



MODJESKA'S MEMOIRS

THE RECORD OF A ROMANTIC CAREER

I—THE BEGINNINGS OF A GREAT ACTRESS

BY HELENA MODJESKA

By good fortune, Madame Modjeska, one of the greatest geniuses of the modern stage, and one of the most admired and beloved women of our time,—a great actress, a true patriot, and a beautiful character,—finished her memoirs not long before her death on the 8th of last April, and those portions of the work most interesting to English-speaking people will appear in *THE CENTURY MAGAZINE*. Of all the distinguished Continental actresses who have visited America and England, her career was in many ways the most romantic and remarkable. Rising by sheer force of genius to the summit of distinction on the Polish stage, she suddenly abandoned all her triumphs and with her husband Count Bozenta took up a frontier life in California with a group of Polish immigrants, including him who came to be the famous author of "Quo Vadis." The colony not proving a financial success, she conquered the English language, and had a new and triumphant career as an English-speaking actress in America and Great Britain.

The story of her life, written by herself, has the fascination and progress of a work of fiction. It abounds in reminiscences of interesting persons in many arts and walks of life, and includes wise and useful observations on the art of acting in general, as well as on the characteristics of contemporary dramatic artists in both Europe and America.

Of Madame Modjeska, William Winter has written: "It is not a detraction from her worth as an actress to say that her greatness was that of a noble woman. . . . To think of her as the years drift away will be to remember a presence of tender, poetic beauty, of winning refinement, and of perfect grace; and for many and many a day the old playgoer, musing upon the past, will cherish, among his sweetest recollections, those that linger and cluster around her loved and honored name."—THE EDITOR.

CHILDHOOD

SOME of the events and surroundings among which I was brought up come back to my mind with the clearness of a silhouette, perfect in outline; and since I have to tell the story of my life, it is just as well to begin at the very beginning.

Born on the 12th of October, 1840, I was one of ten children at home; and being a member of so numerous a family, I could not claim the exclusive attention of my mother, who, besides many domestic duties, had the management of her property on her shoulders. In consequence, I grew up mostly under the influence of

nature, and, free and unrestrained, formed my own judgment of things, blindly, innocently adorning and magnifying them with my vivid imagination, catching eagerly snatches of heroic songs, poems, or religious hymns, memorizing and repeating them, and thus unconsciously building up my character as well as laying the foundation for my artistic future.

When I follow closely my childhood, I see distinctly the logical evolution of my destiny. As far back as I can remember, I did not get on well with other children, who often left my company, branding me with nicknames, such as, "Princess of the Sea Foam," or "Lady with Long Nails"; sometimes they called me "a Fury," sometimes again "a Weeping Willow," or "Laughing Magpie," on account of my occasional uncontrollable fits of laughter.

Misfortunes, fires, the hissing of cannon-balls, the crash of bursting bombs, the march of armies, men killed and rolling in blood—these are never-forgotten impressions which thrilled my childish soul through and through, shaping it into an untimely maturity and awakening in it inclination for heroism, thirst for greatness, for sacrifice, in a word, the necessity of attaining the unattainable, the upward start in quest of high ideals.

My father, Michael Opid, was a student of philology and a teacher in one of the high schools in Cracow. Born in the Carpathian Mountains, he brought with him to the valley a warm, unsophisticated heart, a most vivid imagination, and a great love for music.¹ He was also very fond of children. I remember him sitting by the fireside during long winter evenings, holding me and my sister on his knees; near him, my mother knitting, and the boys, together with neighbors' children, scattered about on the floor, and with glistening, curious eyes watching him and listening attentively to his stories. They were wonderful stories, which touched us with pity or thrilled us with joy. Some of them were taken from national legends or from the mountaineer folk-lore; some were his own invention or taken from his cherished books. His favorite story was Homer's *Iliad*, parts of which he told us in his simple language.

In contrast to my father's gentle nature, my mother was a person of great energy, great activity, very quick, outspoken, very generous, but rash in judgment and often regretting her hasty words and actions. She possessed good health and a merry heart. Some of her friends spoke of her great beauty.

