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LIFE OF

Helena Modjeska.

BY

J. T. ALTEMUS.

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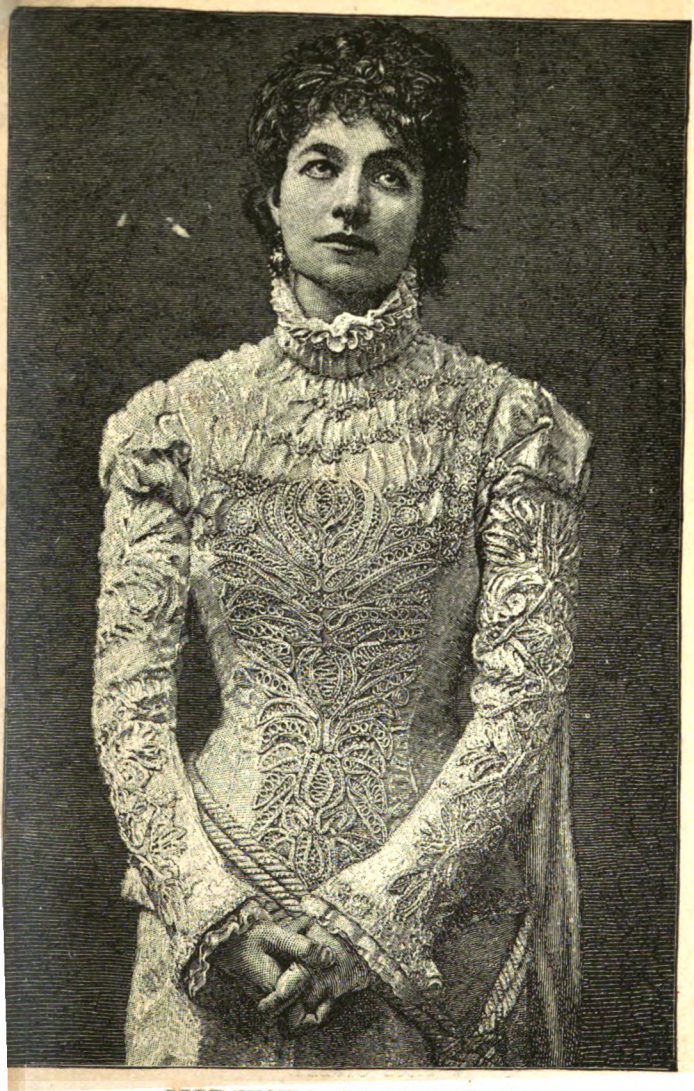


MODJESKA AS "JULIET."

HELENA MODJESKA

BY

JAMESON TORR ALTEMUS

With Illustrations

NEW YORK
J. S. OGILVIE AND COMPANY
31 ROSE STREET.

TO

MY FRIEND

Henry Clay Lukens,

THIS VOLUME

IS

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

There are four sisters, known to mortals well,
Whose names are Joy and Sorrow, Death and Love:
This last it was who did my footsteps move
To where the other deep-eyed sisters dwell.
To-night, or ere yon painted curtain fell,
These, one by one, before my eyes did rove
Through the brave mimic world that Shakespere wove.
Lady! thy art, thy passion were the spell
That held me, and still holds; for thou dost show,
With those most high each in his sovereign art,—
Shakespere supreme, Beethoven and Angelo,—
Great art and passion are one. Thine too the part,
To prove that still for him the laurels grow
Who reaches through the mind to pluck the heart.

R. W. Gilder.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Introductory.	13
Helena Benda's Childhood	19
Studying Shakespeare	29
First Appearance in Bochnia	40
Debut in Cracow	52
Count Charles Bozenta Chlapowski	60
First Appearance as "Adrienne Lecouvreur" . .	69
First Appearance in America	82
Return to Poland and Debut in London . . .	93
Return to America and closing performance at Booth's Theatre, New York.	108
Modjeska's "Juliet"	123
Modjeska's "Marie Stuart".	137
Modjeska's "Adrienne Lecouvreur" . . .	145
Modjeska's "Odette"	151
Modjeska's "Camille"	165
Modjeska's "Frou-Frou"	173
Modjeska in New York	181
Modjeska in London	195
Success on the Stage	207

INTRODUCTORY.

GEORGE HENRY LEWES, in his work "On Actors and the Art of Acting," speaks of Rachael as the panther of the stage, who represented scorn, triumph, rage, lust and merciless malignity in symbols of irresistible power; but who had little tenderness, no womanly caressing softness, no gayety, no heartiness; although at the same time she was so graceful and so powerful that her air of dignity was incomparable. Ristori, too, was, in the minds of many critics, the greatest actress the theatrical world has ever known; while Neilson

also enjoyed a large share of the laurels awarded to the great of histrionic fame.

But within the past few years a greater star than any of these has arisen in Madame Helena Modjeska, the Countess Bozenta. The critics of Europe and America, the Schelegels of to-day, who enjoy the reputation of being both unbiased and severe, have all pronounced her as being the first tragic actress on the stage.

In studying Madame Modjeska's acting, we find that she follows Ristori in her style; that is as far as her own genius will allow her to follow any one. In every part she aims at originality, and has a deep sympathetic feeling for the character. Rachael worked up her scenes with mathematical preciseness, until they became a vigorous denunciation of her enemy. They were grand and magnificent pieces of elocution, but they lacked that soul-stirring power, which is noticeable in Madame Modjeska's acting and which works on her audience in

such a manner that they are held spell-bound, as it were, with fascination for the characters which she portrays.

To recognise genius is a genuine pleasure, and to appreciate its power is to feel inspiration. When it flashes and illuminates there is a revelation that brings the vast possibilities of the human brain to the consciousness of those who see and feel. Madame Modjeska is a woman of genius, who has ripened by study until she has become a master of the parts she assumes. With elements of reason, definite, absolute and emphatic; with principles settled, strenuous, deep and unchangeable as her being; her wisdom is exquisitely practicable; with subtlist sagacity it apprehends every change in the circumstances in which it is to act, and can accommodate its action without loss of vigor or alteration of its general purpose. Its theories always "lean and hearken" to the actual. By a sympathy of the mind almost transcendental in its delicacy, its spe-

culations are attracted into a parallelism with the logic of life and nature. Her perceptions, feelings, tone, are always up to the level of the hour.

While at the Imperial Theatre at Warsaw, the fineness of her acting came like a revelation of dramatic art to those who were her auditors. She worked hard for the building-up of the drama in Poland, and on its stage she introduced the highest dramatists of other countries — Shakespeare, Goethe, Schiller, and the classics of the French and Italian stage. She became the adored actress of her country, stimulating its intellect and influencing its enthusiastic youth. In private her influence was as strong as in public. Her salons in Warsaw and Cracow, her country seat at Zakapani, were the rendezvous of the patriots, artists and illustrious men and women of Poland.

The intellectuality of the artiste is crowned by the simplicity of a pure womanhood. It is a pleasure greater than words can express

to find art so free from meretriciousness, and genius so self-poised and assured as not to fall beneath its own ideal. Madame Modjeska's success in this country is for more reasons than one, a tribute to the appreciative instincts of American play-goers. The fascination of the actress evokes a quick enthusiasm, growing and deepening as we better realize the strength and delicacy of the art, which, while it stands apart in its originality, never loses itself in eccentricity or straining itself in wild effort to o'erstep the modesty of nature. It would be presumption on my part, after the verdict of so many older and more experienced critics, to attempt to criticise or analyze the method of Madame Modjeska's art. Her acting is more ideal and therefore more real than that of any actress on the stage to-day, and it is this which gives a finish and distinctness to each of her creations.

Madame Modjeska's career has been such a remarkable and, in some instances, roman-

tic one, that I have been induced to write the record of her life for the benefit of her many admirers.

This will be the initial volume of a series of similar biographies of the noted men and women on the stage to-day, as well as those who delighted thousands of auditors in the past. If these prove a success, a more extensive work on the history of the stage may follow. Such a work is needed greatly by those who are supporters and admirers of the drama, as well as by the members of the theatrical profession. I now give this little volume to the public, hoping that it may be well received, and that it may prove interesting to those who may read it.

HELENA MODJESKA.

CHAPTER I.

"Ambition was an idol on whose wings,
Great minds are carried only to extreme—
To be sublimely great, or to be nothing."

CRACOW, the second city of Galicia or Austrian Poland, though very quietly situated in a plain surrounded by hills and on the left bank of the Vistula, has had a remarkable existence ever since it was founded, during the earlier part of the tenth century; and through the patriotism of its inhabitants it remained a free town long after the people of Poland had allowed their independence to be taken from them. It was destroyed several times during the uprisings

of its citizens; but by energy and enterprise it was speedily rebuilt each time. In 1320 it became the capital of Poland instead of Gnesen. In 1039 it was captured by the Bohemians; in 1241 by the Tartans; in 1655 by the Swedes under Charles X.; in 1702 by Charles XII.; and in 1768, after having supported the cause of the confederation of Bar, by the Russians. After the fall of Kosciusko, who made Cracow the starting point of his revolution, it was on the partition of Poland taken by Austria. In 1809 it was annexed to the duchy of Warsaw, which was created by Napoleon.

At the opening of 1830, the people of Poland commenced to grow discontented, and from this year up to 1846, the country was in a state of revolution. It was during this period of political excitement, the horrors of war, and the desolation of homes, in 1844, that Helena Benda was born. The misery and horror of this period was vividly painted on her memory, and with infant eyes she saw

her countrymen murdered outside of the door of her own home, and in her ears she heard the heart-rending shrieks and moans of the widowed, orphaned and oppressed. Being a witness of such scenes of cruel injustice, naturally the fire of patriotism was kindled in her veins, and in after life she became an enthusiastic lover of her country with a passionate personal affection.

Hundreds of stories could be written about the scenes witnessed by Helena Benda, but it is not my purpose to give any harrowing details, no matter how romantic they may be.

Helena Benda was the child of Michael Opid and Madame Benda, who had some children by her first husband. Michael Opid was born among the mountains, his people all being mountaineers and descendants of an old and respected family. He was a man of scholarly and artistic tastes, devoted much of his time to the study of Latin and Greek, was a patron and devotee to music and the

drama, a great admirer of art, and became an eminent philologist before his death. Singers, musicians, actors, artists and literateures, frequented his home, and from childhood Helena was surrounded with everything that would tend to cultivate in her the artistic taste. Her father gave her the name of Helena because her head was small and well formed. As a child she went by the name of Helicia, the Polish diminutive of Helena.

Michael Opid was the first to discover his daughter's intense interest for music and the drama, and he devoted much time and attention to her education and teaching her Latin and Greek, so that when still quite young she became proficient and thoroughly conversant with these literatures. Madame Modjeska speaks of the pleasure she derived from reading the Iliad and Odyssey of Homer, and often refers to the profound impression they left on her memory.

Michael Opid took a heavy cold while attending at the sick bed of a friend; and

this, together with grieving about the death of his brother, who committed suicide, brought on consumption. Hoping to recuperate his health he went to his early home in the mountains, attended by one of his sons, his wife not being able to accompany him with so many children dependent on her care. Soon after his arrival at his destination he died, after being confined to his bed for a few days. His nature was generous and affectionate, and his love for his family was unceasing.

When Helena was seven years old she was taken for the first time to the opera. This excited her sensitive nature so much that it was thought best not to take her any more, nor did she enter a theatre again until she was fourteen. The impression of this first visit to the theatre took such a strong hold on her mind that she amused herself continually by imitating the performers.

The Polish people attempted to rise about this time, and were led by Mieroslawski.

This revolution was unsuccessful, and was speedily put down. The peasants next rose against their nobles in Galicia, and the republic of Cracow was destroyed by fire. Madame Opid lost all her property, and she and her children narrowly escaped with their lives. Helena and her little sister fled by themselves, and while the two children ran hand-in-hand out of the city, they narrowly escaped being crushed to death beneath the feet of frantic horses and the terrified crowd. They came to the bank of a small stream, and the youngest fell in. Helena cried loudly for assistance, but every one was too much wrapped up in thinking of their own safety, and the distress of the children was not noticed. By considerable effort the little heroine succeeded in rescuing her little sister alone, and carried her, more dead than alive, to where the other members of the family had taken refuge. The suffering of the unfortunates was intense, and for days the people slept in barns,

cellars, or any place where they could find shelter. Penniless, and almost clotheless, they wandered about from place to place with hardly enough to eat. Thus, too early, Helena was brought face to face with misery and the misfortune of poverty, which only the poor know.

When the political disturbances had quieted down, Madame Opid took a house in Cracow, and the whole family had to resort to every expedient to earn money. The youngest son, who was fourteen, went to work as a common carpenter. He displayed great talent for drawing, obtained an excellent position, studied hard and became a professor of architecture. An elder brother, Josef Benda, who was married, was left a widower with one child, which he gave in charge of his mother, and then went upon the stage. Helena took care of her little niece, lavishing on her much care and attention, and at the same time went to a convent

every day to school, where she was taught by some charitable nuns.

Josef Benda's name soon became known in the different Polish towns as a clever comedian and writer of plays. Helena found much to occupy her spare time in reading every book she came across, as well as copying her brother's theatrical plays. Her other brother, Felix Benda, adopted the profession about this time, and became one of the most popular actors in Poland. At home the children had a theatre of their own, where they amused themselves in performing Greek plays, which were written by the brothers. At fourteen Helena, together with her brothers, wrote a play which was performed on the family stage. It portrayed the Greek revolution, and was full of tragedy and emotion. In the performance of her part, Helena became so excited that her mother was compelled to interfere, and this put an end to the home theatricals. It is said that at this performance her acting

was so full of feeling and pathos, that every one in the small audience was moved to tears.

Her mother, fearing that her health would be injured, would not allow her to witness any plays except those in German, supposing that they would not interest the imaginative child. But it is seen how great was that careful mother's mistake. Helena now took a great interest in the German drama, in fact the effect was so great, that she commenced the study of German, and by the aid of a dictionary she read Schiller's plays, sitting up whole nights in doing so. She became infatuated with the author and fairly worshipped him. With money that she had saved from her earnings she bought a bust of Schiller and placed it in her room. While she worked at helping her mother sew, her thoughts were far away, thinking of some romance or poetic idea, often composing poetry and entertaining herself alone by reciting selections from the works of the

great authors, whom she considered her warmest and dearest friends. Her ambitions were awakened, and her whole desire at this period was to do something great. Still she had to work hard, and at times she would become so depressed with thinking of her trials and privations, that she would wander out into the country alone, find some secluded spot to rest, and then build castles in the air and dream of some splendid career surrounded by honors. She yearned for an opportunity to show itself, so that she might display the courage of a Joan of Arc. She felt that she ought to write and become illustrious as an authoress, and while in these moods, her old phantom, the stage, would loom up before her, and she dreamed of the footlights, and a sea of up-turned faces, breathless with wonder at the words she uttered.

CHAPTER II.

"While o'er my limbs sleep's soft dominion spread,
What though my soul fantastic measures trod
O'er fairy fields; or mourned along the gloom
Of pathless woods; or down the craggy steep
Hurled headlong, swims with pain the mantled pool;
Or scaled the cliff, or danced on hollow winds,
With antic shapes wild natives of the brain?
Her ceaseless flight, though devious, speaks her nature,
Of subtler essence than the trodden clod;—
Of human weal, heaven husbands all events,
Dull sleep instructs, nor sport vain dreams in vain."

—*Young*.

THE yearning for something higher and better in life took such a strong hold on the mind of the sensitive girl, that her desires followed her night and day, so that they became as a phantom, which she found impossible to get rid of. Something within her seemed

to be continually saying that her station in life would be high, and that she would be successful. When she spoke to any one about her ambition to go on the stage, she was laughed at, and even in her own family her powers were not considered sufficient to warrant any of her brothers paying much attention to their development. This derision only made her the more determined to overcome all obstacles, and to show those around her that she had ability. At times she wished for the solitude of the convent; and once, when she was greatly disappointed, she thought of becoming a nun. Her day dreams were a source of pleasure to her, and even while working she would become listless to everything around her and her thoughts would wander into the future. This inattention would make her mother very angry at times, so that she would exclaim:

"Helena is so lazy, that it is impossible to get her to do anything right about the house.

