style he could so seriously assume: —

"Who was *Tressel?*"

"A messenger from the field of Tewksbury."

"What was his mission?"

"To bear the news of the defeat of the king's party."

"How did he make the journey?"

"On horseback."

"Where are your spurs?"

Edwin glanced quickly down, and said he had not thought of them.

"Here, take mine."

Edwin unbuckled his father's spurs, and fastened them on his own boots. His part being ended on the stage, he found his father still sitting in the dressing-room, apparently engrossed in thought.

"Have you done well?" he asked.

"I think so," replied Edwin.

"Give me my spurs," rejoined his father; and obediently young *Tressel* replaced the spurs upon *Gloucester's* feet.

In the summer of 1850 Edwin and J. S. Clarke gave a dramatic reading at the Court-House in Belair at the solicitation of a number of collegians and residents of that village. As the request for the entertainment was unanimous, it was cordially responded to, and the two youths mounted their horses and rode twenty-five miles over the roughest of country roads under an August sun to obtain printed programmes and tickets in Baltimore. Mr. Booth was as elated as themselves with the undertaking, and, happy in expectation, the two friends rode back the next day, and immediately commenced arranging a large room in the county court-house, which had been offered for their convenience. The doors and windows were instantly besieged by an eager throng of rustics, who were anxious to witness the preparations for the great show, evidently expecting that a circus or some wonderful magician was to exhibit, as nothing more elevated than such performances had ever been given in Belair so publicly and on so grand a scale.

An old negro was sent out to post the bills, and as the young men rode in from the Farm on that eventful evening they discovered, to their intense chagrin, that every bill had been placed upside down. The house was full and fashionable, — the audience observing the decorous regulation of their meeting-houses by sepa-

rating at the door and seating themselves in perfect silence, the gentlemen on one side of the room, the ladies on the other. Order was strictly observed, and the performance was allowed to proceed to its conclusion without the slightest interruption of applause or dissent.

The programme will be found on the following page.

During the evening they sang a number of negro melodies with blackened faces, using appropriate dialect, and accompanying their vocal attempts with the somewhat inharmonious banjo and bones.

In 1851 his father's being announced for *Richard III.* at the National Theatre, New York, led indirectly to Edwin's attempting that character. Mr. Booth had a partiality for the old theatres in which his first successes had been achieved, and his preference was extended also to the old, dingy, incommodious hotels, wherein he submitted to every inconvenience rather than patronize new establishments. On one particular night, as he and his son were preparing to go to the theatre, he suddenly changed his mood and refused to start, saying that he was ill and unable to perform. Edwin suggested that he should rouse himself for the effort, at least present himself at the theatre, thinking that when within the building he would forego this strange resolve. He reminded his father how well he had rehearsed and how well in health he had been all day; but no argument could move him. "What will they do without you, father?" the son exclaimed in despair. "Who can they substitute at the last moment?" "Go act it yourself," was the curt response. After some further altercation the father insisted that

GRAND DRAMATIC FESTIVAL

AT THE COURT-HOUSE IN BELAIR,

Saturday, August 2.

In compliance with the request of several gentlemen,

MR. EDWIN BOOTH

respectfully informs the inhabitants of Belair and vicinity, that he will give one entertainment as above, in conjunction with

MR. J. S. CLARKE.

The performance will consist of

SHAKSPERIAN READINGS, ETC.

PART FIRST.

Selections from RICHARD III.

Richard III. . . . . Mr. E. Booth.

Selections from MERCHANT OF VENICE.

Shylock . . . . . Mr. J. S. Clarke.

The celebrated Dagger Scene from MACBETH.

Macbeth . . . . . Mr. E. Booth.

Selections from Kotzebue's STRANGER.

The Stranger . . . . . Mr. J. S. Clarke.

Hamlet's Soliloquy on Death . . . . . Mr. E. Booth.

Selections from Otway's tragedy of VENICE PRESERVED.

Jaffier . . . . . Mr. J. S. Clarke.

Selections from RICHELIEU.

Cardinal Richelieu . . . . . Mr. E. Booth.

The great Quarrel Scene from JULIUS CÆSAR.

Brutus . . . . . Mr. E. Booth.

Cassius . . . . . Mr. J. S. Clarke.

his son should assume the character of *Richard III.* on that night. The carriage had been waiting for a long while at the door, with the trunk of stage-dresses strapped upon it. There was no time to be lost, and Edwin sprang into the vehicle and drove furiously to the theatre, where, on arrival, he encountered John R. Scott. In great dismay he related his father's sudden freak. "No matter," replied Scott calmly, "*you* act it." In surprise Edwin exclaimed, "That is what my father said, and what he sent me here to do; but it is impossible, — I cannot." Entering behind the scenes, he was quickly surrounded by others, who urged him to "try," promising to help him in every way, to make an apology to the audience, etc. It resulted in these excited people dressing him in his father's clothes, which, for his slender figure, were "a world too wide," while some one with book in hand heard him repeat the soliloquy. All was bustle and confusion behind the curtain; the theatre in front was densely crowded, and the young unwilling substitute was hurried to the stage entrance. At his appearance the applause rang out in a wild burst, but as suddenly ceased. No apology had been made, and in astonished silence the spectators allowed the play to begin and to proceed. He, who had absorbed into his own being every word, look, and tone of his father, soon wrung from the audience a gratified applause. John R. Scott showed great concern and uneasiness throughout the play, fearing the breaking down of his young *Richard;* but in answer to the prolonged call at the close, he led him proudly before the curtain and introduced him as "the

worthy scion of a noble stock," adding, *sotto voce*, "I'll wager they don't know what that means."

On Edwin's return to his hotel he was questioned coldly by his father as to his success. The elder Booth was found by the son apparently exactly as he had left him, unchanged in mood or position; but it is believed now by Edwin that he had witnessed the whole of the performance of *Richard*, as well as that of *Tressel* on a previous occasion, and was not dissatisfied with the result.

Edwin Booth soon after entered into an engagement with Theodore Barton of Baltimore to play any part assigned him for a salary of six dollars a week. Although he had acted in tragedies with success, considering his youth and want of training, yet in minor characters and in inferior plays he proved awkward, confused, and apparently a failure. He once attempted a part in pantomime with Madame Ciocca; had graceful pose to assume and airy trivial manners to simulate; but he did everything wrong, filled the French actress with horror at his *gaucherie*, and called down upon himself her abuse in broken English. In the year 1852 the elder Booth went to New York, intending to start for California, accompanied by his son Junius, but in consequence of illness he returned to his home in Baltimore. He sailed in the next steamer from New York, taking Edwin with him, whom he had previously arranged to leave at home. In one week from the date of starting they arrived at Aspinwall; then proceeded up the Chagres River to Gorgona on a flat-boat which conveyed the passengers and their luggage.

They slept one night at Gorgona, and proceeded to cross the Isthmus on mules. At night they slept in a hut, on wine-casks and trunks, covered by their blankets; the only lady of the party occupied a hammock, and each man lay with a hand under his pillow, holding a pistol. Edwin, sleepless, watched the natives sharpening their *machcetos*, — or long knives which they used to cut the tall grass in front of them as they journeyed on foot, — and vainly tried to understand their conversation, which was carried on in low whispers. The rats ran about undisturbed during the night, and the whole party rose in the morning, unrefreshed by their rest, and proceeded on mules. The elder Booth prophesied that there would be a railroad across the Isthmus before many years, and confidently anticipated the time when a canal would connect the two oceans.

After an engagement of two weeks in San Francisco, Mr. Booth proceeded to Sacramento, in which city, on the occasion of his benefit, he acted *Richard III.* The following night J. B. Booth, Junior, for *his* benefit, played *Othello*, and his father, *Iago;* and the following night being Edwin's benefit, he acted *Jaffier* to his father's *Pierre.* Arrayed in black for his part of *Jaffier*, Edwin perceived his father seated on the steps of his dressing-room, who at his approach observed, "You look like *Hamlet;* why did you not act *Hamlet* for your benefit?" Edwin carelessly replied, "If I ever have another, I *will.*"

Disappointed at finding no theatre in San Francisco suitable for the production of his plays, — the new theatre progressing only in the imagination of the people,

and the state of the country being discouraging in every respect, — Mr. Booth determined to start for New York; and, being assured that Edwin had resolved to become an actor, he would not consent to allow him to accompany him home, but advised him to remain in California and perfect himself in his profession. Although proverbially lavish of money in cases of need or charity, and never pressing for ready or even just payment of a loan, it seemed harsh that he should have demanded of his son Junius, who had not profited greatly by the transaction, the full amount for his services, according to their agreement; but he had great regard for the law of equity, even with his own family, his severity therein being a principle, as with *Hotspur*: —

> "I 'll give thrice so much land
> To any well-deserving friend;
> But in the way of bargain, mark ye me,
> I 'll cavil on the ninth part of a hair."