PLAYING WITH BULLETS

IN 1815, Cracow, with its surroundings, was proclaimed a free city by the Congress of Vienna, with the agreement of the powers, Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Notwithstanding the stipulations of those countries, and contrary to their pledges, Cracow was annexed by Austria in October, 1846. The people of Cracow naturally were indignant, and when, in 1848, revolution broke out in Vienna, they were awakened to their old hopes of independence; but the Austrians crushed these hopes by the bombardment of the city.

One morning my mother, looking pale, came in, followed by all my brothers, who rushed into the house very excited, all talking together about the national guards, the exiles, and the Austrians. While they were talking, a murmur of voices was heard approaching nearer and nearer, until an unusual clamor filled the streets. In the midst of it was heard a cry, "Build barricades!" Immediately all the houses disgorged their inhabitants, who carried beds, mattresses, chairs, and sofas, throwing them into a large heap, until a barricade was raised across the street. We counted three barricades, the last one at the end of our street, and leaning out of the window, we could see the Austrian bayonets approaching in the distance. Peremptorily our mother ordered us away from the window, exclaiming:

"Great God! they are bombarding the city! Aunt Teresa, call the boys and servants, and let us go to the cellar! And please tell them to bring some bedding, as we must pass the night there, if they do not stop." Then taking my sister by the hand, our imposing mama turned to me and said briefly, "Follow me." But I stood where she left me. Was it fright or curiosity? I cannot tell; but I did not move.

My youngest and my own brother,

¹ For these details about my father I am indebted to my mother.



Drawn by Wladyslaw T. Benda. Half-tone plate engraved by R. Varley

HELENA AND HER BROTHER GATHERING AUSTRIAN BULLETS

Adolphe Opid, three years older than myself, tearing himself away from Aunt Teresa's protecting arms, came up to me, disheveled and with an expression of wild passion in his face, exclaiming:

"I will not go to the cellar! I want to see!" On the instant, a tremendous crash shook the house to its foundations. Something heavy struck the wall, followed by something falling with a loud clang against the stone pavement. I began to cry aloud. My brother grew very pale. His lips were trembling. He ran to the window, and, leaning out, said excitedly, "A bomb tore away half of the iron balcony, and made a big hole in the wall!"

The cannon reports still continued, and the streets were filled with the cries of the people; then, with a noise like the snapping of whips, the rifles began their work. Louder and louder grew the shooting, and with it the crash of broken window-panes falling to the floor with the bullets. Adolphe, who during that time ran from one room to another picking up the bullets, pulled me with him to the corner room, the one most exposed to the fire of the Austrians.

"Hide in that corner," he cried, pushing me forward, and then added with open pleasure, "There will be more bullets." And there were more. This time bullets and shots fell like hail through the window. "I told you so! Hold up your apron!" my brother cried, and picking the leaden toys from the floor, he threw them into my apron, which I obediently lifted up, not altogether displeased with the contents.

The shooting ceased for a while, and we went to the window. There a picture met my eyes. On the opposite side of the street a man lay on his back on the pavement, his shirt open, and in the middle of his breast a gaping, red wound. A woman knelt by him. Oh, the sight of murder and death for a child's eyes! Clinging close to my brother, I cried. My mother's desperate call, "Helcia! Adolphe!" made us leave the window, and we rushed out of the room, and down to the cellar.

By the dim light of a lantern and a few candles the interior of our large cellar looked more picturesque than pleasant. Slowly silence began to reign, and

we heard only the distant shooting and faint cries of the people. Mother sat on her improvised bed with her head in her hands. Aunt Teresa undressed me, and I knelt for my evening prayers. My mother kissed my forehead, and whispered:

"Lie down and sleep; shut your eyes; you have seen too much to-day. Good night." I did as she told me; but behind my closed eyelids I saw a streak of red, a pale face, and the wide-opened eyes of a dying man, who stared at me.

CHURCH AND SCHOOL

As far back as my memory can reach, I remember that I loved to be in church. To be there, kneeling on the marble floor, looking at the altars, and listening to the organ music, was sufficient to make me happy; and when I prayed during the mass, a deep sense of beauty and holy peace spread over me, and the church seemed filled with angels. Often I closed my eyes, and, with face upturned, waited, hoping that one of those holy spirits floating in the air would touch my forehead with its wings. My favorite amusement after the evening prayers was to join my hands in the same way, and, holding them against the light, imagine I had a little chapel of my own, with three arches, a door, and a window in the background.