She is continually reading, and has no thoughts except for her books."

But these books were cultivating her mind and fitting her for the position she was to occupy in after life. Hers was not the mere desire to be considered a great actress; "she had none of that girlish vanity which would sacrifice art at the shrine of folly." Even at this age she saw many crudities in the performances at the theatres around her, and she yearned for the time to come when she could be able to place before the people of her country plays that would be instructive, and in which the character would appear true to life.

To the troubled spirit of the girl the theatre seemed like a heaven and the people on the stage like gods, worthy to be worshipped with veneration. Up to this time she had never witnessed the performances of any of Shakespeare's plays, and when it fell to her good fortune to see Hamlet, the whole color of her life was changed. Fritz

Devrient, nephew of the great Emile Devrient, rendered the lines of the melancholy prince. He was well suited for the part, as his face naturally wore a serious expression, and was somewhat womanish in its outlines. His build was medium stout; his hair long and fair, and in fact his whole make was all that could be desired, being a true portraiture of the Shakespearean character. Devrient had great talent, and had he not been so careless he might have obtained as illustrious a position as his great uncle. Helena now became enthusiastic over the works of the English bard. She placed her Schiller and Goethe aside, procured an old Polish translation of Shakespeare from her brother's library, read the play of Hamlet, and then copied it carefully so that she might better appreciate the lines and also commit them to memory. As she had done previously with her beloved author, Schiller, she saved her money, bought a bust of her new idol, and sat up at night studying his plays until

near daylight. Even then she would be loth to lay the volume aside for a few hours' rest.

Madame Modjeska has always been a firm believer in dreams, not from any superstition, but she has had so many curious and indefinable warnings in her life-time of events that happened, that she cannot help but believe in their being harbingers of good and evil. Soon after she witnessed Devrient's performance, she had a vivid dream, in which she thought that she was climbing a high tower. Above she saw beckoning to her the man whom she adored secretly, because he was the greatest actor in Poland. It seemed that she experienced many difficulties in reaching him, but when she stood by his side, she exclaimed triumphantly:

"Why! it is quite easy—I will go on higher."

She then turned and left him far behind. In after years, when she had gone on the stage, she met this actor and related to him

her dream. He listened attentively to what she was saying, and then answered:

"It is very likely that you will come up to me, and then you will leave me far behind."

"No," she said, "that is impossible; I can never hope to be as great as you."

And still this prophesy came true: she reached the level of her hero, and became greater and more beloved by her countrymen, than any actor or actress that Poland has known.

The great, in youth, always have many sad trials to contend with, and every one seems to have a desire to throw obstacles in their road. Notwithstanding the derision of Helena's brothers and the constant admonition of her mother, who assured her that she was constitutionally unfit for the life of an actress, and that the excitement would kill her, she persisted in her studies in secret, recited to imaginary audiences, and declared her determination to become a *tragédienne*. She

used every devise to get upon the stage. Her brother, Felix Benda, who was gaining considerable notoriety, she thought ought to help her. Helena persisted in her appeals to him, and finally she became so importunate, that he yielded to her entreaties, and agreed to take her to see an actress of great experience, and get her opinion in regard to her talent. Helena went full of hope and fear. She felt as if she was going before a great judge to be tried for some crime of which she was innocent, and she trembled in anticipation of what the verdict might be. She found the actress busy embroidering, and thinking more of her work than of the young girl before her. The first opinion she expressed was:

"To begin with, you are too young."

"But," said Helena, "I shall grow older."

"True," answered the other, with a smile on her face, "but you do not know what a difficult profession it is, which you desire to embrace. It is impossible to get on without

great talent. Do you feel that you have talent?"

This question was a staggering one. For some minutes Helena was silent, but she had the courage of her convictions, and she answered in a firm and decisive manner:

"Yes, I do."

"Indeed!" was the sarcastic reply. "If you are brave enough to think that you have talent, show it to me. Let me hear you recite something."

Helena called up all her courage in a romantic impassioned poem, full of sentiment and patriotism. When she had finished, her auditor remained silent, and bent attentively over her work. The silence became painful, and Helena coughed slightly, to indicate that she was still present. The actress looked up.

"Ah, well," she said, "I don't think you will do for the drama. Have you any voice for singing? You have? Then sing me something."

This actress had made her success in

character parts, and Helena thought that she would please her by singing one of her songs. She sang in a low voice, and began to imitate the acting of the woman before her, and the result was a sort of caricature. This displeased the actress somewhat, and she interrupted the singing.

"I think you will be a comedy actress. Come again next week, and I will see what I can do for you."

Helena went home feeling that she had made some headway, and waited anxiously for the day to come, when she was to see the actress again. At last the day arrived, and she went to see her severe critic. She was given a piece to learn, about a girl who has never seen a man, and when she sees one at last, takes him for a bird. The absurdity of the piece made her laugh so, that she could not deliver her lines with any earnestness, and this made the actress very angry.

"Oh," she said, "if you are not serious, I can do nothing for you."

The result was that Helena went home depressed and discouraged. She was about to give up all idea of ever being anything, when an event occurred, which might have given another direction to her artistic tastes. While visiting at the house of a friend one afternoon, she met Mirecki, an eminent Polish composer, who was the director of the Musical Institution at Cracow. He was teaching his pupil a difficult passage, which she found it impossible to accomplish. He left the room discouraged, and when he was gone, Helena stepped to the piano, and sang the passage correctly, in a full and clear voice. Mirecki heard her across the street, and ran back into the house, demanding:

"Who was that singing?"

When Mirecki found out who it was, he was very enthusiastic, and he proposed to Madame Opid that she should allow him to undertake Helena's musical education. Three months after this he died, and Helena went back to her housekeeping and her dreams.

From childhood up she had been given to understand that she was to become the wife of her guardian, an old friend of the family, and a man very much older than herself. When she became seventeen she consented to take the name which she has since made famous. The original spelling of the name is Modezejewska, and after Helena went upon the American stage, she abbreviated it. Her husband was in the employ of the Government at Cracow, but soon after his marriage he lost his position, and Madame Modjeska was brought face to face with greater sorrows than she had ever experienced before. She lived in the same house with her mother, and found much in the household affairs to occupy her thoughts and keep them from dwelling on her troubles.

CHAPTER III.

"Ah! who can tell how hard it is to climb
The steps where fame's proud temple shines afar;
Ah! who can tell how many a soul sublime,
Has felt the influence of malignant star,
And waged with fortune an eternal war!"

—*Beattie.*

MADAME MODJESKA now commenced the study of German, under an actor named Axtman. Her husband saw that she had talent, and was anxious for her to go upon the German stage, because he thought there was no scope for her in Poland. Axtman taught his pupil two parts, and he found her very diligent, and determined to learn. At times, when she saw difficulties staring her in the face,

she would stamp her foot excitedly, and exclaim:

"I will be celebrated—I will be celebrated!"

Axtman, who had seen a great deal of poverty, and who was familiar with an actor's precarious existence, would look long and earnestly at the ambitious girl, and then answer, with a sigh:

"Ah! that is not so easy—that is not so easy!"

He took great pride in his pupil, and worked hard to develope her talents. Unfortunately for Madame Modjeska, her kind tutor was called away from Cracow to fill an engagement, and she never saw him afterwards. When Axtman left she laid her books aside, and once more gave up all hope of ever going on the stage.

In March, 1862, Madame Modjeska gave birth to her first and only surviving child, Rudolph Modjeska. Three months afterwards, she and her husband left Cracow, and

took up their residence at a small provincial town named Bochnia.

Shortly after their arrival at Bochnia, an amateur theatrical company was organized for the purpose of giving performances for the benefit of the poor. At the first night's performance there were three pieces put on, the first of which was "Le Camélia Blanc," with Madame Modjeska as the countess. In the next she assumed the character of an Italian peasant, and in the third she played the part of a thievish maid-servant with such brilliancy that she was loudly applauded by every one present. The first evening's performance was an immense success, and every one went away surprised and delighted at the young actress.

The second performance was largely attended, and the crowd was so great at the third, that the hall was not large enough to hold it. Madame Modjeska was the talk of the town, and every one was advising her to continue the performances and go on the stage. After

considerable trouble Madame Modjeska's husband procured a license, organized a company and constituted himself manager. The company was made up of Madame Modjeska, her sister, a semi-professional actor, his mother and sister, an amateur actor, and a prompter. They were to work the company on shares and travel through the principal towns. They first engaged a theatre for three months at a small town twelve miles from Bochnia. They travelled in a cart, and created quite a sensation among the peasantry. They found that at their new home they would be compelled to practice the utmost economy to make both ends meet. They all lived at one house, and at times they had to devise some very curious means to find costumes, owing to the fact that their wardrobe was very scanty. But notwithstanding the many privations of this sort of Bohemian life, Madame Modjeska was happy; she had at last been able to carry out her pet plan and go upon the stage.

Many amusing and laughable incidents happened to this little band of players during the earlier days of their organization.

The engagement at Sonez was a successful one, and at the end of three months the company numbered twenty-one, and was fairly supplied with scenery and costumes.

The troupe was thoroughly organized and they started out on a trip through the provincial towns, notwithstanding the unpromising outlook and unsettled condition of the people, who were greatly excited over the cruelty of the Russian government. Their performances were interrupted night after night by some terrible account of the crimes committed in Warsaw, and one could hardly walk along the streets wthout being a witness to some outrage. The whole country was in a state of mourning. The company grew larger and larger and met with success wherever they went. They engaged a leading lady to do the tragic business, and although Madame Modjeska aspired to such

parts herself, she found her voice was not strong enough, and was sensible enough to refrain from playing anything except light comedy. She sang and danced exquisitely, and was a great favorite with the audience, as well as being the life and soul of the company. All of her time off the stage was taken up with the study of tragical parts, and the developement of the lower tones of her voice. She persisted patiently in her work until she had full command over a naturally weak instrument, which had a tendency to become shrill and harsh.

While they were travelling from place to place Madame Modjeska gave birth to another child, a girl, that only lived two years. She was very ill, owing to her having overtaxed her strength, and she was not expected to live. As soon as she began to grow stronger, she would insist upon going down to the theatre and playing her part, and the result was that she fainted after every performance. Her husband desired her to

remain at home, but she saw that her non-appearance at the theatre would result in small audiences, and kept up the strain, knowing all the time that she was ruining her health. The stage was her home, and she was not happy unless she was working in the glare of the footlights and listening to the applause of the audiences. Madame Modjeska had her mother with her now, and she gave her the charge of her son, who had grown to be a bright and interesting child.

The company had been on the road a year when one day Madame Modjeska received a visit from a leading manager at Lemberg, who made her a very flattering offer, which she accepted. Lemberg was a University town, and the audiences were principally made up of students, who were very critical and easily provoked at bad acting. Here it was that Madame Modjeska considers that she learned some of the most valuable lessons. A very curious mode of criticism was indulged in by the frequenters of the gallery. Each person

was given, on entering, a large metal ticket, on one side of which was pasted a blank piece of paper. On this blank, criticisms of the acting was written, and the check was given up on going out. In the morning the members of the company would congregate in the office and read what their censors had written. The morning after Madame Modjeska's début in operetta she found written on one of the tickets this warning:

"Will Madame Modjeska please not to sing, or if she will sing, not to sing so out of tune as she did to-night; because, if she does, next time we shall hiss."

On another occasion she found a note which ran:

"Please, Madame Modjeska, will you kindly take the trouble to pronounce well the ends of your sentences; as you speak them the effect is as if we were deaf, and I am sure we are not."

These suggestions were taken in good part and she tried to remedy the defect by

following out the advice of her gallery critics. They noticed this and were pleased, and where other actors and actresses had incurred their disfavor, by disregarding their criticisms, Madame Modjeska became their favorite and was always received with applause. This created a great deal of jealousy among the other members of the company, and Madame Modjeska's life was by no means a happy one. Then again, the manager had promised to give her leading roles when she made her contract, but after she had been with him some time, he seemed to forget all about his promises, and kept her in parts for which she was entirely unsuited. Finally, she found that there was no happiness for her in such an existence, and so she and her husband concluded to leave the theatre, organize another company and go back to the provinces.

The new company was made up of Madame Modjeska and her husband, who became the manager; her sister and her husband;

Felix Benda, Josef Benda, Rapacki, Hennig, and a number of others. When they started out they were compelled to resort to every kind of expedient to obtain properties and costumes, as they had very little capital except their talents. By degrees their condition became very much improved, and they obtained an excellent reputation wherever they performed. A number of the members of this troupe in after years occupied leading positions on the Polish stage, and became known as the greatest actors that Poland has ever known.

Getting tired of this strolling Bohemian existence, Madame Modjeska and her husband, in 1863, leased a theatre at Czerniowce, the capital of Bukowina, with the determination of settling in a quiet home of their own. It was here that she made her first appearance in tragedy, playing in "Marie Stuart," and creating a favorable impression among the German critics who were acting as correspondents at Czerniowce at that time.

This year was a year of terror to the inhabitants of Poland. The political movement which had been growing for two years, culminated in an insurrection, and there was enacted once more in the streets of Warsaw a fearful drama of carnage and bloodshed. All the towns were overrun with insurgents, and the theatres were naturally packed with the patriots, who came to listen to the inspiring words of the patriotic Polish authors. On such occasions were produced the comedies by Fredro, the Molière of Polish literature and the dramas by Slowacki, who patterned after Shakespeare in his style. The actors were enthusiastic, and would sing patriotic songs for the purpose of encouraging the young soldiers who were about to lay down their lives for their country.

In 1865 Madame Modjeska's husband died, and she, accompanied by her mother and brothers, left Czerniowce for her old home in Cracow. Felix Benda succeeded in procuring an engagement at the theatre, and

the family went to live with the youngest brother, who had married a very estimable lady.

After Madame Modjeska had regained her health, she accepted an offer and went to perform at the theatre where her brother was playing. This theatre had entered upon a new lease of life, and was patronized by the Austrian Emperor, who helped the management by liberal donations.

CHAPTER IV.

"Ah, friends, the ideal Bohemia
Is close to Utopia, I fear;
You cannot find people to deem you
As good as you want to appear.
The world is a vast panorama—
But best of spectators ne'er hints,
That to pen and to brush and to drama,
They owe its best tints."—*Geo. H. Jessop.*

IT was the aim of the friends of the Cracow theatre to make its stage the equal, if not the superior, of that of Warsaw. No pains nor expense were spared to accomplish this end. At Warsaw the Russian authorities had placed a kind of censorship over the theatre, and the production of plays was limited to those that had no bearing upon Russian politics. This

created a great deal of dissatisfaction, not only with the management but with the people in general. The Cracow stage was free from this petty tyranny and was thus able to bring out the best of the productions of the leading Polish playwrights. Count Skorupka was given the management, and he selected for his assistants M. Stanislas Kozmian and M. Jasinski, who had been the stage managers of the Warsaw stage for a number of years.

When Madame Modjeska went to M. Jasinski to procure her engagement, he was pleased with her style, notwithstanding the fact that she was deficient in many points. He saw that she was energetic and ambitious, and that by careful study she could soon make up what she lacked. The part of "Sara," in Szymanowski's play of "Saloman," was selected for her debut. The night that she made her appearance, every one was astonished with the force which she put in her acting, and even Jasinski, who

was known to be a harsh master, was lost in amazement, and he complimented her for the rapidity with which she had been able to grasp his method.

When she came behind the wings after the first act, Jasinski took her by the hand and said:

"It is well done—very well, my child! There are only a few words you must deliver differently, and then you will be perfect! Now you will play tragedy. But you must also agree to play comedy, because we have very few leading ladies."

It was Madame Modjeska's desire to make her debut in the part of a singing page, but this was prevented by the management, who saw that she would do better in tragedy. She imagined that she was not yet able to produce those great effects, which make tragedy soul-stirring and inspiring. It was not long after this that Jasinski left the theatre and she was left alone to work out her own characters. She studied with a will,

and was at last able to approach what she considered an ideal standard of acting, and to cope with parts which she had thought she would be unable to produce. Her first important character was that of the Princess "Eboli," in "Don Carlos." In this she made a hit and delighted the management as well as her numerous friends and admirers. She next took up the study of Shakespeare, and created a sensation as "Ophelia." She played in the "Merchant of Venice," "Much Ado about Nothing," and Victor Hugo's "Le Roi S' Amuse."