The prosperous state of theatrical business in California was most encouraging when the offer had been made and accepted between son and father; but, by one of those sudden reverses in financial matters that occur in newly settled countries, an unaccountable depression had changed the whole aspect of affairs almost upon arrival of the veteran tragedian. The hard times so long threatening now burst in terrible earnest. Men who had been wealthy a few weeks previous, ready to squander, to lend, or to give, now became hard, suspicious, and grasping. Edwin, in this dilemma, accepted a proposition of Mr. D. W. Waller to accompany him

to Nevada. At that place he acted *Iago* for the first time, and played alternately in Nevada and Grass Valley.

J. B. Booth, Jr., had said to Edwin, at parting, "Put a slug [which was a large octagonal gold piece of fifty dollars] in the bottom of your trunk, forget you have it, and when things are at the worst, bring out the slug." The advice was followed; but the worst soon came, for theatrical affairs were in a most disastrous condition at Nevada. Ruin and starvation were the evils that oppressed all minds, and now the snow fell unceasingly until the travellers were completely cut off from the rest of the world. The theatre had been closed for a fortnight in consequence of the distressed state of these towns.

One night, as Edwin was passing along a dark road where the houses had literally been undermined by the gold-diggers, and great gulches yawned amidst the slush of snow and mud, rendering pedestrianism unsafe, he came face to face with a man carrying a lantern. By its glimmer he recognized the actor, George Spear, familiarly called "Old Spudge" (now an inmate of the Forrest Home, Philadelphia), who cried out, "Hollo! Ted, is that you? There is a mail in," he continued, "and a letter for *you*." The snow had prevented the arrival of the post for a long while past, but a courier had at last broken through the almost impenetrable mass, and on horseback arrived with the long-delayed mail-bag.

"What news is there?" asked Edwin carelessly. "Not good news for you, my boy." At this reply the

lad seemed to detect the fatal truth, either by the accent or hesitation of the old actor, for in terror he exclaimed, "Spear, is my father dead?" Gently as possible the sad story was told him, and the old man, who had come out to break the intelligence, now led the half-distracted son to the hotel, where the waiting group of friends endeavored to calm his sorrow. He was stunned by the blow, and they could not understand how deep his grief was, or how he blamed himself for having allowed his father to undertake the homeward journey alone.

Poverty and utter "hard times" settled upon the actors in desperate reality. They were helpless, and dreaded the day when they should be unable even to obtain credit; the cold had become intense, and the snow continued to fall without intermission.

Every man — ruffian, gambler, laborer, and scholar — was on terms of equality at that time in Nevada; for as Mr. B. L. Farjeon remarks, in his interesting story of "The Shadows on the Snow Ranges," "so small a matter as one being born a gentleman and another a common laborer was here of no account."

A hopeless group stood at a street corner one day, bewailing their condition, when it was casually suggested that they should walk to Marysville. The worst that could befall in the adventure would be no worse than the misery awaiting them here. Two or three men accepted the proposition of one who immediately constituted himself "leader." An actor named Barry, and Burridge, a musician, whose violin had comprised the entire orchestra at the theatre, decided to join the party.

Edwin, sauntering leisurely up to this group, was told of their intention, and consented to go with them without reflecting upon the fatigue and exposure of the undertaking. Although of an age when meagre fare and privation might seriously have undermined a constitution never robust, he ventured to tramp a distance of fifty miles across the mountains, the foremost man breaking the road through the drifts. Two days of walking through heavy snow brought them at night to Marysville, where the pedestrians disbanded.

Edwin borrowed ten dollars of an acquaintance, with which he secured passage to Sacramento. On arrival, he found that the city had been destroyed partially by fire, and that later floods had set in and swept away nearly everything that had escaped the flames.

Letters from home awaited him at San Francisco, where he had gone at once, acquainting him with the details of his father's death, in which his mother advised him and his brother to remain in California if they considered it best for their theatrical future, adding that their coming home would not be of any avail; their father was buried, and the family intended to live at the Farm.

J. B. Booth, the younger, at that time was co-manager with the Messrs. Chapman, and was able to give Edwin an engagement, but could make no agreement allowing him a fixed salary, business being still in a precarious state. With this poor prospect of earning a living, and his present penniless condition weighing on his spirits, he met an acquaintance who opportunely remembered that Edwin had once lent

him twenty dollars, and who was now eager to cancel the debt. This state of affairs ought to have sharpened any man's memory, but Edwin failed to recall the loan until circumstances related by his debtor brought it to his mind; for it had been made in those days of plenty, not long departed, when no one asked a favor or a loan in vain. Elated by the possession of so much gold, he thought how pleasant it was to be able to send part of it to those who had befriended him, and in whose debt he was, and how sumptuously too he would fare for a time on the remainder. Walking away with an elasticity in his gait, new to him at that time of depression, he met a companion with whom he turned into a gambling saloon, one of those crowded and conveniently located places so numerous in those days. Carelessly watching men throw down their gold, and in one sweep of the hand amassing hundreds, he who had never attempted a game before, and was ignorant of the mysteries of *vingt-et-un*, staked his twenty-dollar gold piece only to see it deftly swept away with others to fill the pockets of some luckier man. In despair he left the place and has never since been tempted to gamble.

Several months later the scene-painter, Fairchild, who was to have a benefit, obtained from him a promise to act *Richard III.* J. B. Booth tried to dissuade him from the undertaking, advising him to become better acquainted with the public, and to play more romantic parts suited to his age and appearance, rather than undertake so arduous a rôle. Edwin, however, resolved to make the attempt. A crowded house and an enthusiastic audience received him; he acted

finely, and was told afterward that throughout the performance a tall dark man stood behind the scenes watching him intently. This proved to be Ferdinand Ewer, then editor of the *Pioneer*, a monthly magazine, (but at present a minister of the gospel in New York,) who on that occasion penned the first criticism that had ever been written of Edwin Booth's acting. The great success of this performance induced the managers to deviate from their original intention, that of devoting their theatre to comedy; and they proposed to Booth the production of other tragedies, particularly of "Hamlet." He steadily resisted every inducement to perform that character, but personated many others with great success, among which were *Sir Edward Mortimer*, *Shylock*, *Richard III.*, and *Othello*. Finally a benefit was tendered him, on which occasion he played *Hamlet*. The words once spoken carelessly to his father had assumed the sacredness of a promise: —

> "Thy commandment all alone shall live
> Within the book and volume of my brain,
> Unmixed with baser matter."

One can imagine with what intensity of feeling, as he thought of his father, he spoke the lines, which had acquired for him a powerful significance, —

> "He was a man, take him for all in all,
> I shall not look upon his like again."

A conservative spirit seems to have taken possession of the adventurous people of California, for they cultivated a feeling of exclusiveness, which led them almost to ignore the existence of what had become to them

the old world, designated colloquially "the States." They would push onward to Australia and distant parts, but rarely turned homeward even to better their condition; hence it is not so remarkable that no enterprising manager had, at the height of Edwin Booth's popularity, with the name of the father still warm in the hearts of playgoers in "the States," induced him to return and establish himself at once in the position he afterward attained. Instead of this, his name was put in the bills when the "business" was on the decline, and it very rarely proved ineffectual to draw large audiences; but meanwhile he was drifting into a kind of stock-star, on a pittance of salary.

Mrs. Catherine Forrest Sinclair came from the East and opened the new theatre on its completion, Edwin playing secondary parts to her. Mr. James Murdock and Laura Keene followed, the latter attributing her failure to "Edwin Booth's bad acting." There sprang up between this lady and himself a mutual dislike which culminated in something like hatred; but the duties of theatrical life exacted that they should appear upon the stage together.

Mr. D. C. Anderson, a kind, genial gentleman and actor, congratulated himself and Edwin, whom he learned to love as a son, upon their good resolutions to be temperate, virtuous, and domestic. They bought a plot of ground, seventy-five by two hundred feet in extent, which they satirically called the "Ranch," and in a small house of two rooms they lived, doing all their own work, domestic and menial. This veteran actor remarked recently, in speaking to the writer of Edwin

Booth, that "he believed him to be the noblest specimen of man God ever created." Years and changes had not diminished his admiration for the boy whom he had so lovingly taken under his protection.

In the year 1854 James Stark, a famous tragedian of California, had returned from Australia with glowing accounts of its prosperity and wealth. Mr. Anderson urged Booth to make a professional visit to that country, and eventually arrangements were made to that effect. The idea prevailed that there were no actresses in Australia, and as Mr. Anderson had been informed that Miss Laura Keene was desirous of going there, without letting her intention be known to certain persons in San Francisco, he entered into an engagement with her to act with Booth. Miss Keene, asserting that tragedy was her forte, that she acted comedy merely through necessity, and would adopt tragedy gladly if offered the opportunity, readily consented. It was settled between Mr. Anderson and the lady that she was to go on board the ship at night, and they were to sail at four o'clock in the morning. The captain missed the tide and was obliged to delay until the afternoon. In the mean time, as afterward transpired, the captain's wife, who had been a governess, an actress, and later a lodging-house keeper, was commanded by her husband to get a fresh wardrobe, let her house, and sail with him to Australia, whereupon Mr. Booth would be compelled to engage her in default of other female support. A Mr. Evans, moved by the same speculative idea, brought his wife aboard; the three ladies concealed themselves in their respective cabins,

and the scene, when they met and realized the absurdity of the position, was as amusing as any in which the *dramatis personæ* had ever acted on a mimic stage.