I do not recollect the exact program of our studies, but my favorite subjects were grammar, Polish history, and French, and it seemed that I made some progress in my studies as well as in my behavior. For my mother came one day and expressed her gratitude to our teachers, Mrs. R. and her daughters, for the good influence they exerted over me, assuring them that they had corrected many deficiencies in my character. To which Mrs. R. replied, that though I seemed to improve, yet there were two things in my character she could not cure me of, my stubbornness and my bashfulness. Oh, that horrible, shrinking shyness, which stood in my way so often, which sent all the blood to my cheeks, and made me look like a boiled lobster at the least provocation! That awful timidity which many times, even in my days of maturity, pre-

¹ Helcia is a Polish diminutive for Helena.

vented me from asserting my own value in the face of impudent ignorance! How often I loathed that unwelcome defect without being able to overcome it! Even my long stage career did not cure me entirely of this disease.

SEEING HER FIRST PLAY

MRS. R. and her daughters were very fond of the theater, and one afternoon, together with my mother, they planned to take a box to hear the new soprano, Miss Studzinska. Miss Ludwina, always kind and thoughtful of others, begged my mother to take Josephine and me with them, the box being large enough for six. The play was "The Daughter of the Regiment," followed by a one-act ballet entitled, "The Siren of Dniester." Miss Studzinska was the heroine of the opera, and little Josephine Hofman,¹ dressed as a butterfly, had the prominent dancing part in the ballet. It was my first visit to a theater, and the whole evening was a dream of joy and enchantment to me. My mother told me years afterward that I was so absorbed by the play that I became perfectly oblivious to the surroundings. I was blind, mute, and deaf, and she could not get a sign from me. I went to bed with a high fever, and for weeks afterward I tried to imitate the butterfly dance, and sang some airs, accompanying them with gestures, to the great derision of my brothers, who had spied me on the sly.

Every child tries to imitate actresses seen on the stage; there is nothing wonderful in that, and there is no indication of talent in such demonstrations. Still, I know mothers of little girls who think that their daughters must one day be great actresses because they are naturally graceful and fond of pretty frocks and dances. I cannot be grateful enough to my dear mother that she never encouraged my inclination to the stage, and never excited my vanity by flattering or praising me to my face. I became an actress because I think it was my destiny to be an artist of some kind: and as the stage was more accessible than any other branch of art, I chose it. My three older brothers were crazy about the stage, and asked mother for permission to give

¹ Joseph Hofman's aunt.

² His full name was Gustave Sinnmayer Modrzewski.

private theatricals at home. Wearied with their incessant pleadings, she consented at last, probably to keep them out of mischief. And it happened, to my great delight, that we had regular performances every month. Joseph, the eldest, who was married, painted the scenery; Simon took care of the music and songs; and Felix was the leading man. With four or five young students they formed a company. Girls were not admitted to this histrionic circle, the boys assuming female parts.

THE GREAT FIRE

IN Cracow, in July, 1850, occurred the great fire which lasted ten days. My mother lost in the fire almost everything she possessed, and dark days came upon our lives until the brothers were able to help.

GERMAN LESSONS WITH MR. MODJESKI

IT was in the autumn of 1850 that my brother Joseph introduced Mr. Gustave Modjeski to my mother.² I was ten years old; he was then nearly thirty. He soon became a friend of the family and offered to teach us children German, which we hated in every way, but which became obligatory in public schools and convents. My sister and myself tried to get out of these lessons, but we were held fast to them by Mr. Modjeski's stern behavior. It took a long time for us to get used to him; but we ended by liking him quite well, especially when, during the long winter evenings, he read aloud to us some wonderful stories. It was he who established in our house the custom of reading aloud in the evenings.