Madame Modjeska was an enthusiastic advocate of historical accuracy, and from girlhood she had cherished the desire that if ever she became great on the stage of her country, she would aim to have the plays put on as the authors had intended. In her earlier days, the actors had no conception of what the costumes or scenery should be, and if they had, they were afraid to assert their opinions, lest they should run the risk of in-

curring the disfavor of the management, which was autocratic, as well as dictatorial. Madame Modjeska wanted to change this absurd state of affairs, and now that she had become popular, she set about carrying out her long thought of plans. She met with opposition on every side, and was compelled to submit to the slurs and sarcastic remarks of a large number of her companions, who considered her plans foolish and eccentric, and not worthy of consideration. But she had a number of friends at the theatre who set about to help her in carrying out her designs. M. Rapacki, M. Ladnowski and her brother Felix Benda, formed a coterie to consult with professors in regard to costumes and to study the different points of architecture and art. The result was that they were at last able to produce the Shakesperean plays with some show of correctness.

The experiment was a success, and met with the hearty approval of the public. Thus they at last received their reward for

their unremitting toil in behalf of improvement. This was the beginning of a new era in the history of the drama in Poland, and it was all due to Madame Modjeska's energy and indomitable will that this important change was brought about. She carefully considered every trivial detail of enunciation, gesture, pose and costume, until every character in a play became true to life, and stood out before the spectators like a magnificent painting.

The Warsaw papers noticed her acting and published long critical articles on the changes which she had been instrumental in bringing about. All her spare time she devoted to the study of literature, and she spent hours at the University library, in reading works upon the history of the drama. She met a kind friend in the librarian, Dr. Charles Estreicher, a member of the Academy, who helped her in making selections, as well as giving her advice.

The season ended in June, 1866. The

company was sent from the theatre at Cracow to Posen, the capital of Prussian Poland. Madame Modjeska's mother accompanied her on this trip, and was able to witness again her daughter's unprecedented success. In this company there was no under-studying of parts, and if any one was taken sick, the play was either postponed, or some one read the part. Shortly after the arrival of the company at Posen, one of the actresses fell ill, and the management was about to postpone the performance, when Madame Modjeska volunteered to study the part and play that evening. Every one considered that it would be impossible for her to memorize the lines, as she only had two hours to study in. She accomplished her task, and was thus able to prevent a catastrophe, for the audience was one that would not put up with a change in the performance.

That evening, while on the stage, she saw in one of the boxes a gentleman, who gazed at her intently, and who seemed to be great-

ly interested in her acting. She made inquiries among the people of the stage, and was informed that his name was M. Chlapowski. When she retired to her green-room, M. Chlapowski sent in his card, and was granted an interview. Thus was commenced a friendship which ripened into love, and finally culminated in marriage.

CHAPTER V.

"Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near,
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they crossed themselves with fear,
All the knights of Camelot.

But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said: She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace;
The lady of Shallot.—*Tennyson.*"

IT is always interesting to know something about those who are closely connected with the great in history or art. The career of Count Charles Bozenta-Chlapowski is so closely allied with everything that relates to the success of his wife, Madame Modjeska, that it is due to that gentleman that I should not pass by his name, without giving

to the reader some of the important events in his life. He is a descendant of an old and noble Polish family, which traces back its pedigree to a remote period, and which counts among its ancestors some of the most noted men in Polish and French history. The Chlapowskis have always been strongly attached to the Catholic Church, and are noted for their patriotism in defending the rights of their country. An uncle of Madame Modjeska's husband was a noted general in the service of the great Napoleon, and was a great favorite among all the officers, for his chivalry and undaunted bravery. At the age of twenty-three he became a colonel, and later on was distinguished by the award of a number of other titles in the French service. After the campaign against Russia, he left the French army, as soon as Napoleon had given up his idea of re-establishing Poland's independence. In the years 1830–31, he was a leader in the Polish insurrection against Russia, notwithstanding the fact that

he was married to Princess Lowiez, who was the sister of the wife of Grand Duke Constantine, the brother of the Czar, and Viceroy of Poland. His patriotic impulses led him to side with the people, whose cause he considered a right and just one.

He had command of the troops in Lithuania, and his campaign is considered one of the most brilliant in the history of Poland. For several years he was an exile, and suffered greatly from imprisonment. He became a member of the Russian House of Lords, as did also his brother, the father of the present Count. M. Charles Chlapowski, at the time he made the acquaintance of Madame Modjeska, was a dramatic critic and political writer on one of the largest papers in Poland, as well as an ardent politician. In the insurrection of 1863 he was attached to the personal staff of Dictator Langeiwiez, was wounded several times during the campaign, and suffered twenty months in a Prussian prison, being accused of high treason. When

he gained his liberty he went to Posen and took the position as dramatic critic on one of its papers. He was well posted in French and English literature, and after he became acquainted with Madame Modjeska, she allowed him to select books for her perusal. It was during this period that Madame Modjeska first read "Romeo and Juliet," and she became so fascinated with the characters, that she determined to study the role of Juliet and play it at her benefit.

She communicated her desire to the manager of the theatre, and he laughed at her, claiming that she was unsuited for the role, and prophesying a total failure. He gave his consent, though, when he found that she expected no new costumes, and did not ask for new scenery. Her cousin agreed to take the part of Romeo; and together they would go out into the country early in the morning, and amid the songs of birds, and the sweet perfume of flowers, they rehearsed under the shade of the trees, receiving inspiration from

all the surrounding beauties of nature. Her friend, M. Charles Chlapowski, rendered her much valuable assistance, and when the day came for her benefit he was in a box anxiously awaiting the curtain to rise. He had faith in her abilities and knew that the play would be a success.

It was with deep emotion that she portrayed the character of Juliet. She rendered the lines with such mystic force and decision, that the simplicity and loveliness of the part stood out so prominently that the spectators were not aware at first of its complexity, depth and variety. There was in it an intensity of passion, a singleness of purpose, an entireness, a completeness of effect, which held every one spell-bound. "To attempt to analyze the impression thus conveyed at once to soul and sense, is as if, while hanging over a full-blown rose, and revelling in its intoxicating perfume, we should pull it asunder, leaflet by leaflet, the better to display its bloom and fragrance."

Never was Madame Modjeska more inspired than upon this occasion; it seemed to her as if she was truly Juliet, and that the words she was rendering, were the expressions of the passion that was pent-up within her breast. From this time forth Juliet became her favorite role, and her ambition was to make the part a portion of her life, and to act it as it had never been acted before. The audience went away well pleased, and, notwithstanding the prophesy of the manager, the play was a success.

After her benefit Madame Modjeska determined to take a vacation, and rest from her arduous labors. She and her mother went to Paris, and there she was delighted with the acting of Madame Favart, Mademoiselle Delaporte, Bressant and Got. She visited the Théâtre Francais, Vaudeville, Odéon, Gymnase, and the two Operas, and learned a great deal about dramatic art, that heretofore she had not the least conception of. She saw that there was nothing constrained

about the French artists, and that they aimed at simplicity and naturalness. She returned to Cracow greatly improved in health, and set to work to remedy the faults, which she now saw in her style.

About this time the attention of Dumas fils, was attracted to Madame Modjeska, by the appearance in *L'Artiste* of a portrait of her, accompanied by a lengthy criticism on her acting. He wrote her a letter inviting her to come to Paris, and offering her an engagement to play in "La Dame aux Camélias." The offer was a tempting one; but after a great deal of thought and consideration, she refused it on account of the expense she would be under in buying a wardrobe, and her being compelled to break up her home, which was a pleasant and happy one.

In 1868 she received an excellent offer from the stage manager at Warsaw, to go as leading lady at the Imperial theatres. She accepted the offer after she returned from a

camping excursion in the Carpathian Mountains with some of her friends, and commenced to make preparations for her journey. Three weeks after the signing of her contract, she was married, and she and her husband started for Warsaw.

This marriage made her a member of the Polish aristocracy, a position which very few actresses had ever attained. She was received by her husband's relatives, who were attracted to her by her simplicity of manners, her talents and great genius. She soon became a leader in Polish society, and her salon was crowded with those noted in literature, politics and art. Although she possessed the title of Countess Chlapowski, she preferred to be called by her *nom de théâtre*, a name which she had made famous from one end of her country to the other.

It is singular how in many instances Madame Modjeska's career corresponds with that of George Sand's great heroine, Consuelo. Like her, an angel of inspiration

seemed to watch over everything that Madame Modjeska did, and when failures stared her in the face, she seemed to be exalted to the highest pitch, transported as it were to a loftier sphere, and acted with such energy and passion, that her audiences, as well as herself, were astonished at her capacity.

CHAPTER VI.

"Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous, confirmation strong
As proofs of Holy writ."—*Shakespeare.*

AT the Warsaw theatre there was a coterie of actors and actresses, who were very jealous of any one who pretended to assume any of the parts which they had made a specialty of; and the life of a debutant was made a burden by their avowed enmity. It was impossible for the manager to attempt to control their actions, for nearly every one had some influential person behind him.

When Madame Modjeska came to Warsaw she was looked upon with suspicion, and this clique set to work to make her debut a fail-

ure. The manager desired her to appear as Ophelia in Hamlet, but when he made the proposition to the company, he was met with objections on every side; some claiming that they were unprepared to play in tragedy, while others said that they had no wardrobe. They finally agreed to act in a burlesque, because they imagined that Madame Modjeska would not be able to cope with the part. At the rehearsal she acted so well that every one was astonished. This would never do. The play must not be permitted to be put on. They must find some plan to break up the idea of allowing her to appear in burlesque.

One of the leading actors was taken sick, and this had to be given up. The management was puzzled what to do, and so proposed that she should take a part in a play of Dumas fils. The part was an excellent one, and she studied with a will to make it realistic. At this point one of the ladies fell ill, and this had to be abandoned. Madame

Modjeska was now aware of the fact that she was surrounded by enemies, and she hardly knew what to do. One of the actors who was in the clique, and who was a friend of hers, came and told her that they thought that she was not capable of assuming any great tragical role, at the same time advising her that if they proposed "Adrienne Lecouvreur," to agree to their proposition, and at rehearsal to appear as if she were embarrassed. She did as he suggested, and the result was that the clique was highly delighted, and was certain that she would fail.

At last the eventful night arrived, and the curtain went up amid a round of deafening applause. What was the surprise of the clique, when, instead of stammering and becoming confused, she uttered her lines with precision and was perfectly composed. In the scene in the Princess' drawing-room, she acted with such vigor, that her enemies were forced to acknowledge that she had out-

witted them; and she could hear them whispering in the wings:

"She has voice! She has voice! She is strong enough, after all!" As the play progressed, the audience became enthusiastic, and after the rendering of Lafontaine's fable in the second act, she was given a perfect ovation. She had made a hit. She was the superior of any around her, and her enemies were forced to admit her as a member of the clique. After the first night's performance her success was unprecedented, and she became the rage of Warsaw. In the *salons*, on the street corners, and in the family circle, her name was the sole topic of conversation, and she was pronounced the greatest actress that Poland had ever known. The management offered her a permanent engagement and wanted her to sign a contract for life; and after some consideration she accepted the terms, signing with certain provisions. Her engagement was not to commence until a year after her début, so she returned to

the Cracow theatre to finish her contract with the manager there. He was so angry at her for having signed with a rival manager, that after a few performances he refused to allow her to play any longer.

Not having any other theatrical work on hand, she turned her attention to politics, and assisted her husband, M. Chlapowski, who was the manager-in-chief of a Cracow political journal. He was closely identified with the movements of his party, and was looked upon by the government as a person who was working to overthrow the institutions, and was accused of inciting the people to rebel.

Madame Modjeska gathered about her all the leading men and women in Cracow, and soon had a literary and political salon that could not be surpassed in the whole of Poland. She became a shrewd diplomatist, and she had such an excellent memory that at times she acted in the capacity of reporter for her husband's paper. Her receptions were

largely attended, not only by the politicians and literati of her own country, but by distinguished visitors from all parts of the world. Here she was an acknowledged queen; and when a new political party was formed, one reason for choosing M. Chlapowski as the editor of its paper was because his wife's salon was such a power, and there they could meet and concoct their plans without fear of being discovered. For the time being, she forgot her art and plunged headlong into the whirl and excitement of political life, and thus it was that she earned for herself the name of the Polish Jeanne d'Arc. Liebelt, the Polish Ruskin, was a frequent visitor to her salon, and he wrote many flattering articles about her in the Warsaw papers.

When the time came for the Warsaw engagement to commence, M. Chlapowski was compelled to decide between his political career and his wife's art. He saw that there were a number of men who were as able as himself to carry out the plans of his

party, and so he concluded to resign his editorial position, and devote his time to the advancement of his wife's career as an actress. He gave up writing for the press, and when they arrived at Warsaw he entered upon a business life. In Warsaw they were watched closely by the police, and it was often asserted that in her acting, Madame Modjeska was continually trying to work so upon the minds of the people that they would rise *en masse* and rebel against the government. This accusation was unjust, for she had no such intention, and was only working for the elevation of the drama on the Warsaw stage. She succeeded in putting on a number of Shakespeare's plays translated from the English version.

At the head of the Imperial Theatre was M. Muchamow, a gentleman of great experience in the management of theatrical matters. He was a warm personal friend of Madame Modjeska and he took a great interest in all the plays which she selected.

His wife, Madame Kalerdgi, was a celebrated beauty, and was at one time greatly admired by Napoleon, who desired to make her his wife. Her salon was a celebrated resort of the leading musical and theatrical people, and she counted among her friends such men as Chopin, Liszt, Wagner, Alfred de Musset, Joachim, Tansig and the Rubensteins. Madame Modjeska was a great favorite of hers and she exerted her influence in her behalf. When she applauded at the theatre an actor or actress' reputation was made.

All the time while Madame Modjeska was at Warsaw, she was continually disputing with the Russian Censor, who at times refused to allow her to produce the plays which she had selected, and which he claimed were seditious. She however often overcame his foolish objections and succeeded in carrying out her plans. Her repertoire was a large one, and at times she was so fatigued by hard study that she often fainted after the performances: and at last the strain became

so great that she was thrown on a bed of sickness, where she remained for six weeks. This made her so weak that it was impossible for her to appear for nearly six months. The public missed her greatly, and when at last she made her appearance she received a perfect ovation. The house was filled with the nobility, and after the performance she received the hearty congratulations of all the members of the company.

While here, among the leading characters she assumed were those of Ophelia, Juliet, Desdemona, Queen Ann in "Richard III," Louisa Miller, Marie Stuart, the Princess Eboli of Schiller, Marion Delorme, the Thisbè of Victor Hugo, the Mazeppa of Slowacki, Beatrice in "Much Ado about Nothing," Donna Diana, a play translated from the Spanish; and a number of other parts from the plays of Dumas, Sardou, Angier, Legouvi, and Alfred de Musset.

Those occupying prominent positions are always envied by those possessing not as

great talents, and this jealousy at times often leads to enmity. Madame Modjeska's position in literary and social circles was an envious one, and she was hated bitterly by a number of men and women at the theatre. This hatred at last found vent in certain malicious attacks through the columns of a few newspapers.

This was very irritating to Madame Modjeska and it had an injurious effect upon her sensitive nature. About this time Madame Kalerdgi died, and soon afterwards Madame Modjeska was afflicted by the loss of her brother, Felix Benda. It is said that troubles never come singly, and this is so in Madame Modjeska's case, for immediately after the death of Felix Benda, M. Chlapowski lost his brother, and while he was away attending to the settlement of his brother's estate, Madame Modjeska was taken seriously ill, and her physician ordered rest and a change of scene. When M. Chlapowski returned, he concluded to leave Warsaw and

take his wife on a sea voyage. He desired to go some place and buy a farm with the money that had been left him, and finally, after talking the matter over with a friend he concluded to go to California. Madame Modjeska, after considerable trouble, obtained a two years' leave of absence from the theatre. She felt very little regret at leaving, for she imagined that the people cared but little for her, because she had been so illy treated during the latter days of her engagement. But when they found that they were about to lose her, and that she was going away to a foreign country, all their old enthusiasm was aroused, and they begged her to stay. On the evening of her farewell performance, after having been called innumerable times before the curtain, she found the streets from the theatre to her house crowded with her fellow-countrymen, who strewed flowers in her path, and when she left the city the same scene was enacted. The railway station was crowded, the cars were decorated with leaves

and flowers, and with tears in their eyes the people cried:

Niech zyge Modrzejewska! ("Viva Modjeska!") *Pani Helena, wracaj do kraju!* ("Madame Helena, return to thy native land!")