On arriving at Sydney, the destination of the vessel, Booth entered into an engagement with Manager Torning and played *Shylock* to Miss Keene's *Portia*. His performance of *Richard III.* was enthusiastically received. They went thence to Melbourne, where but few performances were given; the dull state of every kind of business materially affecting the theatres. Booth had made the acquaintance of Mr. Hamilton and his wife (who was a daughter of Thomas Hamblin, at one time a manager of the Bowery Theatre, New York, and a very celebrated actor), and an old Irish comedian named "Clem" White. These people were unable to obtain engagements and undecided as to their future course; however, at the last moment, they determined to return to San Francisco, Edwin accompanying them.

Acting companies, leaving the last-mentioned city *en route* for Australia, not unfrequently stopped at the Sandwich Islands. The vessel on this occasion for some reason put in at Honolulu, and Booth and Mr. Anderson decided to give an entertainment there rather than go back to San Francisco without money. An agreement was effected between the five professionals, and the Royal Hawaiian Theatre was secured, for which Booth paid all the money he possessed, fifty dollars, in advance, for one month's rent. They were joined by two actors, scarcely less needy than themselves, who had been left at the Island by a strolling company some months before. The theatre was constructed by sev-

eral houses being thrown into one building, and the company, comprising seven persons, slept in the theatre, which saved the rent for lodgings. One of the actors, Mr. Roe, was a short, thick-set Dutchman, of unprepossessing countenance, who had been accustomed to play female rôles, and who undertook the same line to support Booth, "doubling" the characters of the *Duke of Norfolk* and *Duchess of York*. The King of the Sandwich Islands had lately died, and, the court being in mourning, his successor was unable to attend the theatre publicly; but, expressing a desire to witness Booth's performance of *Richard III.*, his Majesty was accommodated behind the scenes. The arm-chair used for the stage-throne was placed at the wing, with Edwin's theatrical robe thrown over it, and the king seated himself upon it; his escort, who were a Frenchman and a huge Kanaka, the latter wearing a military jacket, white trousers, and a long sword, stood by his side. Edwin was compelled to trouble the king for the throne in the coronation scene, and his Majesty good-naturedly stood until it was returned for his use. Kamehameha IV. was an educated gentleman, speaking English fluently; he told Edwin that when he was a little boy he had seen the elder Booth perform *Richard III.* at the Chatham Theatre in New York.

A letter from Mrs. Sinclair greeted Booth on his arrival at San Francisco, offering him an engagement to play with her at her own theatre, the Metropolitan; he accepted, and his personation of *Benedict* to Mrs. Sinclair's *Rosalind* was enthusiastically received by a large audience. The "business," at first most gratify-

ing, began to decline, in consequence of which he accepted an offer to act at the American Theatre in the same city, where he performed nightly to crowded houses. Seceding from this theatre, he went with a company to Sacramento, enrolling himself as "juvenile man"; but, the business proving a disappointment to the manager, he engaged one of his company to enact his own parts and assume the juvenile characters as well, so that Booth was discharged in order to curtail the expenses. Mr. Sedley and Mrs. Sinclair were about securing a theatre in Sacramento for the production of some very attractive pieces, and now made him an offer to become a joint-lessee with themselves and a Mr. Venua. Accordingly, a shabby little theatre in a back street was leased, where the play of "The Marble Heart" was produced for the first time in America. Mrs. Sinclair distinguished herself by her performance of *Marco;* but the character of *Volage* was claimed by Sedley and Booth, and finally decided by the toss of a penny, falling to Mr. Sedley. "Fortunately for all concerned," Booth remarked, "for he acted the part finely; much better than I could have done it." Edwin took the character of *Raphael*, in which he made a marked success; and, according to theatrical technicality, he *created* the part. The long-continued success of "The Marble Heart" was the means of closing the Forrest Theatre from which he had been discharged. Notwithstanding the increasing popularity of the piece, the management gave up the lease of the house and travelled through other towns to produce it. The combination did not meet with the anticipated success,

however, and after visiting several towns it ultimately disbanded at San Francisco.

Booth now joined a company of eight or ten persons to go through the mining towns; he travelled on his own horse, while the manager and his wife, the company, scenery, and wardrobe, were transported in a large covered wagon. Some of the "towns" through which they passed were composed of a few huts, the theatre being usually a hall over a shop; other places contained respectable houses, and occasionally a small convenient theatre was to be obtained. The standard bill with this company was the "Iron Chest" and "Katherine and Petruchio." Booth's dress-basket was covered with canvas, painted to represent an "iron chest," and served for that important "property." The promiscuous population of the mines and huts who could enjoy Shaksperian productions and the plays of the best authors was not to be treated slightingly. No curtailment or glossing over of speeches would be permitted by the people, who walked miles to have their evening's amusement conscientiously given.

After acting in several of the mining towns, and at one place being compelled to leave his horse in payment of a debt, Booth arrived penniless in Sacramento. He there formed the acquaintance of Mr. Butler, an architect, who manifested great interest in his career, and urged him not to waste any more time in California, but to return to the States. He told him that Boothroyd Fairclough was attempting to take the position that should be his; that now, while his father's memory was dear to the American heart, he alone should assume

the vacant place. He had but one reply, — the want of money; although in his own mind he did not aspire to equal his father or consider himself worthy or capable of doing so.

That his impecuniosity should not deter Edwin Booth from asserting his inherited right to fame, this enthusiastic friend arranged a benefit for him. It proved a great success. He made a farewell speech before a sympathetic audience, and was presented with a pin of California gold representing a wrist and hand, the finger and thumb of which held a valuable diamond. The next day his debts were cancelled, and every bill paid; but he found by these proceedings that his money was entirely expended. Mr. Butler suggested another benefit, which Edwin opposed. Mr. Butler insisted, however, claiming that the enthusiasm of the previous occasion would warrant it, and he cleverly arranged that actors should come from San Francisco to lend their services. The second farewell was given to an overflowing house, and Booth was to leave for San Francisco the following day. Crowds assembled to see him go on board, the band from the theatre was present to testify good-will, the captain made the young actor stand in a prominent position to be visible to those who wished him again and again "God speed." Confusion, noisy farewells, and music filled the air; nothing was wanting to complete the sense of satisfaction excepting Mr. Butler with the night's receipts. It was a harassing ordeal for the recipient of this generous ovation, but good wishes will not fill an empty pocket; and, as Rousseau says, "A crust of bread and

a bit of money are worth more than God bless you." Fortunately, at the very point of the given time when the gang-plank was about to be hauled in, a man's voice vociferously calling for delay was heard, and in a moment Mr. Butler, wildly gesticulating, rushed amid the crowd with the missing, and by him until then forgotten, bag of gold.

At San Francisco Booth had a farewell benefit, acting *Lear* for the first time. He crossed the Isthmus by the railroad which was then finished, and engaged his passage on the "Illinois," — the same steamer in which he had left home with his father.

He had sent an agent ahead to make engagements for him, with the strict injunction to avoid the Front Street Theatre, Baltimore, but to negotiate an opening at the Holliday, in the same city. On arrival, he found that he was announced to appear at the Front Street Theatre, engagements in New York having been entirely forgotten.

He went at once to the Farm in Maryland, where he met with a hearty welcome. The country lads who carried in his trunks shook their heads knowingly at the weight of the supposed contents, saying, "*He*'s from the diggin's." He had come back older in experience only, for he looked like a boy still, and very fragile; his wild black eyes and long locks gave him an air of melancholy. He had the gentle dignity and inherent grace that one attributes to a young prince, yet he was merry, cheerful, and boyish in disposition, as one can imagine *Hamlet* to have been in the days before the tragedy was enacted in the orchard.

He thoroughly enjoyed the rest among his own family at the Farm, and in a short time opened at the Front Street Theatre, Baltimore, in the character of *Richard III.*

He also acted under J. T. Ford's management at Washington and Richmond, Va., Joseph Jefferson being the stage-manager at the last-named city. It was here that he made the acquaintance of Miss Mary Devlin, whom he afterwards married. On a tour arranged for him by his agent he played in the principal Southern and Southwestern cities, establishing himself as an universal favorite. As previously mentioned, he conceived that after the glow of excitement consequent on his assuming the characters of the elder Booth should have abated, he must naturally sink into the position of leading man at one of the New York theatres. He was diffident of his own power, yet from the first he set himself earnestly to eradicate from his acting every tinge of what he considered an imitation of his father. Schlegel says: "Mere imitation is always fruitless; even what we borrow from others, to assume a true, practical shape, must, as it were, be born again within us. Of what avail is all foreign imitation? Art cannot exist without nature, and man can give nothing to his fellow-man but himself."