A YOUTHFUL PLAYWRIGHT AND ACTRESS

MY three half-brothers were scattered in the world. Joseph Benda, after his wife's death, leaving his two-year-old daughter in my mother's care, went to Russian Poland, where he joined a theatrical company. Simon Benda, my musical half-brother, went to a conservatory of music in Vienna. Felix Benda, at nineteen years of age, became an actor. Our household became very quiet, and something had to be done to enliven it. My

brother Adolphe¹ suggested that as we were now "grown up" (he was fifteen and I twelve), we could give performances, as the big brothers did; and for that purpose we wrote a play together. We found a plot in a magazine and shaped it into a drama in one act, I writing two female parts, and he supplying his own speeches. It was a fierce tragedy, with the scene laid in Greece. A jealous girl was waiting for her lover, who was hundreds of miles away on some secret patriotic mission. He had sworn to be back on such a day, at such an hour. In case he failed to return in time, his affianced lady swore on her part to take poison, which the ladies of that nation are supposed always to carry about their frail bodies, in rings, medallions, even in scapularies.

The bill read as follows:

Sophronia, an aristocratic

Grecian lady Helena Opid
 Ismena, her companion . . . Josephine Opid
 Hector, the young patriot . . Adolphe Opid

At the opening scene, dressed in Aunt Teresa's black gown, tucked and pinned to make it suit her size, with a black lace mantilla on her head, *Sophronia* walked up and down, excitedly wringing her hands. Suddenly she stopped, and, looking at the clock, exclaimed:

"Ten o'clock and he is not here!" Then came a short dialogue between herself and her plump duenna, whose long dress was dreadfully in her way.

"Twelve! Heavens! Now it is time to die!" and she poured the poison into a tin cup. She lifted it to her lips, when at once,—oh, rapture! oh, joy!—footsteps were heard. "Yes, it is he!" and with a laugh of joy she nestled on her hero's breast. But, alas! poor *Hector*, after a short explanation, fell down and died from exhaustion and a neglected wound. The heroine's joy turned into a desperate speech and a convulsive sob over the dead lover's body. Curtain!

The dear Aunt Teresa was wiping her eyes, but mother looked stern. She took me aside, and said I had made a poor exhibition before the neighboring children, playing such a play and in that absurd manner. Then she concluded with an

imperative, "No more theatricals!" I received the blow with tears.

I had often asked Aunt Teresa why, when all the girls I knew had mirrors in their rooms, we had none. But she replied that it was a dangerous thing to look in them, especially after dark. Instead of a mirror, I used to place a lamp in the middle of the room, and standing between it and the white wall, I could see distinctly the silhouette of my whole body, which I twisted in all sorts of impossible poses. I had great difficulty in managing my arms, and I did not like the appearance of my rather short-fingered hands; they did not look a bit like those in pictures and statues. I came to the conclusion that the best way of managing them was to keep the fingers close together, as in some archaic pictures I saw in churches. In spite of all that, when I was before our modest audience, I forgot my hands and arms and poses, and thought only of the miseries of my heroine. And mother did not like it, though I had tried to please her above all the people in the room. I took the manuscript and tore it up in little pieces, which I threw into the fire.

THE THEATER AGAIN

At the age of fourteen I had finished the highest grade at the convent school, and then my literary education began. First of all I read frantically our own poets. In the winter evenings the sole pleasure of our small circle consisted in reading aloud, and we made the acquaintance of Walter Scott, Dickens, Bulwer, George Sand, and of course of Dumas père, the idol of young people. We never liked to read Russian or German stories, such was the resentment we cherished in our hearts toward those nations; but one evening we were invited by Mr. Modjeski to see the German troupe playing at that time in our city. By the wish of the Government it was decided that Polish and German companies should play alternately at the Cracow theater. I had not been at the theater since I was seven years old.

I dressed in a hurry, and was so fidgety and afraid of being late that I made mother start three quarters of an hour before the beginning, and when we ar-

¹The youngest boy and my own brother, Adolphe Opid.