This was more than she could stand, and she burst into a flood of tears, and with a pang of regret she waved an adieu to the crowd. As she left the station she little dreamed that it would be a long while before she would see her country again, or have the pleasure of performing before an audience of her countrymen. She was going to a foreign land, among strangers, and among a people whose language she could not speak or understand. The travellers went to Bremen, and from thence took passage on a vessel to New York. To the tired and worn-out actress the sea-voyage was a great novelty, and the life around her infused new hopes within her breast. She commenced to regain ambition and long for some activity.

It was her intention to study English, and if she succeeded in mastering it to make her début on the American stage. Something seemed to tell her that she would succeed, and we now see how well she fought the battle. Learning English only seven years ago, she rarely mispronounces a word, and she finds very few words but what she can master.

CHAPTER VII.

"As some lone bird, without a mate,
My weary heart is desolate:
I look around, and cannot trace
One friendly smile or welcome face;
And e'en in crowds am still alone."

—*Byron.*

AFTER a tedious sea-voyage the weary travellers arrived in San Francisco, in September, 1876. As they entered the picturesque portals of the Golden Gate, and glided swiftly past the Cliff House and Seal Rocks into the bay, their eyes rested for the first time upon the barren sand-hills of the "Paris of America." It was the dry season, and not a speck of verdure was to be seen. The sight was not one to raise the hopes of the wanderers, who

had pictured to themselves a land of beauty. They stopped at the Palace Hotel until they could buy a farm, where they could go and try the experiment of a ranchero's life. While in San Francisco, Madame Modjeska went to the California theatre to see Edwin Booth, who was then filling a successful engagement. She was greatly pleased with his style, and a few days afterwards she received a visit from him and Mr. John McCullough, who was then the manager of the theatre. Mr. McCullough proposed that Madame Modjeska should play Ophelia in Polish, with Mr. Booth. They talked the matter over, but finally gave up the idea. The farm was at last procured, and Madame Modjeska and M. Chlapowski started out, full of expectation of making a fortune in the Golden State by farming and keeping bees. Of this part of her career a contributor in "Scribner's Monthly" writes: "After a few months of ranch life Arcadia soon began to cloy. It is true that on the California farm

the mustangs fully came up to expectation, but in the long run even the success of rides on horseback will not atone for the fiasco of milkless kine and eggless poultry. Alas, theatricals on a rancho are worse than in private!" The dry season went against them. The crops failed, and instead of making the long expected fortune, the Golden Fleece was not found, and the two embryo farmers lost nearly all the money they had brought with them. Home-sickness came, with all its pangs, and the unhappy artiste yearned for the old life of excitement. "The stage is a candle that the actor-moth cannot escape. The actress who has seen an amphitheatre kindle with the excitement she herself has called forth and partly shares, sooner or later must return to the boards. Now San Francisco was not Warsaw; but it has a stage."

Madame Modjeska determined to learn English, and in February, 1877, started for San Francisco, where she put herself under

the instruction of Miss Joanna Tukoloka, an American lady of Polish origin.

She studied with a will, and at last, in June, was able to speak with some fluency, and recite portions of "Adrienne Lecouvreur," and "Juliet," in English. She now thought herself able to appear before the public, and so made application for a position to Mr. Barton Hill, who was then managing the California Theatre in Mr. McCullough's absence.

Mr. Hill had not heard of Madame Modjeska, and on her first interview with him, although he treated her very politely, he showed plainly by his actions that he did not regard her as an actress, but rather thought that she was a countess who was stage-struck, and desired to make her debut in a strange city where no one knew her, so that if she failed she would not suffer the mortification of the comments of her friends.

He finally consented to hear her read, and she chose the last act of "Adrienne

Lecouvreur." Mr. Hill sat in his chair and listened attentively, expecting to see her fail. Before Madame Modjeska was half through the act, Mr. Hill saw that she was an actress of no mean ability. He became enthusiastic, and when she had finished, he said: "Madame, your acting is the finest I have ever seen. We will give you a week."

This was a pleasant surprise to the debutante, for she had only asked for a night, and had received, instead of a mere permission to appear, a permanent engagement for a week. She left the theatre full of hope, and went immediately at work to study and make arrangements for her debut.

A few nights before Madame Modjeska's first appearance, Mr. George H. Jessop, who was then acting as the dramatic critic of the "San Francisco Post," wrote the following notice in his column:

"Following 'M'lliss,' we are to have the debut on our boards of a distinguished Polish artist, Madame Helena Modjeska. The

lady has been studying English for some months back, and her reading is marked with a power and purity, which show that the praises lavished upon her by the critics have not been undeserved."

I never shall forget the first night of Madame Modjeska's engagement at the California Theatre. The house was moderately filled with first-nighters, who wore upon their faces an expression which showed that they expected to be bored. Ever and anon before the curtain went up, some one would ask: "Who is this Madame Modjeska? I wonder if she amounts to much?" and this was answered by the knowing ones with a smile.

"Adrienne Lecouvreur" was the play, and the minute the curtain was rung up, the audience saw that instead of a mere debutante they were listening to an artist of experience, who understood her lines and appreciated the part she was performing.

The evening after her debut Mr. Jessop wrote the following criticism.

"In 'Adrienne Lecouvreur' last evening, we saw Madame Modjeska move like a breath of fresh air through the stifling atmosphere of a licentious court. We saw her by God-like genius raise a poor dramatization to the level of an artistic triumph. What cared we for poor curtains—she filled the stage while she was upon it; or for weak dialogue, interpreted by such wonderful business? Nothing. She comes as the reigning artist of the day to recite in the salon of the Princess de Bouillon, her unknown rival. The two women know each other, but it is not until the heartless hypocrisy and cruelty of the Princess have tortured the very soul within her, that forced, under that torture, as it were to recite, she chooses that pas sage from 'Phedie,' which, as it closes, cuts into the breast of the smooth sinner."

Then he follows with a critical analyzation of each scene, and finally concludes by saying:

"But what shall we say of that death

scene? It is simply wonderful, tearful, grand. Like to the painter, who, for the crucifixion, painted not a God in agony but a child in sleep, the pains of death are not obtruded, and the spirit-suffering o'ershadows mere physical distress. When Maurice, Count de Saxe, comes with his love, in the dark hour of her agony, and his voice cannot call her back from delirium, we see the stage, as it were, through a mist. 'The sweet bells jangled out of tune,' play discordantly the song of the past. She is on the stage again, and her eye rests on the box wherein sits Maurice and her hateful rival. He is the life of her life, and in agony of appeal she cries out, 'Maurice! Maurice!' as if the power of her love could draw him as the magnet draws the steel. And then, when the poisoned bouquet has done its deadly work, in the hands of Modjeska, the noblest thing about poor Adrienne is her leaving of it. With quiet fondness her fingers rest on her lover's head, which she draws toward her

lap; her eyes full of affectionate regard, born of a life-time of respect and love, rest for a moment on the old prompter, but immediately after one is lifted to the world beyond the skies and the tragedy of life is ended."

After that first night's performance, the theatre was packed every evening, and at the end of the week's engagement, arrangements were made so that Madame Modjeska could play another week, Rose Eytinge kindly consenting to allow her engagement to be delayed.

Madame Modjeska now went on a tour through the California towns, and was well received wherever she played. Returning to San Francisco for another week, she played the "Dame aux Camélias," and this tended to finally establish her reputation with the critics and the public.

At first Madame Modjeska was doubtful about making a hit, and when the curtain went down on the first act, and she heard a number of sharp whistles coming from

the gallery, her heart sank within her, for in Poland, when an actress is whistled at it is a death-blow to her reputation; and if the whistle is very pronounced she generally leaves the stage forever. When she was assured that these whistles really meant applause, she was very much astonished and delighted.

Mr. Henry Sargent now signed a contract with Madame Modjeska for a two years' engagement, and according to this agreement she was to play in any city which he might select.

Madame Modjeska made her debut before a New York audience at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, on the evening of December 22, 1877. The play was "Adrienne Lecouvreur;" but owing to some mismanagement it did not draw, and at the end of two weeks, it was withdrawn, and "Dame aux Camélias," was put on in its place.

The tide now turned, and where the audiences had been small during the time

that "Adrienne," was running, the house was now crowded nightly with enthusiastic admirers, who showed their appreciation by rounds of applause.

After leaving New York, Madame Modjeska's tour through the United States was a great success at every place she played. She became a general favorite and was welcomed by thousands.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

"Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again."

—*Longfellow.*

IT is pleasant indeed to receive the praise of the great, and to listen to their words of encouragement. While playing in Boston, Madame Modjeska received a visit from the poet Longfellow, who extended to her an invitation to dine with him. He was very enthusiastic about her acting, and spoke in high terms of her

style. At the dinner he talked pleasantly about the people of Poland, and of some Polish ladies whom he knew. After the dinner he read to her a poem written by Campbell upon Poland, and this worked so upon Madame Modjeska's patriotic feelings that she was moved to tears. During the conversation Mr. Longfellow never spoke of his own works except once, when Madame Modjeska said that she had thought something about playing the "Spanish Student," when he asked:

"Why don't you play it?"

"It is very difficult," she replied. "I don't know if I am equal to the task."

Longfellow laughed at this and said that if she would consent to play he would revise the play himself.

After this first visit quite a friendship sprang up between the poet and Madame Modjeska. She often called on him, and at times sent him translations of the Polish poets to read. With these he was delighted,

not only on account of their beauty of construction, but for the patriotic sentiments that were to be found in every line. When Madame Modjeska left Boston, Longfellow continued to correspond with her, and if, at times, she was too busy to answer his letters promptly, he would look anxiously in the papers for news of her whereabouts. In April, 1881, I was in Boston, and had the good fortune to have a letter of introduction to Mr. Longfellow. I called on the poet and found him busy at work in his library. He received me graciously and chatted pleasantly for some time upon different literary topics, when the conversation changed to a talk about dramatic matters and the different theatrical people he had met. Happening to glance at a picture hanging on the wall over his desk, I discovered that it was a portrait of Madame Modjeska as Juliet, and I said:

"I see you have Madame Modjeska's picture."

"Yes," he answered, "I am a great admirer of her acting, and I think that she is the greatest tragic actress on the stage today. I admire her unconventional treatment of the character of Juliet, and while listening to her rendition of the lines, a feeling of inspiration seems to come over me."

In Philadelphia Madame Modjeska was the guest of George W. Childs, and when she was at Hartford, Connecticut, she was entertained by Charles Dudley Warner. At Washington she made the acquaintance of Senators Blaine, Conkling, Schurz, General Sherman, and a host of other distinguished people.

On Madame Modjeska's return to Boston, so great was the enthusiasm, that she was compelled to play at four matinees a week in order to satisfy the people. In Chicago the Owl Club honored her with a reception, and at several other of the large cities of the West, receptions were given her.

The first tour through the United States

lasted about six months, and during that time Madame Modjeska, at Mr. Sargent's request, studied "East Lynne" and "Peg Woffington." These she produced at the commencement of her second season, but soon gave them up, because she found it impossible to identify herself with the characters.

At the end of her first tour Madame Modjeska went to Paris to see the exhibition and to make arrangements for new costumes. Here she met Victor Hugo, whose writings she greatly admired. She and the great author had a long conversation together, and when she left he extended to her an invitation to make his house her home as often as she visited Paris. While in Paris, Madame Modjeska sat for her portrait, which Carolus Duran, was ordered to paint for Mr. Paris Haldeman, who presented it to the Philadelphia National Gallery.

Returning to America, Madame Modjeska commenced her second tour, and after this

was ended she opened in New York at the Grand Opera House, in "East Lynne." The play was not a success, poor houses was the result, and the management was compelled to re-place it by "Camille."

Madame Modjeska desired very much to play in England, and when her New York engagement was over, she and her manager made arrangements to go to London.

Here Mr. Sargent found all dates filled. It was impossible to procure a theatre even for one night, and Madame Modjeska had to give up all hope of playing in London, until February, when Mr. Sargent promised to make arrangements for an engagement.

Finding that there was nothing for her to do in London, she and M. Chlapowski concluded to re-visit their native land, for the purpose of taking part in the jubilee that was to be given at Cracow in honor of the great Polish poet, Josef Kraszewski. This *fête* was held in the beginning of October, 1879.

Josef Kraszewski is one of the most prolific Polish authors of modern times, and his works are counted by hundreds. On his fiftieth birthday, his countrymen decided to give a great *fête* in his honor at Cracow. This city was chosen on account of its being free from the jurisdiction of the Tzar, who had exiled Kraszewski on account of his patriotism, and naturally, if the people had held the anniversary in the Russian domains, the government would have interrupted the proceedings. Thousands of people flocked to Cracow, and after the ceremonies and the delivering of the oration to Kraszewski, the people made publicly their vows of brotherhood and gave utterance to their feelings against the cruelty of the Russian government. It was during this excitement that Madame Modjeska and M. Chlapowski arrived at Cracow, and they were enthusiastically received by their countrymen. The people insisted that they should share the honors of the *fête*. A play of Kraszewski's was produced and on this occasion

Madame Modjeska made her first appearance in Poland after her long absence. It was a perfect ovation. The people waved their handkerchiefs, flowers were strewn upon the stage and cries of "Welcome! welcome, Modrzjewska!" resounded from all portions of the house. After this first appearance, the *fête* over, Madame Modjeska gave a series of performances at which she played a number of her old parts. She amazed her audiences by her great power, and she became a perfect lion in society. Invitations poured in on her from all the people of note.

She next went to Lemberg, and there the enthusiasm was as great as it had been at Cracow. In December she went to Warsaw, where she was compelled to pay a fine of ten thousand roubles for failing to write to renew her leave of absence, when she was in America. She played ten nights at the Imperial Theatre for nothing, and these performances paid her fine. Then she was

engaged for twenty nights more, for which she received a "star's" salary.

She went to Posen, where she played a short engagement, and then, in February, she returned to London, where she expected to find Mr. Sargent. Madame Modjeska had written to Mr. Sargent several times, but he only answered one of her letters; and furthermore he was not to be found when she arrived in London, neither had he kept his promise to procure for her an engagement.

She determined to procure an engagement herself, and after considerable trouble she succeeded in making an arrangement with Mr. Wilson Barrett, manager of the Court Theatre, whereby he was to give her the house for a few matinees and to share the profits with her. Mr. Mortimer's adaptation of the "Dame aux Camélias," which he had entitled "Heartsease," was chosen for the first performance.

On the first of May, 1880, Madame Modjeska made her debut before the London

public. At this performance the Prince and Princess of Wales were present, and they complimented her highly upon her success. For two weeks she played at these morning matinees, attracting large audiences, and then Mr. Barrett withdrew "The Old Love and the New," which was running at night, and put on "Heartsease" with Madame Modjeska in the *role* of Constance. At the first performance at night, the house was crowded with celebrities, among them being Gustave Doré, Alma Tadima, Joachim, Madame Trebelli, and Md'lle Sara Bernhardt. Of this first appearance Mr. Labouchere writes in London *Truth*:

"Never once does she raise her voice above the pitch of ordinary life, in not one of her gestures does she outstep nature; in every act she is true to the character of the girl that she is representing, and yet she manages to idealize her. From the first she carried her audience with her, and each successive scene brought them more in sym-

pathy with her. Never was the applause that greeted her after each act more spontaneous and more thoroughly deserved. Even the fine people in the stalls forgot their *nil admirari*, and heartily joined in it, whilst, when at length she died in the arms of her lover, ladies forgot even their paint, and wiped genuine tears from their eyes. I am told that in other parts she is better than in the one she chose for a debut. This seems to me to be almost impossible; but whatever she does play, I shall, setting aside every other occupation, go to see her, for acting such as hers is a treat that makes up for the many weary hours that one passes in theatres, hoping against hope, that some touch of genius may enliven the dead level of respectable mediocrity."