However one might grow to love even the peculiarities of a favorite, yet it was these very mannerisms, effective and graceful though they were in the elder Booth, that the younger strove studiously to avoid, for he knew they would be quickly detected and used in the criticisms against him; but there were that same

upright bearing and rapidity of graceful motion, there were tones of voice, clarion-like, sonorous, and inexpressibly sweet, that no art could copy: nature herself transmitted them; they were her dower. He never was a copyist of his father. A jealous analyst could discover, even at that early stage of his theatrical career, evidences of an originality in conception and portrayal which he asserted would attain softness and elegance with the thoughtfulness of years. This conscientious student of men, of nature, and of Shakspere has well fulfilled the prediction.

Laura Keene, as if to confirm the opinion he held of his own ability, offered him the position of leading man at her theatre in New York; but his continued successes had aroused the ambition of others, if not of himself, and it was decided that he should hold his place as a "star." As an incentive to that ambition came an offer from Thomas Barry, a veteran manager of old Park fame, for him to appear at the Boston Theatre. In spite of all that he had achieved he was not satisfied of his own merit, for he still lacked the indorsement of Boston criticism which he considered necessary. Through a dearth of tragedians, comedy reigned in New York; managers had conceived the idea that tragedy was ruinous to business, and the fancy of the day was to ignore Shakspere. William E. Burton, the comedian, was at that time the manager of the Metropolitan, afterward known as the Winter Garden Theatre, and through his business manager he arranged with Booth's agent to bring him to the Metropolitan when his Boston engagement should have ended. In ac-

cepting the proposal, he emphatically stipulated that he would open with "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," reserving his reason for doing so. The elder Booth had so essentially identified himself with the character of *Richard III.* that Edwin wished to avoid a comparison which he felt would be detrimental to himself; and moreover, in the quiet scenes of *Sir Giles*, he could feel his way, gradually centre the interest of his audience, and, while working on their sympathy, reserve his force for the powerful culmination. He would be modestly announced, — no loud-sounding allusion to his inherited name and fame, — for he designed to win, not startle, his audiences.

He proceeded to Boston, and opened as *Sir Giles*. It was a cold, dreary night, and he had a thin house. Many white-haired men were in the parquette, which contained more of the passing than the present generation. On the entrance of *Allworth*, the modest personator of that character was startled by vigorous applause from the audience, which, with the laugh that followed on discovery of the mistake, succeeded in taking away his power of speech. When *Sir Giles* appeared loud and prolonged applause greeted him; then (as he described it) the people braced themselves, self-satisfied, in their seats, as if to say, Now, young man, let us see what you can do for yourself. The play proceeded quietly until the fourth act, when the player was on his mettle, for he felt that evening to be the turning-point in his career, —

> "This is the night
> That either makes me, or fordoes me quite."

This Boston indorsement was to decide his future; and with a nervous calm he reserved himself for the last great scenes. The effect was electrifying, the call genuine and spontaneous; he knew his power, and felt that he was safe. The next day his pronounced success was universally acknowledged, and the press was unanimous in his praise. No other city had as yet adopted the custom of giving matinées, but the Saturday morning performance had long been the established rule in Boston, where all places of amusement were closed on Saturday nights. Booth's engagement, which had been in every respect successful, terminated with a matinée, during which his agent had brought him a telegraphic despatch from the New York acting-manager: "Mr. Booth announced for *Richard III.* next Monday. Seats going like hot cakes."

Annoyed and disappointed at this violation of his express orders, he left Boston in no enviable mood, and arrived in New York on Sunday morning. In shame and indignation at the vulgar bombast which would be attributed to him, he read on every available space his own name, coupled with such glaring sentences as, "Hope of the living drama!" "Son of the Great Tragedian!" "Richard 's himself again!" and that hackneyed allusion to the "mantle falling on worthy shoulders," which poetic garment never so sadly hampered his individuality as now; for if, as it is said, "every man builds his own monument," then for him who is "born great" there can be little scope for ambition or achievement. Yet it was with more earnestness than ever that he studied for himself the hidden beauties of Shakspere,

whereas but for these difficulties to surmount he might have been less close a student, less meditative a scholar. He obeyed a Baconian precept, and read "not to contradict nor to believe, but to weigh and consider."

He opened on the evening of the 4th of May, 1857. Expectation was at its height to witness the performance of this well-advertised prodigy of genius, whose serious and modest demeanor, however, did not coincide with the idea of the vainglorious young actor who was coming to demand rather than deserve applause. He pleased thoroughly by his Spartan-like action, his grave and sententious speech, no less than by his grace and passion; and, in spite of glaring town-posters, his name on calendars, cards, and shop ornaments, he gained a hold on the theatre-going public which he never forfeited or lost. In the company were many distinguished names: John Gilbert, Daniel Setchell, Mark Smith, Charles Fisher, and Lawrence Barrett.

In the autumn of the same year Booth visited Baltimore, Richmond, Charleston, Savannah, Memphis, Mobile, Montgomery, St. Louis, and Louisville.

In the following winters he travelled through the Southern and Southwestern States. On one occasion he was crowned with laurel, and after a representation of *Richelieu*, in answer to an enthusiastic call, the curtain rose, and the stage became literally strewn with garlands and bouquets; to one of the latter was attached a leather bag containing five hundred dollars in gold. His first engagement in Chicago was at M'Vicker's Theatre, and at that time he made the acquaintance of his present wife, then a child.

A series of thoughtfully written criticisms appeared in the *New York Sunday Times* over the *nom de plume* of "Vagabond." These were subsequently collected and edited in book form by the author, Adam Badeau, who became during the civil war an aide-de-camp of General Grant, and afterward biographer of the soldier-President.

In the year 1857 Booth fulfilled an engagement at the Howard Athenæum, Boston, under the management of E. L. Davenport. Lawrence Barrett and John McCullough were in the company. At this period he began altering and revising certain of his plays, "Hamlet" especially occupying his attention. Costumes and scenery, as well as stage business, received his particular care, while a new reading would suggest itself or comprehension of a thought would develop fresh meaning to his active mind. These plays as arranged by him, with many embellishments, excisions, and curtailments, were the fruit of much serious labor and research, neither study, energy, nor expense being spared in their preparation. It was the conscientious effort of the actor to render his versions concise, clear, and authentic, without marring their beauty or deteriorating from their grandeur. This attractive series of "Edwin Booth's Prompt Books" was edited by William Winter in 1878, with preface, appendix, and observations by that gentleman, and relative quotations from criticisms by the best Shaksperian scholars.

During a lucrative engagement at New Orleans in 1858, Mr. Booth was the recipient of a costly service of plate consisting of a salver, pitcher, and two goblets.

At Charleston he was presented with a similar token of regard. In 1860 he married Miss Mary Devlin, who had retired from the stage the previous year; he then determined to travel less, leaving the Southern and Western States to his younger brother and confining himself to the Eastern cities. He had become the most popular tragedian in the United States. Edwin Forrest was waning in power, and Edwin Booth, now at the acme of a fame deservedly won, had not only in the opinion of friends, but in the estimation of the people, "achieved greatness!" That magnetic power which enchains the ear and rivets the eye was not an acquirement; no practice, study, or artifice could teach him that which was indisputably a gift and an inheritance; but custom and conscientious thought helped him not only to idealize but to subdue his nature and exalt his passions, so that he was in turn each person he portrayed.

An adaptation by Mr. Tom Taylor of "Le Roi s'Amuse," entitled "The Fool's Revenge," had been sent to Joseph Jefferson from England. He took it to Mrs. Booth, telling her to insist on Edwin's looking at it, the character being tragic and not suited to a comedian. Booth studied the part and performed it several times, but failed to satisfy himself with his rendition or clearly to demonstrate his own conception of the character. In this year, 1860, he acted in it with great success, however, in all the cities that he visited with the exception of New York. He now applied himself to reconsider the character, which he felt had not received justice from his interpretation, and finally made an alteration

of the last act. He performed *Bertuccio* at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, under Wheatley and Clarke's management. As he acted he seemed to realize the full force of the character, and for the first time he delineated satisfactorily to himself the perfect pathos and passion of the part.

Miss Charlotte Cushman and Edwin Booth gave ten performances at the Academy of Music, Philadelphia, commencing Dec. 31, 1860. They played *Wolsey* and *Queen Katherine* in "Henry VIII.," *Macbeth* and *Lady Macbeth*, *Shylock* and *Portia*, *Katherine* and *Petruchio*, to crowded houses. Miss Cushman observed, "that, judging from Mr. Booth's rehearsal of *Macbeth*, he had a refined and very intellectual conception of the character; but she begged him to remember that *Macbeth* was the grandfather of all the Bowery villains." Booth differed from her on many points, and declined to depart from his own conception of the rôle.