Drawn by Wladyslaw T. Benda. Half-tone plate engraved by C. W. Chadwick
THE YOUNG ACTRESS USING THE WALL AS A MIRROR

rived, the lights were not yet up. I remember with what respect, almost reverence, I entered "the temple." I do not remember exactly what thoughts whirled in my brain at my entrance to the theater, but I know that my whole being was filled with a kind of rapturous awe. Schiller's "Kabale und Liebe" ("Intrigue and Love") was the play, and it fascinated me completely. I sat like one petrified, drinking in the words I did not understand, and feasting my eyes on the somewhat stiff and ponderous players. In the dramatic passages, however, their actions were impressive and clear. By the force of the acting, and the help of Mr. Modjeski, who translated to me several scenes, I succeeded in understanding the plot. When we returned home, I sat without a word at the tea-table, ruminating over the wonderful masterpiece I had just seen, until, jeered at as a lunatic, I was sent to bed. That evening created a revulsion of feeling in me. I thought better of Germans.

One afternoon, thinking that no one but my sister was listening to me, I recited a snatch from the poem "Maria" by Malczewski. When I finished, I saw Felix standing in the door and smiling. I was terrified as if I had been caught in some naughtiness; but he asked quietly:

"Who taught you to recite?"

"Nobody," I murmured.

"Would you like to go on the stage?" he asked.

"He mocks me," I thought, and said nothing. But he continued:

"I am not jesting; if you wish to become an actress, I can help you." Saying this, he left me—left me with my thoughts in a whirl.

"How can I be an actress? How shall I ever dare to appear before a crowd, when I am too shy to speak before a single stranger?" I was neither happy nor unhappy at the idea of devoting my life to the stage, and only when I looked at Schiller's statuette, a great joy, a vague hope, filled my heart.

INTRODUCTION TO SHAKSPERE

THE German manager, in order to attract the Polish public, which obstinately kept away from the German theater, used

to engage different stars from Vienna and Berlin. After the financial failure of several stars, a bill appeared at the corners of the street, announcing Fritz Devrient in the part of *Hamlet*. I had heard of Shakspeare, but never had read or seen any of his plays, and naturally enough my curiosity was aroused.

"Hamlet" made an overwhelming impression on me, and I worshiped at once the great masterwork of that mysterious spirit ruling over human souls, the wonderful wizard, reading human hearts and God's nature, the great, inimitable Shakspeare. He became my master then and there, and remained so through my theatrical career. I never took better lessons in acting than those *Hamlet* gives to the players; I never enjoyed acting more than when I played those wayward, sweet, passionate, proud, tender, jolly, cruel, and sad heroines of Shakspeare's dramas.

I lived weeks afterward in continual enchantment. The translations of Shakspeare were scarce, but Mr. Modjeski succeeded in getting "Hamlet" in Polish translation, and also "Two Gentlemen of Verona," "The Merchant of Venice," and "Timon of Athens," which I read greedily. I had given up all aspirations in the direction of the stage, but my desire for achieving a name for myself had never left me, and I thought for a while I might gain it as a writer. At the same time my good mother wanted me to pass a teacher's examination, believing in self-support for women. To me learning was the highest pleasure. Endowed as I was with an exceptionally strong memory, it did not cost me any effort. I enjoyed it. I also went steadily to Mr. Mirecki's music school for three months. My only ambition and desire then was some day to become a church and concert singer; but the master insisted on making of me a prima donna, and again the vision of my treading the stage boards stood before me by day and by night. Alas! the dear old man died in a few months, and I never took another lesson.

DETERMINATION TO BECOME AN ACTRESS

AMONG my letters I have found the following letter I wrote about that time to my brother Simon:

Dear Brother: I would have written to you oftener, but I was and am very busy all the time. . . . First of all, I help mama in the house, for we have no servant; only old Kazimierzowa comes twice a day to wash the dishes. She also does our laundry, but ironing belongs to mother and me. . . . I have also to help Stasia¹ with her lessons. . . . I am the only one that can manage her, because she loves me and I talk to her as to a grown person.

All my days are taken with sewing, studies, and a thousand little things. The evenings I spend in reading, sometimes prolonged until three o'clock in the morning.

And now I have very important news for you, but I am afraid you will scream. Yet I am going to tell you, for I have more courage to write than to speak: I am to become an actress! This is not all. I am to become a German actress. Please do not swear! Mr. Gustave [Modjeski] says I shall have better opportunities on the German stage, and though I do not like the idea yet, I think I have to please him. You see, dear brother, I want to do something in the world, and though I may not get an engagement, yet I study, study, and study. It may be useful to me some day, and if not, well, at least it gives me a great deal of comfort at present.