It was during this engagement that she won the hearts of the London public the same as she had done previously in America. She made the acquaintance of Tennyson and

Browning as well as several other noted English literary people.

In September, she took a tour of the provinces, and then returned to London to rehearse "Marie Stuart." Several times she thought that she would have to give up the part. She had studied three different translations, and it now seemed to her that it was impossible to memorize the lines. By dint of hard study she overcame all difficulties, and on the first night not a break occurred to mar the beauty of the play. "Marie Stuart" ran until Christmas, and then "Adrienne Lecouvreur" was put on. This was followed by "Heartsease" and "Romeo and Juliet," the last named play running two months.

After the run of "Romeo and Juliet," Madame Modjeska was anxious to produce Mr. Wills' play of "Juana." Every one thought that this play would be a success. New scenery was bought, new costumes were ordered, and great preparations were made for

its production. But, alas! the piece was a failure. The public would not support it, and at the end of a week, the management was compelled to withdraw it, and put on "Adrienne Lecouvreur." "Frou-Frou," had been in preparation some time, and was soon put on, and with this piece the company was moved from the Court to the Princess' theatre.

At the Princess', Madame Modjeska played a short time, and then took her benefit before going on an excursion into Brittany, where she was to spend her vacation. On this occasion, the profession generously offered their services, and among those present, were Mr. Irving, Mr. Toole, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, Mdlle. Bernhardt, Miss Ellen Terry, Mr. Barret, Mr. Hare, and Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft.

After the holiday in Brittany, Madame Modjeska returned to London, and then started upon a tour through England, Scot-

land and Ireland. Everywhere she played to full houses, and was warmly received.

The provincial tour over, she went again to Warsaw. During her stay here, she played a piece entitled "Nora, or, A Doll's House." It was written by Henrick Ibsen, a Scandinavian author. This piece Madame Modjeska has had translated into English, changing the title to "Thora."

After leaving Warsaw, Madame Modjeska went direct to London, where she appeared at the Haymarket Theatre on April 25, 1882, in Clemens Scott's English version of M. Sardou's "Odette." This play was originally brought out at the Vaudeville Theatre, Paris, on November 17, 1881, and was performed there one hundred and thirty-eight times. It had a very successful run and would have been kept on longer had Madame Modjeska consented to prolong her engagement, but being in delicate health, and desiring to take a rest before sailing for America, she declined all offers.

After closing her engagement at the Haymarket, Madame Modjeska took up the study of the character of Rosalind, in "As you Like it." This she played with success during her American engagement of 1882.

CHAPTER IX.

"Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match,
And on the wager lay two earthly women,
And Portia one, there must be something else
Pawned with the other; for the poor rude world
Hath not her fellow."—*Shakespeare.*

THE return of Madame Modjeska to the American stage was made at the Globe Theatre, in Boston, on Monday evening, October 2, 1882, in the presence of a large audience, whose welcome was cordial, and whose appreciation of a fine and well-sustained dramatic portraiture was made evident throughout the performance.

Madame Modjeska's earlier triumphs in the city at the old Boston Museum, several sea-

sons before, established the artiste in a popularity which is rarely quickly gained in that community. The play on this occasion was "Adrienne Lecouvreur," and the scenes were given with an effect that she has never rivalled. "Adrienne Lecouvreur," was followed by "Frou-Frou," "Dame aux Camélias," "Marie Stuart," "Romeo and Juliet," and "As You Like It."

In "As You Like It," Madame Modjeska scored an emphatic success. This was produced on October 19, and was the first time that she had played the character of Rosalind. The Boston *Globe*, speaks of this performance as follows:

"If Rosalind is a prime favorite with the admirers of Shakespeare's heroines because of the charming attributes of her character—her loving impulses, frolicsome humor, gentle tenderness of feeling, and bright intelligence withal, it is likewise true that it is one of the most difficult of interpretation by the actress attempting it. Many have essayed

it and many have failed. The number, indeed, is most limited who have succeeded, the best known of whom to ancient and modern Boston are Anna Cora Mowatt and Adelaide Neilson, both gone from life save in the memory. The Rosalind of Madame Modjeska must now be added to the list of successful aspirants—not in the same degree with Miss Neilson, perchance, whose English birth and tongue gave her all advantage over a stranger—but eminently successful as compared with the greater number who have tried and achieved but moderate triumph. Her conception of the character of Rosalind is highly intelligent. When she assumed the forester's dress of Ganymede she shone forth in her native and acquired gifts. Lovely in person and costume, graceful and easy as it is possible to conceive, her scenes with Orlando were played with a delicate refinement of manner which produced the best effect and called for unqualified praise."

The engagement in Boston lasted three

MODJESKA AS "VIOLA."

weeks, and then Madame Modjeska took a tour through the New England and Middle States and finally opened at Booth's Theatre, in New York, on December 12.

On Madame Modjeska's arrival in New York from Washington, she was met at the depot in Jersey City by a large number of her fellow countrymen. The Polish organizations present included the Krakowa Young Men's Association, the Noiwiski Singing Society, the Polish Dramatic Society Fraedro, and the Battalion of Polish Sharpshooters. At the head of the procession was a large transparency on which was printed in English and Polish: "Welcome to Modjeska."

As the artiste stepped out on the platform she was greeted by prolonged cheers, and when these had subsided, M. Mierzwinski, of Colonel Mapleson's troupe, presented her with a large bouquet of flowers and an address of welcome. On board the boat the singing societies sang the national airs of Poland, and when New York was reached

Madame Modjeska was escorted to the Clarendon Hotel. It was an agreeable surprise to the artiste, and the scene will long be remembered by those who were present and witnessed the reception.

Madame Modjeska opened her engagement at Booth's Theatre in the character of Rosalind. President Chester A. Arthur and his son occupied a box and were among the heartiest applauders in the audience. This engagement was a remarkable artistic as well as financial success; every seat in the house being sold for every performance days in advance.

An instance of the exquisite breeding of this great artiste is shown by her reception of young Allan Arthur and a poor Pole who called on her.

"One afternoon a few days after her arrival in New York two cards came up to Madame Modjeska's apartments about the same time, and two visitors were ushered in by accident at the same moment. One was

young Allan Arthur, and the other a Pole, perfectly unknown to her, who keeps a haberdasher's shop in Washington, and who wished to pay his respects to his countrywoman. Madame Modjeska received them both exactly alike. The haberdasher was not made to feel his inferiority, nor was the President's son that he had conferred an honor — both were treated with delicate courtesy."

It is pleasant indeed, after all the undignified squabbles of theatrical stars, to find Madame Modjeska, with all the honors that have been conferred on her, so simple and unpretentious.

The second week of the engagement at Booth's Theatre commenced with the production of "Twelfth Night," with Madame Modjeska as Viola.

"Twelfth Night" was followed by "Camille," "Frou-Frou" and "Odette," the last named play being kept on until the close of the engagement.

Madame Modjeska, after the expiration of

her engagement at Booth's Theatre, went on a tour through the Eastern and Middle States, and then returned to New York to make arrangements for several western engagements, which she was to fill before she took her vacation.

The existence of Booth's Theatre was brought to a close on the evening of April 30, 1883, with a performance of "Romeo and Juliet," the same tragedy with which it was opened by Mr. Edwin Booth on the evening of February 3, 1869. On this occasion Madame Modjeska took the part of Juliet. The theatre was crowded from the orchestra to the upper gallery with old theatre-goers, who were drawn there to bid an adieu to the theatre, which had afforded them so many pleasant hours in the past. At the close of the last act Madame Modjeska was called before the curtain, and in response to an urgent demand that she would address the audience, said:

"It is always the unexpected that happens,

and certainly to me nothing is more unexpected than that it should fall to my lot to say the last words that will ever be addressed to an audience from the stage of this noble theatre. As a foreigner who has long enjoyed the generous hospitality and kindly appreciation of the American people, it is impossible for me to exaggerate the feeling of deep interest which animates me on this memorable occasion. I have the pleasure to know the splendid artist who gave his fortune and his energies to the building of this theatre, which he naturally hoped would remain for all time as a monument of the art he so loves and so adores, and I know that in the midst of his triumphs abroad, the intelligence that, when he returns to his native land, full of honors, and loaded with trophies, Booth's Theatre will be but a memory, will cloud with sadness the brilliancy of his fair horizon. Fourteen years have passed since the first representation was given on these boards; and then, as on to-night, the great

genius of William Shakespeare supplied the entertainment. Of the plays and players that have since been seen here, there is no time for me to speak to you, and besides they are matters of contemporaneous history, and I am, like Marc Antony, come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him. Let me, therefore, dear public, simply invite you to believe in the entire sincerity with which I in my own personality repeat to you again the words of Juliet—'parting is such sweet sorrow that I could say good-night, 'till it was to-morrow;' and the affectionate regret with which I say to Booth's Theatre—farewell!"

During the four weeks of Madame Modjeska's engagement in San Francisco, she appeared in seven characters: "Adrienne Lecouvreur," "Rosalind," "Frou-Frou," "Viola," "Camille," "Marie Stuart," and "Juliet," the last named being produced at her farewell performance. Of this the edi-

tor of the "Overland Monthly" speaks in the following terms:

"Though Madame Modjeska will always be young in the memories of those who have had the good fortune to see her, it was a happy thought to bid us farewell in the person of this youngest heroine. With golden hair, in a simple, girlish, rose-colored gown, she looked not a day over eighteen. When we beheld the girlish outbursts, the sweet ingenuousness, the thousand charming ways of maidenhood by which she vivified her *role*, we could not but wish she might be young forever, in order to set before men her high types of womanhood, from generation to generation."

After Madame Modjeska had finished her Western tour she and M. Chlapowski, with a few friends, went on a camping excursion in the Yellowstone Park, where she remained for nearly two months.

In a few weeks she will commence her "Farewell American Tour," opening in Des Moines, Iowa, with Cymbeline, playing

Imogen, a new part for her, and which she has been studying in the mean time. This engagement finished, she will go to Europe, where she will remain for several years.

I close this biography with the earnest wish that Madame Modjeska's pathway will continue to be strewn with laurels, and that it will be a long number of years ere the closing chapters of her life will be written.

CRITICISMS ON

MADAME MODJESKA'S ACTING,

BY

HENRY LABOUCHERE,

GEORGE AUGUSTA SALA,

CLEMENS SCOTT,

WILLIAM WINTER,

GEORGE EDGAR MONTGOMERY,

AND *JOHN C. FREUND*

MODJESKA'S "JULIET."

MODJESKA'S "JULIET."

THE name of Madame Modjeska will inevitably become associated with that of Shakespeare's first, sweetest, and most poetic tragic heroine, and I venture to predict that the association will be one that will convey the most beautiful, the most intellectual and the most suggestive ideal of the character that has ever been presented to modern playgoers.

As in her other characters, the controlling influence of Madame Modjeska's "Juliet" is essentially the strikingly natural and unconventional manner, which, whether in the highest reaches of tragedy, or in the most delicate tints of the lightest comedy, seems

to pervade the whole of the picture. So charmingly light and fresh and pure a picture of womanly grace and tenderness was surely never combined with the mad *abandon* of uncontrollable passion and frenzied despair which is developed in the later scenes of tragic and poetic romance woven by the magic master-hand. It is in these scenes that the true greatness of Juliet is unfolded, and it is in this phase of the character that the highest genius of Madame Modjeska is apparent.

Nothing can exceed the charm of the representation of the earlier scenes, in which the love of Juliet bursts into the flame of an overmastering passion. No inquiry into the motive or truth of the Shakespearian conception is needed to enable us to judge of the vivid realization of the conception that the actress achieves. It may be that Juliet possessed a "precocious facility" in the art and practice of love, but the duty of the actress is to achieve, and not to explain this character-

istic. This Madame Modjeska does with a fullness and charm of modesty such as have never been surpassed in the representation of girlish passion or womanly devotion. The magnetic nature of Juliet vaguely trembles towards the pole-star of her love almost before she meets with Romeo, and the slumbering passion of a girl's romance, which has been lit by the reputation and the generous and lofty ardor of the handsome young nobleman, bursts forth in a sudden flame at the electric touch of her lover's lips, the first moment they meet at the ball.

From this moment up to the sublimely tragic sacrifice at the end of the play, as the text demands, the character of Juliet is fixed, and her fate, which is to live or die by the passion of her love alone—and that is to rule all her thoughts and actions—is sealed. There is no awakening or growth of this passion in the first scene between the two lovers, it is already surging in the bosom of the impetuous girl, and there is no attempt

to curb or conceal it, or to suggest a gradual development.

As in the text so it is in the living realization of the figure of phantom-like beauty which in the person of Modjeska, glows before us on the moonlit balcony. There is no element of questioning in Juliet's contemplation why she should have fallen in love with Romeo. The prompting of her heart is "wherefore he should be Romeo" and a Montague, that he should be so much beloved. The girlish innocence and delightful frankness of the avowal is rendered with a sweetest grace, in a voice of softest allurement, and in every *pose* of the entranced Juliet there is a piquant charm which the figure of Modjeska presents with a surpassingly picturesque effect. There is a constant and ever-varying, but perfectly spontaneous and natural play of expression in voice and gesture which exercises a kind of spell over the audience, which listens in enrapt silence to the whispered music of

Juliet's love-making. Nothing can surpass the thrill of delight with which, upon re-entering, she suddenly re-discovers Romeo in the shadow of the ivy-grown wall —the surprise being expressed by a half-startled and stifled cry and an impulsive leaning forward and darting downwards of the hands—nor the ingenuous eagerness of the fondling action of resting her cheek upon and kissing the very stones that to Juliet have been hallowed by his touch. Only such delightfully extravagant actions can express that "idolatry," which is as "boundless as the sea!"

Another of the most exquisite phases of Juliet's passion is in the burning anxiety with which she receives the message of the testy and garrulous old nurse on her return from the interview with Romeo. The very excess of joy struggles with the fiery eagerness of anticipation as she coaxes the nurse in a rapid succession of girlish wiles and endearments to disclose the news. She flies

across the stage with a dainty and gossamer-like grace, showers her sweetest kisses upon the messenger upon whose words her hopes depend, and then in an assumed outburst of impatient weeping—a point which is perfectly rendered and lavishly appreciated—alarms the fond old nurse into a sympathetic disclosure of the message. With excess of joyful impetuosity and eyes swimming with delight, she kisses the astonished messenger again and again, and then disappears, like a fitful gleam of sunshine, to prepare for the "high future" of her nuptials.

The bright sparkle of this delightful and unapproachable performance forms a singularly startling contrast to the overshadowing gloom of the first of the tragic scenes in which in the superb opening soliloquy Juliet appeals to Romeo to come unseen on the "wings of night," and afterwards learns of Tybalt's death and Romeo's banishment. He is now "*her* Romeo," and the enthusi-

astic girl has changed into the heroic and ardent wife. Here commence those sublime flights of tragic power which raise this actress far above all other Juliets in the majestic grandeur as well as in the passionate ardor of her illimitable and uncontrollable love. Her alternate grief at Tybalt's death and wild denunciation of the nurse for daring to wish that shame should come to Romeo, are rendered with sublime force; and perhaps the grandest part of this conception is the thrilling and daring originality of the passage where she herself in a hysterical frenzy denounces her lover and her husband as a "fiend angelical," a "damned saint," and an "honorable villain." This extraordinary outburst—for the first time in the rendering of the character—is accounted for by a sudden revelation of real madness on the part of Juliet, and the nature of the terrible blow which shakes the mental poise of the frail and romantic girl (already predisposed to excitability), is only fully disclosed when

the strangely calm reaction of deliberation and attempted reasoning sets in.