In a discussion with Henry Tuckerman of New York, on the character of *Hamlet*, that gentleman, who had witnessed many of the old actors, observed to Booth that they all stood during the soliloquies, and inquired if it were not possible to alter this. On the next representation of "Hamlet," Booth, seated, began the soliloquy "To be, or not to be." Mr. Tuckerman, watching the play, could not conceive how *Hamlet* could rise from that chair with propriety and grace. When at the words, "to sleep, perchance to dream," after an instant of reflection, during which the mind of *Hamlet* had penetrated the eternal darkness vivid with dreams, he rose with the horror of that terrible "perchance"

stamped upon his features, continuing, "Ay, there 's the rub!" His friend was satisfied that the actor had caught the inspiration of the lines in that reflective pause. Booth also introduced sitting on the tomb in the graveyard when, with his face half buried on *Horatio's* shoulder, he speaks, as if to his own heart, the words, "What! the fair Ophelia?" His resting previously on the tomb is most natural and graceful, and, imbued with these qualities, it cannot fail to be effective.

During the summer of 1861, while on a fishing excursion with friends in the White Mountains, Booth received a letter from the agent of Mr. Buckstone inviting him to act in London at the Haymarket Theatre. He replied, accepting the offer, and prepared to sail for England. He left Boston with his wife in September of the same year. He was surprised when Mr. Buckstone informed him in London that a second letter asking him to defer the visit, as he was rather afraid of tragedy, had crossed him on the way. After much discussion Booth allowed himself to be overruled by the manager and consented to appear as *Shylock*. A lady who had spoken with enthusiasm to her circle of friends of the passion and fire of certain of his delineations confessed herself disappointed when he walked the stage, calm to indifference, and evidently annoyed at his support and his surroundings.

On this eventful night every one behind the scenes was more nervous and frightened than the untried actor. His fellow-players, with but few exceptions, were supercilious and disposed to treat the stranger with indignity. One of them was so positively certain of his being hissed

that he was scarcely able to conceal his disappointment at the result.

The prejudice did not extend, however, to Henry Howe or Henry Compton of the Haymarket company, for these gentlemen were particularly kind and sympathetic. His audiences were thin but enthusiastic, and many flattering critiques appeared upon his acting, none of which, however, he had the satisfaction of reading; only the malicious articles, unjust and sweeping in denunciation, were brought to his notice. He had reason to believe that English criticism was a two-edged sword rather than the surgeon's knife probing to cure; yet he received much encouragement from private sources during his engagement of five weeks. He acted four characters, *Shylock*, *Sir Giles Overreach*, *Richard III.*, and *Richelieu*. Mr. Sothern prevailed on Mr. Buckstone to allow Mr. Booth to play *Richard III.*, and the tragedy was eventually put upon the stage, but in such a manner as to seem a burlesque. One man in armor rendered himself ridiculous by kneeling and not being able to rise again, and another lifted his mailed arm and could not lower it without difficulty; their tin armor so clumsily constructed formed a ludicrous contrast to the massiveness of the king's complete dress of steel. Mr. Buckstone reluctantly consented that Booth should produce *Richelieu*. For that event the actors had brought crowds of friends behind the scenes to witness a great failure; and the hisses of the audience, which as yet had not been forthcoming, were confidently expected at this production. Before the close of the first act marks of pleasure instead of the disapprobation

anticipated were distinctly heard; and even the non-paying audience behind the scenes partook of the enthusiasm. Mr. Chippendale, who had frequently been lavish of kind words to Edwin as a boy and had often professed friendship for his father, held an unwelcoming hand to the hard-used actor struggling against the prejudice and conventionalism of a foreign country. During the fourth act of the play, as Edmund Kean would have said, "the pit rose at him." It was reported that Mr. Chippendale, leaving the theatre, rushed over the way to Mr. Buckstone, saying, he had seen the finest piece of acting in his life. Mr. Buckstone always regretted that he had not opened with "Richelieu."

During Booth's residence at Fulham his only child, Edwina, was born, in December, 1861.

On the completion of his London engagement, Booth went to Manchester, where he acted for three weeks, Mr. Henry Irving being a member of the stock company; thence he proceeded to Liverpool and fulfilled an engagement of two weeks. A marble medallion of him by Küntze was in the Royal Academy exhibition of 1862.

After a visit to Paris he was presented with the sword which Lemaitre had worn in "Ruy Blas," bearing upon the blade the name "Frederic Lemaitre" and the date of his first performance of the rôle. No theatres were open to him in London on his return from France. Fechter, then at the height of success at the Princess's Theatre, monopolized the Shaksperian drama, and as he was in receipt of handsome offers for New

York, he concluded to leave England, sailing on the "Great Eastern" steamship, which then made her last voyage as a passenger vessel.

On his return from England Booth played a very successful engagement at the Winter Garden Theatre, New York, commencing Sept. 29, 1862. In his support were Mr. and Mrs. F. B. Conway.

At Philadelphia some months later he played *Macbeth*, to the *Lady Macbeth* of Miss Charlotte Cushman, for the benefit of the Woman's Branch of the United States Sanitary Commission, raising upwards of thirteen hundred dollars for the fund.

About this time Booth, on account of the failing health of his wife, decided to take a house at Dorchester, Mass., where he left his family, after playing a few weeks in Boston, to open at the Winter Garden, Feb. 9, 1863. He never saw Mrs. Booth alive again. Her sudden death before he could reach her bedside abruptly terminated his engagement in New York. Mr. T. W. Parsons, in his collection of poems entitled "The Magnolia," has paid a touching compliment to the worth of a good woman in his memorial of Mary Devlin Booth.

Booth did not resume his professional duties for some months; Lawrence Barrett, who was his leading support, filling up the break in his New York engagement by acting *Richard III.*, and continuing with *Ruy Blas*, which Booth had had in course of preparation. On his return he wished to assume this part of *Ruy Blas*, but Mr. Barrett considered it unfair that he should be cast for the character of *Don Cæsar* when

he had already been playing the leading rôle, on its first production in the metropolis. Booth then introduced the scene of *Don Cæsar*, which had been omitted in the English version, and offered it as an inducement to Mr. Barrett, who accepted, and acted the character remarkably well, "taking," as the star said, "all the wind out of my sails."

In October, 1863, the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia was offered for sale. At such a precarious time, during a disastrous civil war, few men were willing to assume so great a risk; but John S. Clarke and Edwin Booth conjointly ventured to make the purchase, feeling that they would be lucky to be able to pay for it entirely in thirteen years. This they did, however, in three!

At Niblo's Garden, under the management of William Wheatley, who had lately dissolved partnership with John S. Clarke in Philadelphia, Booth presented "The Fool's Revenge" for the first time in New York, March 28, 1864, the play meeting with decided success. In his support were Miss Ada Clifton, Miss Mary Wells, Miss Rose Eytinge, and J. W. Collier.

Edwin Booth, John S. Clarke, and William Stuart took a lease of the Winter Garden Theatre, New York, for a term of years, opening the house Aug. 18, 1864, with an engagement of Mr. Clarke. Booth had long desired to have a leading metropolitan theatre under his own control, where he could mount his plays in a correct and elaborate style and confine himself entirely to the legitimate drama. Mr. Stuart was known, however, as the "manager" of the theatre, although his

duties did not extend to the stage department or the production of plays. He received a large salary, and occupied a suite of rooms in the theatre, from which he narrowly escaped when the building was destroyed by fire.

Booth cast his first, and the only vote of his life, for Abraham Lincoln, in the autumn of 1864. A short time after, on the night of Nov. 25, 1864, the three Booth brothers appeared in the play of "Julius Cæsar," — Junius Brutus Booth as *Cassius*, Edwin as *Brutus*, and John Wilkes as *Marc Antony*. The theatre was crowded to suffocation, people standing in every available place. The greatest excitement prevailed, and the aged mother of the Booths sat in a private box to witness this performance. The three brothers received and merited the applause of that immense audience, for they acted well, and presented a picture too strikingly historic to be soon forgotten. The eldest, powerfully built and handsome as an antique Roman, Edwin, with his magnetic fire and graceful dignity, and John Wilkes in the perfection of youthful beauty, stood side by side, again and again, before the curtain, to receive the lavish applause of the audience mingled with waving of handkerchiefs and every mark of enthusiasm.

Nov. 26, 1864, Booth produced "Hamlet" at the Winter Garden, and acted the *Dane* for one hundred nights consecutively, — the longest run that any Shaksperian play had ever known in America at that time. It was more splendidly produced than any other that had ever been presented, with the exception, perhaps, of "King John" and "Richard III.," many years

previously, at the old Park Theatre, under the direction of Mr. Charles Kean, and which, it is said, were comparative failures financially, although most expensive and elaborate productions.