I know you will say that I always live in the clouds. Alas! it is so. And I think I shall never have peace until I am really up there among the clouds. . . . I wish spring were here. But it is only autumn now, and a long, heavy winter is coming. Adieu. Mr. Gustave sends hearty greetings to you. Mama, Josephine, and myself send you a thousand kisses.

Your loving sister,

Helena.

MARRIAGE TO MR. MODJESKI

ABOUT that time happened this great event of my life. Mr. Modjeski, knowing my great love of reading, always thoughtfully provided me with books. I read with him Goethe, Wieland, and Lessing. He also made me memorize selected verses from the "Nibelungenlied." It was during those readings that one day he asked me to become his wife. I answered "Yes" without hesitation, because he had already become as dear to me as my own

brothers, and, besides, my imagination had adorned him with the attributes of all possible and impossible heroes about whom I had read in poetry or prose.

In 1861, in the month of May, Mr. Modjeski, my little son Rudolphe, then four months old, and I were living in Bochnia, where my mother and my little niece had moved previously.

One day at a May festival, while the young men and girls of Bochnia were trying their feet in a quadrille on the uneven ground of a meadow, Mr. Modjeski and I perceived the figure of a man coming toward us with dancing steps. We both exclaimed:

"Mr. Loboiko! What are you doing here? Have you left the stage?"

"Oh, no; but there is little chance to draw a good salary during the summer months." Then addressing me, he exclaimed: "Ah, your sister is here, also! She is a Juno." And he strolled toward the dancer's circle, where my tall sister, with her dazzling complexion, her beautiful figure, and her immense crown of golden hair, was queening it over the countrified, stooping, and tightly laced country girls.

AN AMATEUR BENEFIT AND FIRST APPEARANCE

ONE afternoon Mr. Loboiko brought news of an unfortunate accident at the salt mines, causing the death of several men, who left widows and orphans without any means of support. We felt very badly about it, and decided to arrange an amateur performance for the benefit of the bereaved families.

This prospect transported me into the seventh heaven. The poor would be relieved, and, moreover, I should act on a real stage. Mr. Loboiko at once offered his services as instructor and artistic director. He obtained the casino hall, in which he built a stage about ten feet deep. Then he manufactured some scenery out of wall-paper and canvas, and made a curtain of red calico, painted all over with golden stars.

We selected two plays for the performance: "The White Camelia," a comedy in one act, and the "Prima Donna; or, A Foster Sister," a play with songs, in two

¹ My niece, Joseph Benda's daughter, whom he placed in my mother's care before leaving for Russian Poland.

acts. We had eight rehearsals, and the actors were, speaking in theatrical slang, "dead letter perfect," yet, when I heard the curtain bell I nearly fainted. I tried to recollect the first lines of my part, but could not. My hands became as cold as ice, thrilling, acute shivers ran up and down my spinal column, and altogether I had a feeling of sinking slowly into the ground. I do not recollect how I found myself on the stage, but once before the footlights, I recovered my presence of mind and never made a mistake or forgot one word of my part. Toward the middle of the performance I was completely at ease when, just at the beginning of a long soliloquy, my niece, in the prompter's box, dropped the manuscript. The leaves went scattering over the floor, and the poor child began to cry, asking me in a desperate whisper:

"What shall I do now?"

I answered composedly:

"Pick up the leaves," and continued my part. My inborn shyness had totally disappeared when at work, and it came back to me only the next morning, after the performance.

The audience was more numerous than we expected. All the authorities of the district and city, several country gentlemen of the neighborhood with their families, a few occasional visitors to town, the teachers, and the local schools; in fact, everybody who dressed in Occidental fashion, and even a thin scattering of Jews, in their long silk gabardines, filled the casino hall, and represented what is called in the American theatrical language "a full house." We presented several new pieces, rehearsing the whole week each time, and playing Saturdays.

One evening a stranger came behind the scenes after the performance. He was very pleasant, and rather amused at my "childish appearance," as he called it. He asked me, nevertheless, how long I had been on the stage, which I considered a flattering mistake.