From this time Juliet is unnaturally and icily cold and cunning. Beneath the outward show of obedience there is the lurking desperation which is not allayed by the possession of the potion which she receives from the friar. Her reliance is more upon the dagger, which she constantly and uneasily unsheathes with a glittering and deadly determination that it shall save her from the projected alliance with Paris. This indication of the growing insanity of Juliet is, in my opinion, the greatest intellectual triumph that has ever been achieved in the representation of the character. It is the boldest and most daring and original rendering of Juliet that has ever been attempted. It opens up a psychological phase of study that is almost unknown to the commentators, and to Madame Modjeska is due all the credit of this marvellously graphic and suggestive conception. If in her hands Juliet's mind is not

completely shattered like Ophelia's, it is at least unhinged and strained to a point bordering closely on the very confines of madness. If I had space I could show that this idea is abundantly suggested in the text. At all events, it is carried out by Modjeska from this point with exquisite finish and appalling power.

Take, for instance, the greatest of all her tragic scenes, where, after a long and weird deliberation and self-questioning, she takes the potion which is to bring oblivion. A "faint, cold fear thrills through her veins," and she conjures up with dreadful vividness the ghastly possibilities of the potion being intended for her destruction, or of awakening in the loathsome vault among dead men's bones, where "the bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth, lies festering in his shroud." Is it not possible, asks the already distraught and quivering wreck of girlhood, that should she wake amid the shrieks of hideous spirits, she may go mad? Here

the grand climax and justification of the insanity is reached. If she wakes, may she not—

> * * "Madly play with my forefathers' joints,
> And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud?
> And, in his rage, with some great kinsman's bone,
> As with a club, dash out my desperate brains?—
> Oh, look, methinks I see my cousin's ghost!
> * * Stay, Tybalt, stay!
> Romeo, I come,—this do I drink to thee."

The previous smouldering insanity of Juliet, in this last frantic paroxysm of anguish, lights up into the very ecstasy of madness, and her whole soul is launched in the wirlwind of terrors which her fevered and frantic imagination calls up. In the sudden shriek, where she imagines she sees Tybalt's ghost, the actress seems altogether to lose herself in the awful reality of the situation. Transfixed and rigid for a moment, in the centre of the stage, she stands crouching and expecting the dead embrace, and then gradually turning her head towards the far corner of the darkened chamber, and catching a glimpse

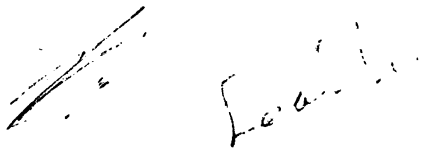
of a curtain shadow, with a horrible cry she makes one bound into a seat near the table, where, with her limbs drawn up convulsively, her whole frame quivering, her very teeth chattering, and a cold sweat upon her livid features, she lies exhausted amid a profound and shuddering silence. Slowly and tremblingly she recovers from her terror sufficiently to take the potion, and in the last wild burst of frenzy she falls, clutching at the table cover, which she pulls over her head, throwing down and extinguishing the lights.

This is an ending worthy of the sublimest genius, and a climax which dignifies the scene —especially in the winding of the cloth round her body as she falls, to the grandeur of a Roman tragedy.

I cannot dwell on the thrilling impressiveness of the awakening and death in the tomb which closes this magnificent performance; but the end is worthy of the high genius which inspires the actress throughout, and

nothing could be more exquisitely and poetically beautiful than the pathetic action where Juliet falls upon the body of Romeo, and in the final yearning movement of the head as she dies, allows her lips to rest upon his.

MODJESKA'S "MARIE STUART."



MODJESKA'S "MARIE STUART."

SCHILLER understood the mechanisms of the stage, but he was not a dramatist in the sense of being able to give life to the characters of a play. His poetry is itself somewhat didactic, and his stage heroes and heroines are far too much given to making elaborate speeches. He would, perhaps, have succeeded better had he never drawn his plots from history, for he allowed his imagination so to distort fact that the real jars with the unreal. Perhaps "Marie Stuart" is the best of Schiller's plays; although I advance this view with fear and trembling, for Mr. Carlyle holds it to be one of the worst.

The plot is somewhat tiresome, and even the telling scenes are too much spun out; the Marie of the piece is not the Mary Stuart known to history, and the incidents are pure inventions; but there is more of human nature in it than either in "Don Carlos," or "Wallenstein:" and if things did not happen as the poet relates them, they at least might have, had circumstances been different.

There is no character which has more exercised the ingenuity of mankind than that of Mary Queen of Scots. Some historians describe her as the purest of the pure, others regard her as the vilest of the vile. The truth is that she was like many women. She was clever, fascinating, and accomplished, with a passion for intrigue, and a conviction that she could make all men who came in contact with her the instruments of her designs. Once, and once only, she entirely lost her head, when she fell in love with Bothwell. She became a mere plaything in his hands, and would have sacrificed

everything for the pleasure of being with him. There is no reasonable doubt that she assented to the plot to kill Darnley, and still less that she wrote the letters to Bothwell about which there has been so much controversy. Men and women often become fools when they are in love, and this is more often the case with women than with men. They seem to have no will of their own whilst the passion lasts, and what their lover is they are.

When Mary entered England she had entirely recovered from her Bothwell fever, and she sought to play her game of ambition with cool calculation. Occasionally her feminine dislike of Elizabeth led her into a fault, but she speedily managed to extricate herself from it. Any pity that may be felt for her long imprisonment is pity thrown away. She had no desire to leave England; at numerous periods she might have done so without difficulty, had she so wished it. That she was cognizant of the attempt to

assassinate Elizabeth which led to the final catastrophe is probable; in any case she had a shrewd suspicion of it, and was ready to profit by it. Those who play for high stakes must pay when they lose. Elizabeth was fully justified, both morally and politically, in having her executed, and the only wonder is that she hesitated so long in adopting this course.

Mary was beautiful, agreeable and unfortunate; therefore we are called upon to forget her misdeeds, and to regard her as a martyr. She had some virtues, and some vices. She probably considered that Elizabeth was her natural enemy, and that she had suffered wrong at her hands. Therefore, she fancied that she was justified in retaliating; but she had no right to complain if Elizabeth fought her with her own weapons, and cut off her head. The "Marie Stuart" of Schiller is a suffering victim, more pure and more good than it is often given to humanity to be. Elizabeth, on the other hand, is a jealous

virago. Leicester seeks to acquire the love of both, and is loved by Elizabeth, who, after ill-treating her rival for a good many years, at length kills her; whilst Lord Burleigh is the grim politician who uses the jealousy of his mistress to gain his own ends.

Schiller's Marie is a character which well suits Madame Modjeska. Considering the number of very common-place, so called, actresses, with about sufficient intelligence to be a nursery governess, or a bar-maid, who are nowadays puffed and advertised into notoriety on the score of one or two parts which they have laboriously learned, and which they go through like parrots, it is really refreshing to witness the performance of this Polish lady. That she has carefully studied what is termed "stage business" is evident, but her art is so exquisite, that it has all the appearance of nature. I do not think that I ever saw a scene better played than that between her and Elizabeth. The pathos with which she pleaded her cause at the commencement of

the scene contrasted wonderfully with her indignant scorn when she is roused by her rival's insults, and bitterly returns them. The great charm of her acting is that she never merges the woman in the heroine; and that whatever phase of passion she portrays, she enlists the sympathies of her audience with her. The adieus to all her friends and dependents are rendered with deep pathos. Every word, every gesture of Mary, from the moment when she left her room, to that when her head fell, is well known. She was herself an eminent actress. Her aim was to create an effect, and this she did most successfully in the last scene that she played, arrayed from head to foot in scarlet, on the world's stage.

HENRY LABOUCHERE,
London Truth.

MODJESKA'S "ADRIENNE LECOUVREUR."

MODJESKA'S "ADRIENNE LECOUVREUR."

MDLLE. SARA BERNHARDT'S "Adrienne" was a superb creation. I preserve the memory of it very freshly in my mind, as, with little less distinctness, I retain the remembrance of Rachel in "Adrienne;" but I do not intend to institute any comparisons between the different renderings of the great French actress of the last generation, the consummate artiste, Sara Bernhardt, and the gifted Polish lady who has achieved so brilliant and so legitimate a triumph at the Court Theatre. Madame Modjeska's "Adrienne Lecouvreur" should

be judged entirely on its own merits, and as a distinctly independent and original study of one of the finest characters in the modern French repertory. The entire interest in the piece centres in Madame Modjeska as "Adrienne." Her forte consists first in alternately playful and pathetic love-making, in which she can be as fascinating and as tender as the best Juliet that ever graced our stage; and next in simulating with great power and directness the last struggles of a dying person. Some critics have held that elaborate dying is not a legitimate branch of art. They held with Voltaire (who had the impudence to call Shakspeare *un barbarie*) that moribund actors and actresses should give up the ghost behind the scenes, and refrain from bringing the actual *thanatos* down to the footlights; but as long as "Juliet," or the "Queen in Hamlet," and "Desdemona" die—so long as the body of "Cordelia" is brought in dead, and "Ophelia" is buried *coram publico* —"Frou-Frou," and "Marguerite Gauthier,"

and "Adrienne Lecouvreur" must be suffered to expire in full sight of the audience; and painfully touching as were the death-deliriums and collapse of Madame Modjeska as "Adrienne," her simulated sufferings did not produce that sensation of painful uneasiness which was awakened by the passage of "Marie Stuart" to the scaffold, and her lugubrious recitation of the Penitential Psalms in low Latin, at the wings.

Splendid was the skill used by Madame Modjeska in the dying scene in the fifth act of "Adrienne Lecouvreur." As the consummation of the tragedy approached, it was in the highest degree interesting, as it was likewise most unusual to see how pit and gallery, and to a certain extent, the boxes, took the task of deciding on the merits of Madame Modjeska. The house literally rose. In no theatre these many years past, have I heard such a tremendous roar of acclamation as that which greeted this truly great actress

when she finally sank expiring into the arms of Maurice de Saxe; and at the conclusion of the drama she was recalled at least five times, amid a perfect Babel of enthusiastic applause.

GEORGE AUGUSTA SALA,
Illustrated London News.

MODJESKA'S "ODETTE."

MODJESKA'S "ODETTE."

IT is not essential to the completeness of this article that we should dwell minutely upon the points of difference between the English adaptation of M. Sardou's "Odette," and the original play. Our French neighbors, in the course of their growing revolt against Catholic dogma, have become agitated on the question of divorce, and M. Sardou, never averse from making hay while the sun shines, has discussed the matter with laudable impartiality from several points of view. If, in "Daniel Rochat," he met the question with a negative, in "Divorçons" he dallied with the notion under the guise of ridicule, while

in "Odette," he practically demonstrates its wisdom and justice.

Taking "Odette" as now presented, we come first upon one of those domestic convulsions from which, unfortunately, English homes are not exempt. There is a beautiful wife in Paris, and a fond husband in London. The loveliness of the woman attracts, while her vanity and frivolity encourage, the roaring lions of society, who go about seeking whom they may devour. By one of these, Prince Troubitzkoy, Lady Henry Trevene (Odette) has been marked for his own, and we have not made their acquaintance long before we know that he will succeed. Her English friend, John Stratford, learns it, too, when, one fatal night, he, with the Prince and Philip Eden, an attaché of the Embassy, accompany Lady Henry home. From the moment they cross the threshold, events crowd thick and fast, and we look on with bated breath and beating heart. Odette dismisses Eden, who has lingered behind the

rest, and retires to her chamber; previously, with a hesitation that indicates the last reproach of departing virtue, unlocking a side door. The servants have extinguished the lights, when Lord Henry comes suddenly upon the scene, with hearty words for Eden, whom he has compelled to return, and all loving inquiries for wife and child. The man is overjoyed at being so near the objects of his affection, but before he can rush to embrace them, the side door opens, and through the semi-darkness the Prince steals towards Odette's room. The infuriated husband springs upon him; there is a momentary struggle, a challenge, and an ignominious exit. Sin has fallen upon the home like a thunderbolt, and Lord Henry's first thought, on recovering from the terrible shock, is of punishment. He acts promptly and decisively. The child is secured in another room, but the wife? She, hearing footsteps approach her chamber, comes forth and fondles her husband with words of endearment in-

tended for the paramour. For a moment she denies her guilt, then she braves its consequences, and recklessly, defiantly, prepares to leave her husband's house. Now comes the crisis. She would take her child, but the little one is hers no longer. With her wifehood she has forfeited maternity. For the one she cares little, but the other is her life and soul. On her knees she begs for mercy to the mother, and none is granted by the stern judge. Then, rising with a superb gesture of rage and scorn, she hurls at her husband the word "Lâche," and goes forth into the night. It is this final moment which determines the whole drama. Retribution and Revenge stand, for an instant, face to face, and though they separate, we know that they will meet again to fight a not unequal battle. On the side of Retribution are all forces of society; on the side of Revenge, the strength of a mother's love and despair, and the power which the fallen wife of a good man has to overshadow his

name with the blackness of darkness. Need we stop to enlarge upon the effects of this first act? Not a word is wasted. It oppresses an audience with the suddenness and completeness of its catastrophe, and opens up a vista of terror adown which one hardly cares to look. After such excitement there should be repose, and this comes with the second act—a calm between two storms.

Fifteen years have passed; the child Eva Trevene has grown into a woman, and the hairs of her father's head are white. She believes that her mother was drowned at Nice, and is now a saint in heaven. Her father is father and mother in one, while "love's young dream," personified by an Irish peer, Lord Shandon, makes the whole prosaic world seem a place of enchantment. Lord Henry is at Nice with his daughter; there, too, are Philip Eden and his young wife; John Stratford, now developed into a cynic whom everybody in revenge calls "Johnny;" and last, though not least, the

Irish lover. The Carnival is on, but the elders of the party see a skeleton in the procession, a death's-head at the feast. Odette, still Lady Henry Trevene—for her husband refuses the relief allowed by law — has sunk into the condition of a needy adventuress, wandering from one "shady" place of Continental resort to another, and now living at Nice in company with an American quack, Dr. Broadway Wilks, and a doubtful widow, Lady Walker. We only hear of her in this act, but enough of the plot is unfolded to give an idea of the power she still wields. Lord Shandon's family will not consent to his marriage with Eva unless Odette ceases to bear her husband's name. The disgraced and ruined woman thus holds her daughter's happiness in her hands. She knows it not yet, but she will know it, and then to strike the father through the child. At the beginning of the third act the storm draws near. We are admitted to the apartment of Dr. Broadway Wilks what time that practitioner,

with Odette and Lady Walker, receives a "mixed lot," of hawks and pigeons. Here, too, comes Philip Eden, not as a gambler, but as an ambassador from Lord Henry to his wife. While a hubbub of voices sounds through the closed doors of the card-room, Philip tries to work upon Odette's feelings in favor of her daughter. He touches the chord of maternity, and it gives forth a note full and strong that rouses the languishing sympathy of the audience. The mother pours out a torrent of questions respecting her daughter. Her love wells over in its abundance, and, for a moment, we are inclined to believe that she will make the sacrifice required. But the spirit of retribution is there. She must not see her child, and the harsh sentence revives the past, with its thirst for revenge. The woman now feels her power, and, conscious of strength, agrees to an interview with her husband. That meeting quickly follows under strange and startling circumstances. Dr. Broadway

Wilks cheats at cards once too often, and is found out. An episode of vulgar quarrelling ensues, and as the swindler is haled off by his victims, Odette calls, out of the depths of her despair, for a deliverer. An answer comes from her husband by way of prelude to a long and trying scene of recrimination, pain, and tears. Finally, it is arranged that Odette shall have an interview with Eva in the character of her mother's friend. To this the husband consents in the interest of his child, and the wife because she promises herself the supreme revenge of making her shameful identity known to the innocent girl in the presence of him who would die to prevent it. Once more, then, has the drama reached a high pitch of interest. The final struggle is at hand, and it will soon be known whether the mother hardens at sight of the treasure she has lost, or softens the harshness of retribution by repentance.