Of Booth's *Hamlet*, at that time, George William Curtis wrote : —

" A really fine actor is as uncommon as a really great dramatic poet. Yet what Garrick was in *Richard III.*, or Edmund Kean in *Shylock*, we are sure Edwin Booth is in *Hamlet*. . . . The scenery was thoughtfully studied, and the effect was entirely harmonious. . . . Booth looks the ideal *Hamlet;* for the *Hamlet* of our imagination, which is the *Hamlet* of Shakspere, is not the scant-of-breath gentleman whom the severer critics insist that he should be. He is a sad, slight prince. . . . Booth is altogether princely. His costume is still the solemn suit of sables, varied according to his fancy of greater fitness ; and his small, lithe form, with the mobility and intellectual sadness of his face, and his large, melancholy eyes, satisfy the most fastidious imagination that this is *Hamlet* as he lived in Shakspere's world. His playing throughout has an exquisite tone, like an old picture. The charm of the finest portraits — of Raphael's ' Julius ' or ' Leo,' of Titian's ' Francis I.' or ' Ippolita di Medici,' of Vandyck's ' Charles I.' — is not the drawing, or even the coloring, so much as the nameless, subtle harmony which is called ' tone.' So in Booth's *Hamlet* it is not any particular scene, or passage, or look, or movement, that conveys the impression ; it is the consistency of every part with every other, the pervasive sense of a mind of a true gentleman

sadly strained and jarred. Through the whole play the mind is borne on in mournful reverie. It is not so much what he says or does that we observe, for under all, beneath every scene and word and act, we hear what is not audible, — the melancholy music of 'the sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh.' This gives a curious reality to the whole. . . . Booth's conception of *Hamlet* is that of a morbid mind conscious of its power to master the mystery of life, which, in its details, baffles and overwhelms him. There is, therefore, a serene consciousness of superiority in his behavior, even in the most perplexed moments. In the chamber scene with his mother, when the ghost passes and *Hamlet* falls for a moment prostrate with emotion at his disappearance, the *Queen* insinuates that he is mad. There is a kind of calm, pitying disdain, mingled with the sense that her feeling is natural, with which *Hamlet* steps toward her, his finger on his pulse. The tragedy in 'Hamlet' is not only the vital curiosity about existence, the mastering love of life which almost subdues his soul with fear and doubt and keeps it tense with eager questioning, but it is the conviction of a mind morbid with this continual strain that it is a most sacred duty to end another life, to plunge a guilty soul into the abyss of doubt, and that soul the one dearest to his mother. This explains the fascination which the idea of his uncle's death always exercises upon his mind, and also his inability to do more than dream and doubt over the action. It is this complication which produces one of Booth's finest scenes. In the interview with his mother he stabs *Polonius* through the arras. For an

instant the possibility of what he has done sweeps over his mind. Always the victim of complex emotions, the instinctive satisfaction of knowing the act done is mingled with the old familiar horror of the doom to which he may have consigned his uncle. With sword uplifted, and a vague terror both of hope and fear in his tone and face, *Hamlet* does not slide rapidly back, and hurriedly exclaim, 'Is it the King?' but, tottering with emotion, he asks slowly in an appalling staccato, 'Is — it — the — king?' The cumulative sadness of the play was never so palpable as in Booth's acting. It is a spell from which you cannot escape."

At the expiration of the hundred nights of "Hamlet," a committee of distinguished persons had arranged to present Booth with a medal commemorative of the event; but it was not yet completed, and he finished his New York season by filling the last week with different plays.

Going from New York to Boston, he was playing a very lucrative engagement, and on the night of the 14th of April, 1865, acted *Sir Edward Mortimer*. On the following morning the news of the great calamity which had fallen upon the country, and particularly upon the Booth family, was brought to him. He left Boston on that evening, and arrived at New York early the ensuing morning, repairing at once to his own home. He was surrounded by devoted friends, who strove by every attention in their power to prove how highly he was esteemed as a public man and a citizen.

Grief and shame, and the dread of having to forfeit his position on the stage, had in the course of a few

months sadly worn his fragile body; and that introspective look, which some writer remarks as "characteristic of the Booths," seemed to fit with the lines, —

"I have that within, which passeth show."

He had thought never to appear upon the stage again, but the more violent the tempest the more subdued the calm which follows; and the reaction proved as reasonable in this case as the denunciation had been fierce. With conflicting emotions, which required an indomitable force of will to keep in check, Edwin Booth made his reappearance on the stage at the Winter Garden Theatre in the character of *Hamlet*, Jan. 3, 1866, after having been in retirement many months. People came from Washington, Baltimore, Boston, and Philadelphia to witness the event, and the audience comprised many distinguished persons. Outside the streets were thronged, angry threats were made to shoot him; but on the other hand cool, common sense was heard, and both within and without the theatre the police force was a restraining power.

In his "Sketch of Edwin Booth," William Winter says: —

"Had there not existed, however, an imperative necessity that Edwin Booth should return to the stage, he would never have acted again. He reappeared on the 3d of January, 1866, at the Winter Garden Theatre. An immense throng of persons gave him welcome, and it was such a welcome as might well have lightened the saddest heart and the most anxious mind. Nine cheers hailed the melancholy Dane upon his first entrance.

The spectators rose and waved their hats and handkerchiefs. Bouquets fell in a shower upon the stage, and there was a tempest of applause. Nor was the welcome less kind in communities out of New York. Wherever he appeared after this momentous return to the stage he found a free-hearted greeting and respectful sympathy, and so little by little he got back into the old way of work, and his professional career resumed its flow in the old channel."

The "Hamlet Medal" (intended for presentation on the one hundredth night) was received by Booth on January 22d during this engagement. It was an offering of appreciation and respect from the chief citizens of New York and students of Shakspere, and was presented publicly after the performance of "Hamlet." The stage represented a drawing-room. The bands of the principal theatres of New York united in giving the Danish National Hymn. Booth, dressed as *Hamlet*, met the committee on their arrival. Among the vast concourse of people were many eminent citizens; and on the stage could be singled out Admiral Farragut, Major-General Robert Anderson, John T. Hoffman Governor of New York, George Bancroft the historian, Charles A. Dana, Judge Daly; S. R. Gifford, Launt Thompson, Jervis McEntee, and many distinguished artists; and Richard O'Gorman and William Fullerton, members of the New York Bar. The latter gentleman spoke the following graceful tribute: —

"Mr. Booth, — You have deservedly won a position in your profession which few men have ever attained. The representation of one of Shakspere's plays for

one hundred consecutive nights to overflowing and delighted audiences is a triumph unrecorded in the annals of the stage until you accomplished it, and is well worthy of commemoration. But it is not alone your success as an actor which has attracted public attention and called forth this demonstration. You have won alike the applause and respect of your fellow-men; and a numerous body of your friends and admirers, through their committee now here present, desire to present you with some evidence of their appreciation of your genius as an actor, and their respect for you as a man, more substantial and enduring than the fleeting, though hearty plaudits nightly heard within these walls. To that end they have instructed me to present you with this medal. Intrinsically, it is of little worth; but as a token of the regard of your fellow-citizens, it possesses a significance far more valuable than the gold of which it is composed, or the artistic skill which has beautified it. It was thought proper that this presentation should take place on the occasion of the play of 'Hamlet,' with which your name will ever be associated, and on the very spot of your greatest professional achievements, thereby affording your numerous friends an opportunity of witnessing it. But the choice of time and place for this ceremony has another and a deeper meaning. It intends a recognition of your lifelong efforts to raise the moral standard of the drama, and to encourage you in your future endeavors to accomplish that result. In conclusion, I beg you to accept this gift; and at the same time, allow me to express the universal wish that you may live to win new triumphs in a profession

which your virtues have elevated and your talents adorned."

The medal is made of gold, and is about three inches in size; it is of oval form, and is surrounded by a thick golden serpent with its head pendent, over which are the skull of *Yorick*, the crossed foils, and thickly massed bunches of *Ophelia's* flowers. A golden ribbon around the oval bears the motto, "Palmam qui meruit ferat." At the top is the Danish crown, from which hang two heavy garlands of laurel and myrtle gracefully festooned; beneath, in *alto-rilievo*, is Edwin Booth's head as *Hamlet*. The medal is suspended from a brooch richly chased, with the face of Shakspere between the masks of Tragedy and Comedy. On the reverse is engraven, "To Edwin Booth, in commemoration of the unprecedented 'run' of 'Hamlet,' as enacted by him in New York City for one hundred nights, 1865."

In January, 1866, Booth and Clarke obtained the lease of the Boston Theatre at a rental of sixteen thousand dollars a year. Offers as high as twenty-six thousand dollars were made by other parties, but the directors preferred these two gentlemen, who managed now conjointly three first-class theatres in the three principal cities. After a very successful engagement in Boston, Booth, on the 23d of April, 1866, made his reappearance on the Philadelphia stage to commemorate the anniversary of the "Birth and Death of Shakspere." He had not acted in that city for two years, and during a most remunerative engagement of fifty-one nights he performed *Othello*, *Romeo*, *Shylock*, *Rich-*

ard III., *Ruy Blas*, *Don Cesar de Bazan*, *Hamlet*, *Richelieu*, *Petruchio*, *The Stranger*, *Bertuccio*, *Sir Giles Overreach*, and *Pescara*. "Hamlet" was produced in magnificent style, and acted for twenty-one nights, the other plays being many times repeated.

During the occupancy of the Winter Garden Theatre by Booth and Clarke, the latter usually acted there from the month of August until Christmas, Booth following and playing until Easter, Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams and other attractions filling the intervening time. John S. Clarke sold his interest to Booth, and retired finally from the management early in the year 1867, a few months before the building was burned.

Booth produced "Richelieu" in magnificent style on the 1st February, 1866, using the costumes he had brought with him from Paris for another play. Charles Barron was the *De Mauprat*, John Dyott *Joseph*, C. K. Mason *Huguet*, Miss Rose Eytinge *Julie*, and Miss Marie Wilkins *Marion de Lorme*.

On the 29th December of the same year he played *Iago* to the *Othello* of Bagumil Dawison. *Othello* spoke in German, *Iago* in English, and *Desdemona* (Madame Methua Scheller) in German to *Othello* and in English to the rest of the *dramatis personæ*. "The Merchant of Venice" was the event of this season of 1866–67, and was produced in magnificent style Jan. 28, 1867, running for seven weeks. On the 22d of March "Brutus, or the Fall of Tarquin," was presented, and early on the morning of March 23d the theatre was burned to the ground.

The fire was the result of an accident, and the thea-

tre, which was uninsured, was never rebuilt. Booth lost the whole of his valuable wardrobe, including many articles prized for their association sake even more than for their actual worth. Some had belonged to his father, others to Edmund Kean, John Philip Kemble, and to Mrs. Siddons.

Owing to the great success which had attended the production of his plays at the Winter Garden Theatre, he was filled with an ambitious desire to build a superior edifice where he could indulge his love of the æsthetic and realistic as well as show deference to the legitimate in art. This had been his earnest endeavor throughout his later engagements, and the production of his plays had so engrossed his attention that he had refused most tempting offers from the West; money at that time being a secondary object. With his mind intent upon pursuing this grand scheme of erecting a theatre on his own responsibility, he now had recourse to the Western managers, and accepted offers that proved most remunerative. He did not act again for two years in New York; but, having secured the site for his theatre, he travelled and worked laboriously to effect what he now calls "a Quixotic fancy."

In 1867, during his engagement in Chicago, Miss Mary M'Vicker made her first appearance as *Juliet* to his *Romeo*. He proceeded to Baltimore to fulfil an engagement of four weeks, opening as *Sir Giles Overreach*, Miss M'Vicker performing *Margaret*. During the first week, while playing *Pescara* in the "Apostate," he met with a serious accident. Mr. Charles Vandenhoff as *Hemeya*, in rushing to kill *Pescara*, was so excited

that he deliberately stabbed Booth three times in the hand which he had fortunately raised to ward off the blow from his breast. He had neglected to have the sharp dagger blunted, and Mr. Vandenhoff was unconscious how often or how furiously he struck in his excitement. After responding to the call of the audience, Booth for the first time realized how badly he was hurt and on leaving the stage fainted from pain. He acted the next night, however, and for two nights following, in the plays of "Hamlet," "Richard III.," and "Othello," carrying his right arm in a sling and fencing with his left hand, even drawing his sword, which he accomplished by a quick upward movement, whipping it not ungracefully from the scabbard. The next week he was obliged to desist from acting as he was threatened with erysipelas, and the arm had become exceedingly painful.

After a brief rest he was enabled to finish his engagement, performing the two weeks following. He shortly afterward made a tour of all the cities of the South and Southwest for the first time in eight years.

The building of Booth's Theatre consumed nearly two years, during which time he was never idle; the excavations for the foundation were made by blasting a solid rock twenty-two feet in diameter, and the pit dug was the extent of the entire stage. The magnificent structure was at length completed at the cost of over a million of dollars, and was said to be surpassed in grandeur only by the Grand Opera House in Paris. The decorations of the interior were most artistic and delicate; everything was perfect in regard to taste and

elegance. There were no "wings" on the stage, all of the scenery being so constructed as to sink or be elevated above the "flies" by hydraulic power; the stage could be thrown open from wall to wall, and the effect perspectively with the great altitude added to its vastness and grandeur. The theatre opened on the 3d of February, 1869, with the production of "Romeo and Juliet," given in the original text of Shakspere for the first time in America. The minutiæ of stage decoration, costume, and equipment received Booth's own supervision, as their correctness had engrossed his time and labor. In the second act, the house of *Juliet* measured sixty feet in height, and had two balconies one above the other. Two trees measured fifty and sixty feet. For the "loggia" scene in the third act was a line of connected arches of great height extending backward to the full depth of the stage; these flanked a wide courtyard in which the tops of trees were visible, suggesting the idea of depth. *Romeo's* ladder was thrown over the balustrade of a balcony of this solidly constructed house. The "loggia scene" employed fifty men to set and to draw it above the "flies." The production of this play attracted immense audiences for sixty-eight nights, Booth and Miss M'Vicker playing *Romeo* and *Juliet*, and Mr. Edwin Adams *Mercutio*.

The "Moor of Venice" was put upon the stage April 19, 1869, on a scale of similar magnificence; Edwin Adams and Edwin Booth alternating the characters of *Othello* and *Iago*, Miss M'Vicker assuming the part of *Desdemona*. Booth, by an ingenious contrivance, had the scenery of "Romeo and Juliet" rear-

ranged with the addition of a few small pieces to answer every requisition of the "Moor of Venice," thus illustrating that the eye of the master saves the laborer's hands. He kept the theatre open during the summer, and produced the play of "Enoch Arden," June 21, 1869. Edwin Adams personated the principal character, and Booth received a letter from Mr. Tennyson relative to the successful production of his poem.

Booth and Miss M'Vicker were married June 7 1869. In this year the lady retired from the stage.*

The plays of "Romeo and Juliet," "Winter's Tale," "Hamlet," "Richelieu," and "Julius Cæsar," were produced in most elaborate and costly style. "The Assassination of Cæsar," from Gérôme's great picture, was beautifully copied for the scene of the latter play. "The Moor of Venice," "Macbeth," "Lady of Lyons," "The Iron Chest," "Merchant of Venice," "Richard III.," "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," "Fool's Revenge," "The Fall of Tarquin," and "Don Cesar de Bazan" were put upon the stage and mounted in superior style. They were frequently repeated, and one of the previously mentioned five plays was produced each year. He had been throughout unsparing of strength and energy, and indefatigable in his labor, each department of the theatre dividing his attention, for the onus of this undertaking devolved on himself alone. He travelled and played elsewhere, while other "stars" filled the time at Booth's Theatre, among whom were Miss Neilson, Joseph Jefferson, Miss Bateman, and J. S. Clarke.

* Mary M'Vicker Booth died in New York, Nov. 13, 1881, while this volume was passing through the press. — ED.

Edwin Adams was the leading man of the company, and had the privilege of producing his own plays on Saturday nights, the same arrangement being effected with Lawrence Barrett in the next season. Booth's management of Booth's Theatre was remarkable for the continuity of its success, but the outlay was enormous and the expenses incredible; he allowed himself rest neither for body nor mind, and, when absent in other cities, sent large sums of money to New York to liquidate his debts.

Finally, the strain on mental and physical health became too severe, and in 1873 he concluded to lease the theatre to his elder brother, J. B. Booth, in preference to other applicants. This management not meeting with the desired success, the theatre passed into new hands, and Booth's monetary affairs became so complicated and embarrassed, owing to his ignorance of the financial details of business, that, notwithstanding his long-continued success throughout the country, the result of this scheme was bankruptcy. Although released from the cares of management he was now compelled to work harder and to travel more, devoting every energy to free himself from the incubus of debt. Out of the failure of this great project, which was a noble endeavor by individual effort to elevate the drama in America and to create for his country a standard of dramatic excellence that should be felt among older nations, came happily renewed strength and determination, not the relaxation of despair or grief for wasted effort that was feared by his friends.

Shortly after his bankruptcy Booth retired for a brief

rest to his wife's country home at Cos-Cob, Connecticut, having surrendered to his creditors all his private and personal property, including his books, pictures, and extensive theatrical wardrobe. While in this quiet retreat he was thrown from a carriage and severely injured in the arm and side. This accident caused a postponement of an eight weeks' summer engagement with Mr. Augustin Daly of the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York. He opened at that house, however, Oct. 25, 1875. During this engagement he produced for the first time his own version or adaptation of Shakspere's "Richard II." He had never seen the character acted, and had never played it himself. It was a very great success, and has become a favorite part of his because of its eloquence and force. Edmund Kean and the elder Booth had performed this character, but it had fallen into disuse. Edwin Booth desired to restore the tragedy to the stage; and, by reason of its profundity of knowledge, its intimate acquaintance with humanity, and its exquisite diction, it deserves the place he has given it in his repertory.