The last act opens in the sunshine of love and happiness. Eva and Mrs. Eden ex-

change views, "leading up to" marriage, the maid receiving from the matron certain shreds of sage advice which she follows to the letter in a subsequent interview with Lord Shandon. All this is very pretty and engaging, but the brightness of it fades as a weary woman, dressed in black, appears upon the scene. With Odette comes the crisis, and we prepare to watch the issue. The struggle takes place on a narrow field. Lord Henry is present, sad and resolute as ever, but remains dumb after introducing Eva to her "mother's friend." A moment more and the issue is clear. The furtive touch of the hand, the momentary kiss impressed upon the brown hair, show that the maternal instinct is aroused, and Eva's happiness assured.

A spirit of sacrifice for love's sake holds in check the passion for revenge. But this is not all. Odette has to drink a bitter cup to the dregs, and suffer there, in presence of those she had wronged, a retribution more

severe than any her husband could inflict. The child—the means through which she aimed to reach Lord Henry's heart—tortures her own. Eva talks of her dead mother, how good and sweet she was, how her father loved her and often tenderly spoke of her, how she saw that mother in her dreams, played the music she loved, and cherished the few relics that remained of her. Even her favorite theme—that of the slow movement in Beethoven's first sonata — the suffering woman is doomed to hear, and to bear with all its torturing reminiscences. What wonder that she breaks down! This surely is expiation, and we marvel if there be mercy and forgiveness. But the husband remains silent and impassive. For him events must go on to the bitter end. At last, after passionate embraces and burning kisses which alarm the girl, Odette moves slowly away, a drooping, broken figure, with nothing to do but to die. She has conquered herself and made sacrifice for sin. Well for her and

such as her that Heaven's justice is tempered with mercy more than man's. The lesson is a terrible one, and we are not disposed to quarrel with it on the ground of social expediency. But the 'denouement' pains and perplexes. Human nature is often better than human laws, and we would give much to see the sad and humbled creature who turns finally from husband and child to go forth friendless and condemned, received into their arms.

"Odette" is a powerful play. Its appeals to human consciousness are forcible and true, and its problems are those which have an abiding interest for thoughtful minds.

The Odette of Madame Modjeska is marked by qualities of the highest order. It presents a studied picture of the erring wife, swayed by conflicting emotions, and passing rapidly from one mood to another; now revengeful, now loving, now hard as a nether millstone, now dissolved in tears. Nothing in the performance is more admir-

able than the ease and naturalness with which Madame Modjeska accommodates herself to this variableness, save, perhaps, the depth of feeling and power of pathetic expression shown in the interview of mother and child. In this scene Madame Modjeska touched every heart, and consummated a success by no means the least memorable in her career.

CLEMENS SCOTT.

MODJESKA'S "CAMILLE."

MODJESKA'S "CAMILLE."

MADAME MODJESKA is a great actress. Her nature is greatly dramatic, and her art of mimetic expression is perfect. The play of Camille is a useless picture of the insufferable, yet remediless misery which follows upon a great sin. To see Camille is to suffer and to weep —and then to be neither stronger, wiser, better nor more clear-sighted than before. Persons who yield to vice must, and invariably do, suffer the consequences of their wrong conduct. They sin in their souls, and their punishment begins in their soul's, coincident with their sin. It is not society that tortures Camille and Armand; it is the

eternal, immutable, inexorable, moral law of the universe. Art, when it touches this aspect of human experience, necessarily pledges itself to become didactic. It ceases to interpret, and assumes to teach; and, in this instance, since it stops short when it has attained its harrowing picture of anguish, and makes no application of it, and asserts no principle or comfort, or hope, as growing out of it, the assumption surely cannot be held to be justified. The spectator may, indeed, leave Camille with the thought that any fate is better than the fate of those who love; that insensibility is the one thing most of all to be desired in this life, and that no crime can be so madly foolish as the crime of those who trifle with their human affections. This way there may be a lesson and warning in Camille, but the most that ensues upon it is tearful, despairing pain; and this is borne in upon the heart in a manner greater than words can describe by the acting of Madame Modjeska. In her ideal,

Camille is by nature a good woman whom wayward impulse and evil accident have plunged into a bad life, from which under the stress of a pure and sacred love, she is striving to free herself, but from the consequences of which she can never get free. In her execution of this ideal she has set before the public an embodiment of such bewildering beauty, natural emotion, and exquisite grace, that for the first time, the subject of this piece is really made to seem one that ought to be treated, and the piece itself is half redeemed. No logic could accomplish this result; but the force of genius and the fineness of consummate art have power to make the theme one of feeling rather than reason. Modjeska's Camille once seen, will no more be spared from our stage, nor suffered to fade from remembrance, than Ristori's "Theresa," or Seibach's "Marguerite."

As we think upon it there rises in fancy a lithe, willowy figure, whose raiment is the perfection of opulent simplicity—just touched

with a kind of strange richness—and whose every movement is perfect grace. The face is pallid with sorrow; the large, dark, liquid eyes are full of mournful light; the voice—in its low tones as sweet as childhood, and always suggestive of innocence and happiness—pierces to the heart in its louder tones of supplication, and vibrates with a nameless thrill of despairing agony. This figure obeys in every motion the feeling that possesses it. The tumult of self-reproach, the bitterness of doubt, the ecstacy of contented and confiding love, the mingled torment and sublimity of enforced self-sacrifice, the devotion to virtuous purpose, and the conflict betwixt earthly hope and heavenly resignation are all expressed by it with the elements of absolute sincerity and in a form responsive to the nicest touch of the guiding thought which controls every particle of the work. It is impossible to recognize with too much acceptance the splendid mechanism with which the artiste acts. It is a net-work of

movements, attitudes, gestures, tones, pauses, glances, and quiet, indescribable, subtle suggestions which, altogether, is faultless in delicacy and superb in completeness. Her portraiture is all action; her simulation is all reality; her art is all inspired. This was felt more than it was seen in her embodiment of Adrienne, because that character is somewhat evanescent and impalpable in comparison with Camille, and also because Madame Modjeska had to speak thin and ineffective words—in a badly adapted translation of the French play.

In Camille she attains to a freedom that she did not before entirely possess; and if indications mean anything, she will be greater yet in Phædra, Myrrha and other kindred characters of classical drama. It is not possible to specify all these great moments of her Camille. The outburst in the third act, when this tortured human being cries to heaven: "Why do I live?" is as fine as anything that ever was done upon the

stage. No actress has ever here expressed, with anything like the fidelity to nature, and the winning sweetness of temperament which Madame Modjeska employs, that glad content and speechless ecstacy with which the eyes of pure love look upon the object of its devotion. This wonderful felicity of expression, so simple and easy when it is devoted, Madame Modjeska is the first to use; and by this she reveals the soul that fills her works. This embodiment of living and suffering womanhood ends with a death-scene free from every taint of physical decay. There is no odor of drugs diffused around the death-bed of Camille; and the only touch of realism is made with exquisite taste, and with a terrible natural effect, in the gradual yet quiet fall of the corpse from the little couch, at the moment of dissolution.

WILLIAM WINTER.

New York Tribune.

MODJESKA'S "FROU-FROU."

MODJESKA'S "FROU-FROU."

MADAME MODJESKA'S "Frou-Frou" proves to be like her "Juliet," far better than some of the personations in her repertoire. While differing in intensity and power from her Juliet as the two plays differ, Madame Modjeska's "Frou-Frou" is as fresh, beautiful and fascinating, and equally instinct with a complete established and appropriate individuality. Like her Juliet this must henceforth be for those who enjoyed it the perfect, the ideal embodiment of the *rôle*. Modjeska's unequalled elasticity, *verve* and spirited grace in acting, find most happy employment in the *rôle*; and the pictures made in the early scenes depicting the light-hearted gayety

and frivolity of her Parisian life are simply enchanting. Her lithe, slender, supple figure, whether in the black riding habit with velvet jockey-cap, the pink and tan-color *negligé*, the flower-trimmed satin evening dress, or the subsequent white cashmere and old-gold costume, is always as fine as a French painting. Her by-play, no matter how wild the gayety, how free the abandon with which she dashes hither and thither, or throws herself upon a sofa or a chair, is unerringly refined, and breathes of genuine ladyhood. This constant quality of Modjeska's acting is of special importance in a play where the slightest personal suggestion of impurity would make it all intolerable. It is in the delicate and thoughtful fullness of vivid detail and in the lighter vein that Modjeska's acting is most delicious; but in the climaxes she rarely fails to make an electri fying effect at the last.

GEORGE EDGAR MONTGOMERY,
New York Times.

MODJESKA'S "FROU-FROU."

THE best "all-round" performance in the series in which Madame Modjeska has appeared was that of "Frou-Frou," which was produced to a crowded house. This version of the comedy of MM. Meilhac and Halevy is by Mr. Comyns Carr, and is certainly a clever adaptation of the piece as it was presented at the Gymnase in 1869. The main feature of the performance was Madame Modjeska's impersonation of Frou-Frou. Those who had seen her as Constance and as Adrienne were curious to ascertain if she would reach in this part the high rank they had willingly assigned her after her former efforts. Her performance as Adrienne

Lecouvreur naturally suggested the thought that she would be equally satisfactory in the almost kindred part of Gilberte; but still the question remained whether her versatility was comprehensive enough to make as signal a success in the one as she did in the other. The answer remained for a while in doubt. The evidence of passionate power came, as it must necessarily do in the case of a gifted actress, in the third act, where Gilberte, after having vainly tried to induce her husband to let her be the housewife, after having vainly sought the society of her child as a protection against the seductive influence of Valreas, assails her sister with bitter reproaches that she has usurped the position of the housewife, and that she, too, has alienated the child from the mother. The closing words of this scene sound by no means so effetive in the English adaptation as they do in the original. That moving cry of Gilberte's, "Mari enfant tu m'as tout pris; c'est bien, garde tout," after she has said in her

jealous rage, "Je m'avone vaincue : je te cède la place," is ineffectually rendered in Mr. Comyns Carr's version ; and it says all the more for the actress that she was able to carry with her to the end the whole sympathies of the audience, and not only to evoke their sympathies but to arouse their tears as, after the agonizing conflict with Louise, she bursts from the room—to fly, as we all know, with Valreas to Venice. Nothing could be more artistic, if so cold a term may be used in this connection, than Madame Modjeska's urgent appeals, as articulately rendered by her gestures and the clinging force of her fair arms as by her voice, when she beseeches Sartorys, who comes to Venice on a mission of vengeance, to abandon his purpose of fighting a duel with Valreas. The actress leaves no doubt that it is not for the life of the new lover, but for the safety of the husband she is pleading. Nay, she pleads, and in tones that moved many of the ladies in the house to tears, that she fears Frou-Frou is

too ignoble a creature now to be fought over. The news presently comes that the duel has been fought, and the first thought of the errant wife is, not for the lover with whom she fled, but, as it had been before for her son, so was it now for the husband she in a hasty moment deserted. Those who know the play know the rest—how she returns to what once was her home, to see once more her boy, to be once more in her dying moments taken to the breast of her husband. The death of "Pauvre Frou-Frou," like that of Adrienne, is in no degree sensational. It is the death of an exhausted woman, whose parting pains are soothed by the ecstacy of joy which comes from penitence and forgiveness.

JOSEPH KNIGHT.

London Globe.

MODJESKA IN NEW YORK.

MODJESKA IN NEW YORK.

MODESTY does not always accompany great success and high popularity on the stage. This is an age when the artist who hides his light behind a bushel might just as well extinguish it altogether. The first principle prevailing in all branches of art now is insistance, and it is found to have a potent influence over the public mind. If art can lay little claim to modesty, public taste may certainly plead its abundance of that virtue. It rarely if ever finds out anything for itself, but appreciates, or fancies it appreciates something which certain interested persons have told them is the best of its kind. If the interested per-

sons should hesitate in their insistance, it is probable that the public will pause too, and hence the wisest and keenest purveyors of art carry their point by the breathless force and energy of their assaults. When the public complain, as they sometimes do, that they scarcely comprehend the beauty or the greatness of the treasure offered to them, the ready answer comes that the treasure is above their appreciation, and thus popular curiosity is aroused anew, and the artistic character of a nation is felt to be in jeopardy.

A great many "triumphant successes" in all the spheres of art have been secured by these bold devices; and as human nature changes very slowly, it is more than probable that the insistance theory will continue to be practiced.

But the public sometimes make discoveries in art themselves, and when they find that they have unearthed a treasure, they have the double satisfaction of admiring it and appreciating their own cleverness. Ma-

dame Modjeska is a discovery of this kind.

Three weeks ago Modjeska came before us after too long an absence, and gave us her well-studied interpretation of Shakspeare's *Rosalind*. As the heroine of "As You Like It," Modjeska appeared for the first time in America as a comedienne, and to those who were unfamiliar with her tragic powers her *Rosalind* must have been a fascinating and perfect picture. In winning grace, in refinement, in poetry of motion, tenderness, and humor, it has never been surpassed in our day.

It was a performance of infinite charm, and Madame Modjeska, whose art is ever growing, will, without doubt, furnish it with all the fullness it demands by the time she next appears in New York.

When the great artiste appeared in "Camille," those who were strangers to her genius felt its full force for the first time. They had the grace of beautiful womanhood, the tenderness of the lover, the feverish fer-

vor of a soul awaking to unexpected happiness, and the tragedy of a sad and terrible life.

Much as we dislike "Camille" as a play, and strongly as we resent its morbid teachings, we cannot deny that Modjeska gives us as its heroine a picture of such rare loveliness and such almost divine sorrow that we become reconciled to Dumas' insidious teachings, and feel that his work, as interpreted by this grand actress, is wholly human, powerful, and true. Modjeska makes us forget that we are sympathising with an abandoned woman, and we follow the story of her love, sacrifice, despair and death with an absorbing interest which drives away reason and argument. An indifferent or coarse actress makes Camille repulsive and the spectators indignant; but Modjeska idealizes the woman, and we have her saying with Othello, "Oh, Iago! the pity of it, Iago!"

In "Frou-Frou" Madame Modejeska had

a task not unlike that which she undertook in "Camille." She had to charm away our sober senses and extract our sympathy for a frivolous woman, who sins without excuse and repents without contrition. Gilberte is an even more repulsive character than Marguerite Gauthier. Dumas' unhappy heroine has some excuse for her profligacy, seeing that she is brought up in a circle of vice and surrounded by associates who live on her shame and their own. Gilberte is reared in luxury and refinement, has a devoted husband, and what should preserve the purity of any true woman, a child. But she falls without temptation, and deliberately goes astray before any genuine effort is made to lead her into sin. But here again the beauty of Modjeska's art and its wonderful variety reconciles us to a character we ought to despise. The agonies of the outraged husband are placidly forgotten by those who see Modjeska in "Frou-Frou," and we have scarcely a thought to bestow on a family

shamed and humiliated by the folly of a frivolous woman. It is all "Frou-Frou," with Modjeska's audience. There is only one channel for the audience's sympathies, and Louise may make her virtue as pronounced as may be, and De Sartorys may expose his wounds, but we shut our eyes to them and find no place in our hearts except for the silly, reckless, sinful and heartless woman called Gilberte. All this is accomplished because Madame Modjeska invests "Frou-Frou" with a charm of her own personality and because the art she displays is so subtle, so logical and yet so unobtrusive. Modjeska's "Frou-Frou" is the moth fluttering round the flame. We know she will certainly be destroyed by it, but we watch her feeble efforts to resist its fascination and we follow her struggles with a pitiful but intense and absorbing interest.

"Odette," in which Madame Modjeska appears, is a powerful but somewhat unpleasant play. Being French, of course it deals with

a profligate wife and an outraged husband. French dramatists indeed give us very curious pictures of French life. They try to teach us that all married French women, or at least those living in Paris, are unfaithful wives, and that their husbands are devoted and high-minded dupes. Surely, this basis of playwriting is getting somewhat threadbare. It is almost as monotonous as the everlasting virtue of the English peasant and the determined rascality of the British nobleman who used to form the people of the old English domestic drama. It has none of the simple merit of the last named dramatic theory, for in the English drama vice was always properly punished; whereas, in the modern French play virtue has rather a hard time of it and sympathy is extended to the wicked or heartless heroine.