During this season, under Mr. Daly's management, he produced "King Lear" in magnificent style and from the original text, after his own adaptation of Shakspere's "King Lear." This, too, was eminently successful. After acting his usual round of characters (but with his maimed left arm in a sling), the engagement terminated. He went with Mr. J. T. Ford of Baltimore on a protracted Southern tour, giving fifty-two performances. He then travelled with Mr. M'Vicker and with other managers, through the Western cities,

successfully fulfilling these engagements and terminating the season in June, 1876.

For several years he had refused all offers from California; but now that he required a vast deal of money to free himself from pressing obligations, he concluded to undertake the journey at the tempting inducements held forth by Mr. John McCullough. Their train *en route* to San Francisco stopped at several places. They visited Salt Lake City, where he gave a half-promise to act on his return journey; they went to Virginia City, and in twelve days from the date of starting he arrived in San Francisco, Sept. 5, 1876, exactly twenty years to a day since he had left that city.

His engagement at the San Francisco theatre was attended by overwhelming success. While in California he met his old friend, D. C. Anderson, and together they wandered over the busy metropolis that had overgrown the straggling village they had known. Their "Ranch" was now a tenement in a back street, and the "marsh" was built over; for the great, prosperous city had reached outward in all directions, embracing the once barren waste.

Booth returned to the East, and opened at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, under Mr. M'Vicker's management, in November, 1876. This engagement lasted ten weeks. The great political disturbance, and the fatal occurrence at the Brooklyn Theatre, burned by fire, with a loss of more than three hundred lives, Dec. 5, 1876, caused so great a panic that all places of amusement were avoided in New York; and the fright extended to other cities, so that the latter part of

the engagement was somewhat injured. Mr. M'Vicker was very anxious to resign his two weeks' lease of the Academy of Music in Brooklyn on account of the disinclination of the community to visit theatres, but his efforts proved unsuccessful. Booth was obliged to fill the engagement, anticipating a complete failure; but, contrary to all expectations, he played to enormous business. Under the same management he visited various cities, acting three weeks at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, two weeks in Baltimore, and later performing in several towns of Connecticut.

He then appeared at the Globe Theatre in Boston for a period of three weeks, and closed this protracted engagement on the 19th of May, 1877. For this season he had received one hundred and twenty-one thousand three hundred and fifty-three dollars. And his total receipts from October, 1875, to May, 1877, enabled him to settle with his creditors, and obtain release from bankruptcy, the time comprising fifty-six acting weeks.

After a rest during the summer months he commenced another engagement under the same management, on Sept. 10, 1877, in Chicago. He played in Cincinnati, Louisville, Cleveland, St. Louis, Buffalo, Lockport, Rochester, Syracuse, Utica, and Albany. In January, 1878, he rented Booth's Theatre, and under his own management acted for six weeks. Later he acted at the Park Theatre, Boston, for three weeks, two weeks at Pittsburg, two at Baltimore, and filled three weeks at Clarke's Broad Street Theatre in Philadelphia. At the Fifth Avenue Theatre in New York

he played for five weeks, then visited Detroit and Chicago. He had reaped a plentiful harvest in all these cities, but he had labored indefatigably and travelled without loss of time.

His engagement at Chicago was for a period of four weeks, beginning the 14th of April, 1879. In the second week, on the night of the 23d (Shakspere's birthday), he was shot at while playing *Richard II.* There was intense excitement throughout the theatre, and the deed created the fiercest indignation against the offender, who was arrested and secured, but not until Booth rose at the third shot, walked to the footlights, and pointed out to the audience the would-be assassin as the pistol was again levelled at his head. At the trial which followed the man was proved to be insane, and he has ever since been confined at the asylum at Elgin, Ill. One of the bullets, which entered the scenery almost directly behind Booth, he has had set in a gold cartridge cap, upon which is engraved, "From Mark Gray to Edwin Booth, April 23, 1879." This, as a grim reminder of his danger and escape, he wears as an Egyptian might wear an amulet. By subsequent measurement the aim of the lunatic was shown to have been very clever, for had Booth risen at the proper and expected moment one of the bullets at least must have passed through his heart.

The newspapers were filled with wild accounts of the shooting affray, and telegrams, cable despatches, and letters from "troops of friends" served to show him how high he stood in the estimation of his countrymen at home and abroad. He needed such sympathy to

stimulate him in the pursuit of his profession, for so many adverse circumstances seemed to conspire to enervate and overcome his powers. When this engagement closed he gladly took his departure from Chicago, and did not act again until October 6th, when he performed at Ford's Opera House in Baltimore for two weeks, going thence to the Broad Street Theatre, Philadelphia, under the same management. At the Grand Opera House in New York he fulfilled an engagement of four weeks. In March, 1880, he acted under Mr. Abbey's management at the Park Theatre, Boston. It was one of the finest engagements on record, and created the greatest excitement. The sale of seats lasted from eight A. M. until eight P. M. A long unbroken line of people was at the box-office during those hours, and before the close of the second week all the seats were sold for the remainder of the engagement. Crowds were nightly turned from the doors, and every available spot in the theatre was given up for the accommodation of the audience.

At Booth's Theatre, New York, in April, 1880, he played four weeks under the management of Mr. Abbey, and, after an engagement in Brooklyn, performed *Petruccio* at the Madison Square Theatre, New York, for the benefit of "The Edgar Poe Memorial Fund," his last appearance in America before his trip to Europe.

On the 15th of June he was tendered a public breakfast at Delmonico's, New York, one of the most brilliant and successful entertainments ever given in America, and probably the highest compliment ever paid to any member of his profession. The church,

the bench, the bar, the world of letters, arts, and affairs, all gathered to do honor to the departing actor, and to express their appreciation of him as an artist and a man. Speeches were made by Judge John R. Brady, who presided, by Judge Charles P. Daly, Algernon S. Sullivan, Edmund C. Stedman, Rev. Robert Collyer, Rev. Ferdinand C. Ewer, Lawrence Barrett, Lester Wallack, Joseph Jefferson, William Warren, and a poem written for the occasion was read by William Winter.

Booth sailed from New York on the 30th of June, 1880, with his wife and daughter. After spending some months in travel in Great Britain and on the Continent, he opened the New Princess's Theatre, London, on the 6th November, 1880, as *Hamlet*. Subsequently, at this house, he appeared as *Richelieu*, *Bertuccio*, *Othello*, *Iago*, *Petruccio*, *Shylock*, and *King Lear*. Of this successful engagement, and of that which followed at the Lyceum Theatre, London, under the management of Henry Irving, where he played *Iago* and *Othello* with that gentleman, alternating the parts, there is not space to speak here.

Edwin Booth still lives, and still pursues his career of usefulness in his profession. Therefore it is hardly time yet, and it should perhaps fall to the lot of some other writer, to analyze the nobility of his character, and unveil to the public the beauties of his private life. Let it be said merely that as a citizen and as a man Edwin Booth has been always devoted, upright, true; the kindest and most tender of sons to an erratic father and to a widowed mother, in every other relation, as brother, husband, father, friend, worthy of affection and

of all praise. Long may it be ere "Finis" is written in his volume of life!

For what she has said in these pages the writer can only quote for her defence this curt excuse, —

"If I have spent my time ill to write,
Let them not be so idle as to read."

LINES TO EDWIN BOOTH.

WRITTEN IN ITALY, 1875.

In dim old palaces, in ancient galleries,
Through dusty corridors and sunless aisles,
Thy weird voice taunts me,
Thy strange face haunts me
With sombre brooding or with radiant smiles.

What grand pale faces fill these quaint places!
What sculptured heroes and perfected art, —
Dim clue affording,
And yet according
This deathless beauty with thy living heart.

True art thus purely transmitted surely
Through all the ages ever new, —
Thine artist spirit
Could but inherit
A gift so wondrous, rare, and true.

Some dark grim hero, or blood-stained Nero,
Link thee and Gloster, the Moor, Macbeth,
While Bruno sainted,
Divinely painted,
Is Hamlet apostrophizing Death.

Under night's cover, Francesca's lover
Hath Romeo's passion-tender face;
And Shylock even
Declaims to Heaven
In an old Rabbi's holy place.

'T is not home-longing, nor memory thronging,
Nor yet the love 'tween thee and me,
That thus I trace
Thy voice and face
In sculpture, painting, minstrelsy!

But, magical spirit, none can inherit
Thine awful greatness, save thine alone!
From earliest times
Thro' various climes
Nature preserves her monotone.

From youth to age, this heritage
Guard *thou* with loving jealousy,
That men may name thee,
Thy country claim thee,
A son of genius, incorrupt, and free.

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American Actor Series

EDITED BY LAURENCE HUTTON