The character of Odette is only saved from absolute contempt by the yearning love of the guilty mother for her child. This is a powerful dramatic motive, and Sardou uses it

with all his own remarkable skill. He boldly introduces it in the first act, at the very moment when the false wife is caught *flagrante delicto.* It thus secures sympathy at once for the erring mother and becomes the leading motive of the play, and redeems Odette from the disgust with which she would otherwise be regarded. In acting "Odette" Madame Modjeska has a much harder task than in playing either "Camille" or "Frou-Frou." These clever dramas to a certain extent play themselves, as they have a simple story with strong dramatic situations. "Odette," on the other hand, is rather a psychological study and the various acts seem written to show the working of one redeeming instinct in a nature which is otherwise coarse, sensual and false. Sardou seems to have thought himself able to dispense with dramatic effect, and hence we find that except in the first act, the curtain falls not on situations but anti-climaxes. The third, and most powerful act in the play, has three or four different

stories in it, and might suggest plots for half-a-dozen plays; and the long and great scene between Odette and her husband after working us into a fever of expectation, suddenly collapses, and the curtain falls on a bewildered audience.

Though we think the pages of a novel better adapted for psychological studies than the stage of a theatre, there can be no denying the remarkable interest the character of Odette provokes, as acted by Madame Modjeska. The fine delicacy with which, in the opening scene, the actress suggests the true character of Odette where the author has not aided her by a sentence or a word, is among the most artistic of Madame Modjeska's effects. When the discovery is made, and the guilty wife is confronted with her husband and her shame, the change from the agony of fear to the defiance of despair was given with a thrilling power which Modjeska has only surpassed in her last act of "Adri-

enne Lecouvreur." The wild fury of her grief and passion when she finds that her child has been taken from her was wonderfully real and touching, and had, as we have already indicated, the effect of transferring the sympathies of the audience at once from the betrayed husband to the guilty, shameless, but not quite heartless woman.

Throughout this play Madame Modjeska exercises all her native charms of grace, elocution and refinement, and in the parts calling for the exercise of something almost akin to tragedy she rose to a height of which we think no other English-speaking actress is capable. "Rosalind," "Viola," "Camille," "Frou-Frou" and "Odette" form a broad repertoire, and to all of them Madame Modjeska was able to give an artistic finish and a personal charm which made her appearances in them memorable and notable dramatic events. Of the five creations "Camille" is undoubtedly her greatest, but "Odette" ex

hibits the actress in a new light, and gives us hope that we may yet see her in a play which will give scope to a great genius which is somewhat confined in its present limits.

JOHN C. FREUND.
Music and Drama.

MODJESKA IN LONDON.

MODJESKA IN LONDON.

I SHALL be obliged to draw largely on my stock of adjectives in order to convey to you an idea of the brilliancy of the audience which gathered on Saturday to greet Madame Helena Modjeska's first night as "Marie Stuart."

The scene of exterior London, with the fog, which Dante must have failed to make one of the attributes of his "Inferno," only because he was unfamiliar with it; with the rain, whose swashing torrents cause one to fancy there must be a mistake somewhere, that man was destined to be amphibean and suffers because of this error in the manufacture of the human article; suddenly transla-

ted to a region where fair, perfumed women, arrayed in beauty's brightest, sit in serried stalls awaiting the appearance of the star of the evening, the beautiful star! Here behind me is the handsome Lady Monckton, wife of Sir John, who is 'something in the city,' Perpetual Lord High, Chief Sheriff to a transitory Lord Mayor or something. He was knighted when great Disraeli bade a farewell to all his greatness. Lady Monckton is a very handsome woman, and to-night wears a dress which well suits her beauty. It is an exact copy of that in which Mrs. Siddons is painted in the fine portrait which is to be seen in the National Gallery, the only agreeable likeness of Mrs. Siddons extant, for surely that terrible, horrible 'Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse' ought to be suppressed as a breeder of nightmare. In the National Gallery portrait, Mrs. Siddons wears a very ladylike costume of blue and white narrow-striped silk, made to fit the figure closely, the bodice, open almost to the waist, folds of

tulle performing modesty's office; sleeves to the elbows, tight, turned back with the musketeer *revers*. A fine effect of color harmony is produced by the bracelets worn by Lady Monckton, all of which on one arm are of silver, and all on the other of gold. They are narrow bangles and very numerous. The porte-veine pig, which had such immense success on the Continent as a charm for bracelets and watch-chains has never been much fancied here. In Paris that pig has now gone to the slaughter-house where fashion kills his kind. The squirming lizard met a similar fate, the negro's head was decapitated, the tiger's tooth has been extracted. For a bracelet with charms, the now only really aristocratic one is that inaugurated last week by the Princess de Sagan at her Chateau of Belbeuf. This is the petiche-bracelet; a galley-slave's chain, in whose links are hung monkeys, elephants, cats, spiders, lambs, dogs, horses, donkeys, and an incidental Noah. It shall

go hard, forsooth, if you do not find your favorite creature in one of these.

There yonder in the box sits the Duchess of—but halte-la! If I go on enumerating one by one the beautiful women who were present, and how they looked, and what they wore, I shall leave myself no space for the real event of the evening—I mean Modjeska's success, not the presence of Mr. Gladstone and his handsome son Herbert. The premier sat directly in front of me in the stalls. What an amazing man is this great minister, orator, author, statesman, and scholar! He is seventy-four, is he not? A marvel! The stalwart frame is as erect as that of a strong man of thirty, the eye keen and bright; the features no more worn than they probably were at fifty. The hair is very thin and scattered, to be sure, and during the whole evening I had so constant an opportunity to study the phrenological developments of the cranium of this great person, that I bitterly regretted my education in that line had been

neglected. What signifies a little, button-like protuberance, about as big as a shilling, situated midway of the back head? Is this a sign of greatness? If so, would one factiously raised, as, say by a boil, or a whack from some hard weapon, be of service?

Throughout the whole play Mr. Gladstone's attention was riveted upon the stage, and his valiant hands often led the applause. His son Herbert is a charming young man, with a thick mass of black wavy hair covering his shapely head. His nose is delicate Greek, a small feature, in great contrast to the Wellingtonian nasal organ of his father. Certainly he must be set down as a 'real beauty,' this worthy young man, but his face does not show much sign as yet of force of character. He has the manner of devoutly reverencing his father, and to be animated by the admirable desire to be a good boy. The couple sit in the front row of stalls, and do not stir the whole evening. A good many opera glasses are levelled at them, but there is no other

demonstration of interest in them on the part of the audience. London is conservative, as New York is democratic, and the people's William is not naturally such a favorite with the fashionable classes as Beaconsfield was. Ah, *bon soir!* that is Bronson Howard; yonder is George Augustus Sala; yonder Boucicault *plus loin* Palgrave Simpson, veteran critic and playwright and Secretary of the Dramatic Author's Society. In a box Mrs. Bancroft, with a great bunch of white lilacs, which she later throws at Modjeska's feet. Sir Charles Young chats with Lady Monckton in the entr' acts; they are members of an amateur dramatic club, and act quite well for non-professionals. But *basta, basta!* "The play's the thing!"

What a beautiful picture is La Modjeska as Mary, Queen of Scots! No, no; you should see it; it is something quite indescribable. The sweet, pale face, with the soft eyes, where the sad soul speaks louder than any words; the mobile mouth, the delicate

profile, the frail form—all this encased and enframed in beautiful costumes of strictest accuracy; the great ruff, the pointed coiffure, long, dark rich robes laden with fur, the large crucifix almost constantly held in the delicate right hand, the handkerchief cut in deep points and trimmed with golden tassels. Every inch a queen, by my faith! nobility in suffering, royal grandeur in the face of death itself. And observe what self-command is shown by this exquisite artist in her firmness in resisting all acknowledgment of her amazing 'reception.' At sight of her cheers rent the air, handkerchiefs were waved aloft, a storm of applause shook the welkin, and made it ring. Calm, resigned, a sad smile wreathing the fine lips, the tender eyes upcast to heaven, so Modjeska stood until quiet reigned. "Such a sweet face," murmured Lady Monckton, behind me. The jolly Gladstones laid their heads together and whispered their opinions in front of me. Boucicault tells the critic of the 'Observer'

how successful the refined Polish actress was in America.

Well chosen, the part of Mary Stuart for Modjeska in respect of accent. What harm that a French Queen should speak English with a foreign flavor? In the more exciting speeches, true, she was like Janauschek: occasionally indistinct, ran the words together; but improvement in this will come. Fancy the excitement to her of such an understanding before such an audience. The thrilling scene in Fotheringay Park between the two Queens was rewarded with renewed cheers—cheers, hearty, loud-voiced cheers mark you—cheers that, unlike the cup, almost inebriate, so exhilarating are they. Modjeska's frame quivered like a wind-shaken leaf during this delirious moment, when her artistic triumph was so superbly acknowledged by an audience of those people over whom the lovely Mary so ardently wished to reign. But never once did she fall into the stilted mannerisms of the old school of act-

ing. She is of her epoch, Modjeska. She knows the key-note of the character of the English nation of to-day: Avoid the appearance of energy; energy is such deuced bad form. Have feelings, but avoid the energetic expression of them. Be intense, not demonstrative. Look daggers, but use none.

OLIVE LOGAN.

Philadelphia Times.

SUCCESS ON THE STAGE,

BY

HELENA MODJESKA.

SUCCESS ON THE STAGE.

[The following article, written by Madame Modjeska, appeared in the "North American Review" for December, 1882, and gives fully her ideas upon the art of acting.]

THINK that success, in the usual meaning of the word, ought not to be the chief ambition of the dramatic candidate. His aim should be higher; his great object should be to be true to his art, whether such fidelity be rewarded by appreciation from the public or not. "*Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra,*" must be his motto. Success is not always the best evidence of artistic merit. How many good actors have remained all their lives in obscurity, and, on the other hand, how many indifferent ones

have obtained a certain kind of popularity. Above everything, an artist ought never to sacrifice his own artistic convictions to the momentary tastes of the public; such a sacrifice, although followed by a short-lived success, will lower him as an artist, and kill in him whatever there may be of natural ability.

The actor, like the poet or the painter, must be born with a certain amount of native talent, which, if neglected, may disappear, but, if cultivated thoroughly and rightly, will produce the desired results. I believe, however, that a person who is deprived of these natural gifts, and who possesses an average amount of intelligence, can, by careful and judicious training, acquire a certain amount of technical knowledge, or what I would call the handicraft of the profession, so as to fill, respectably, minor parts on the stage, and not be out of place in what is called a good *ensemble.*

But I cannot believe that a person not possessing those natural gifts has ever ac-

quired by study the "creative power" which is the distinctive mark of a true artist. With the actor, creative power implies the faculty of building up a character true to nature, and of endowing it with life, so as to produce the illusion that his personation is not a fiction, but a reality.

True, we have, in the annals of the stage, quite a number of instances of actors being unpromising at first and eventually becoming eminent. This does not prove that they did not possess the necessary talent, but simply shows that for some reason or other, they were not able to display their ability. Possibly nervousness, want of experience, or injudicious choice of parts deprived them for a time of their power; while later on, experience, good advice, or some fortunate circumstance allowed them to bring to the surface what was concealed within. In a word, then, the first essential qualification for an actor consists in an inborn talent, the character of which might possibly be described

as an imaginative and assimilative faculty, which allows him to merge his individuality into that of another.

The next essential is the constant study and work required to cultivate and improve the natural gifts. I never have seen genius succeed without labor, and I suppose that it is the inseparable quality of genius that it will never neglect activity in the special branch of science or art toward which it is inclined. Was it not Goethe who said that genius was always accompanied by an extraordinary ability to work, and that its peculiar character partly consisted of an instinctive knowledge how to work. But the happy possessor of genius has, intuitively, a deeper insight into the mysteries of art, which enables him to learn quickly, and which shows him the most direct path to follow. Besides, study and observation being congenial to him, his task appears easy, and. his efforts are not strained. But, nevertheless, true genius could not exist with laziness and inactivity.

I do not think that the feeling of a special aptitude for acting should be much relied upon. Genius is generally unconscious of itself. I have generally observed that the most eminent artists were often the most diffident and unassuming, and that they passed frequently through periods of great discouragement. There are moments in the life of an artist when he may feel like Michel Angelo, exclaiming before his statue of Moses, "*Porché non parlai?*" But such moments are rare. How much more frequent are those when, feeling how far he is yet from the ideal that he tries to attain, he is tempted to throw away his brush, his chisel, or his stage-purple, and to give up the Herculean task?

The right frame of mind, I imagine, for one who enters upon a dramatic career, must not consist so much in a feeling of confidence in his own powers as in a sincere devotion to his art, a firm belief in its high mission, while in his heart must burn that sacred

flame which gives him the courage and energy to overcome all obstacles and undergo all privations. It is what we Catholics call "vocation."

It would be a great mistake to choose the profession with the idea that money comes easier and work is less hard in this than in any other. There is little hope for the advancement of such aspirants.

There is no greater mistake than to suppose that mere professional training is the only necessary education. The general cultivation of the mind, the development of all the intellectual faculties, the knowledge how to think, are more essential to the actor than mere professional instruction. In no case should he neglect the other branches of art; all of them being so nearly akin, he cannot attain to a fine artistic taste, if he is entirely unacquainted with music, the plastic arts, and poetry.

The best school of acting seems to me to be the stage itself—when one begins by

playing small parts, and slowly, step by step, reaches the more important ones. There is a probability that if you play well a minor character, you will play greater ones well by and by; while if you begin with the latter, you may prove deficient in them, and afterward be both unwilling and unable to play small parts. It was my ill-fortune to be put, soon after my entrance on the stage, in the position of star in a travelling company. I think it was the greatest danger I encountered in my career, and the consequence was that when I afterward entered a regular stock company, I had not only a great deal to learn, but much more to unlearn.

The training by acting, in order to be useful, requires a certain combination of circumstances. It is good in the stock companies of Europe, because with them the play-bill is constantly changed, and the young actor is required to appear in a great variety of characters during a short period. But it may prove the reverse of good in a

theatre where the beginner may be compelled for a year or so to play one insignificant part. Such a course would be likely to kill in him all the love of his art, render him a mechanical automaton, and teach him but very little.

Private instruction can be given either by professors of elocution or by experienced actors. I know nothing of the first, as there are no professors of elocution, to my knowledge, outside of America and of England, and I never knew one personally. But speaking of private lessons given by experienced actors, there are certainly a great many arguments and instances in favor of that mode of instruction. Of course, a great deal depends upon the choice of the teacher. But, supposing he is capable, he can devote more time to a private pupil than he can to one in a public school. Some of the greatest actresses that ever lived owed, in great part, their success to the instructions of an experienced actor, of less genius than themselves.

Take, for instance, Rachel and Samson. Strange to say, it happens often that very good actors make but poor professors, while the best private teacher I ever met was, like Michonnet, but an indifferent actor himself. The danger is that the pupil in this kind of instruction may become a mere imitator of his model. Imitation is the worst mode of learning, and the worst method in art, as it kills the individual creative power, and in most cases, the imitators only follow the peculiar failings of their model.

There are many objections to dramatic schools, some of which are very forcible. There is in them, as in private teaching, the danger of imitation, and of getting into a purely mechanical habit, which produces conventional, artificial acting. Yet it is not to be denied that a great number of the best French and German actresses and actors have been pupils of dramatic schools, and that two of the schools—those of Paris and Vienna—have justly enjoyed a great cele-

brity. Of the schools I have known personally I cannot speak very favorably. One point must be borne in mind; a dramatic school ought to have an independent financial basis, and not rely for its support on the number of its pupils, because in such a case the managers might be induced to receive candidates not in the least qualified for the dramatic profession.

Of the three elements that, in my opinion, go to make up a good dramatic artist, the first one, technique, must be acquired by professional training; the second and higher one, which is art itself, originates in a natural genius, but can and ought to be improved by the general cultivation of the mind. But there is yet something beyond these two: it is inspiration. This cannot be acquired or improved, but it can be lost by neglect. Inspiration, which Jefferson calls his demon, and which I would call my angel, does not depend upon us. Happy the moments when it responds to our appeal.

It is only at such moments that an artist can feel satisfaction in his work—pride in his creation; and this feeling is the only real and true success which ought to be the object of his ambition.

HELENA MODJESKA.

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