"I never was on the stage," I answered, "and I am not an actress. We act only for our pleasure, and we are only amateurs, except Mr. Loboiko." It was Mr. Chencinski,¹ a well-known actor on the Warsaw stage, a stage-manager, and a famous dramatic author as well. He

said something complimentary, which I do not remember, and then, in taking leave of me, concluded: "I hope to see you in Warsaw soon."

These words engraved themselves in my memory, and turned my head completely. All the doubts concerning my abilities were dispelled. I knew now that I had talent. I knew I had to become an actress or die. And I wanted to be not a German, but a Polish, actress, and go some day to Warsaw to play at the imperial theater before a brilliant audience—poets, artists, learned men, and refined women; and with great actors and actresses.

In a few hours it was decided that my little experience had opened the way to a career, and Mr. Modjeski advised Mr. Loboiko to go to Cracow and obtain a license for a traveling company. Thus we started on the road under Mr. Loboiko's management. In a short time, however, he handed over the direction to Mr. Modjeski.

FIRST PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

THE picture of this first professional trip stands vividly before my eyes. The weather was glorious. From the road which led uphill almost all the time we saw villages, with luxuriant orchards, golden fields, and diminutive white huts, all flooded with warm sunlight, and far ahead of us the Carpathian Mountains. My joy was so great that I sang. My sister caught the tune, and the others followed. Absorbed by our own merriment, we did not notice that we were traversing a village until our wagon stopped and we saw peasants gathered about us, girls with pink cheeks looking at us from the windows and the garden gates, and little Jews yelling: "Circus! Circus!" Amid laughter and jokes we descended from our Noah's ark at an inn.

When we were established in New Sandec town, Mr. Loboiko wrote to several actors and actresses, who soon joined us. Some came even without being invited, so that at the end of three weeks we had a company of nineteen members. The success was great, and soon we were able to buy decent scenery and costumes.

I became the star from the beginning, but I wanted to play parts of various kinds

¹ Pronounced Hencinski.



Halftone plate engraved by H. Davidson

MODJESKA AS "OPHELIA"

in order to gain experience, and I made several hits in episodic small parts. One evening I played a hysterical, comical old lady, and made the public laugh. I was ready to play even a few lines in pieces where there was no good part for me. Work was a delight. When I think of my enthusiasm of those days, even now I feel thrilled with its recollection. We lived in rooms which were barely furnished; we had to sit on boxes and all sorts of improvised seats. I had only two dresses, one black and the other white, with two tunics, which I used to transform by addition of black or pink ruches. Our meals were frugal, but from the porch I could see fields of wild flowers, trees, and mountains; above all, I had my parts. Walking up and down on the veranda, I studied them to the accompaniment of birds' songs, and felt as proud and wealthy as the richest woman.

The rendering of a part was not so attractive as the study of it, and I never was satisfied with the applause when I was not quite pleased with myself. Even at this early stage of my career I had a habit of calling before my mind a picture of the person I had to represent, and then filling it with my own self. When I could not see the vision in my mind from head to foot, even to the garment and gestures, and when I could not hear my own voice ringing in the accents of my vision, I rejected the part; for I knew I could not play it to my satisfaction.

"THE NEW SANDEC COMBINATION"

At the end of August we left New Sandec. In order to prove our gratitude to

the town, we called our company "The New Sandec Combination."

Our company grew rapidly. In April, 1862, it contained thirty-six members, and our equipment and staff were considerable. There were no regular salaries, however, in our combination; but we shared the income according to the importance and abilities of the actors. Not being in a cast did not exclude the actor from his right to a share. The actors

being interested in the income, tried their best to promote our success. The reputation of "The New Sandec Combination" reached the ears of Mr. Nowakowski, one of the managers of the endowed theater in Lwow (Lemberg),¹ who came to Sambor to see our performance. He paid many compliments to the company and to me, and said he would surely remember me. In case I should get tired of traveling and wished an engagement in the Lemberg theater, the doors would be opened for me.



Half-tone plate engraved by H. Davidson

HELENA MODJESKA—A STUDY IN EXPRESSION

A REMARKABLE SHOT

In September of 1862, Mr. Modjeski saw the managers in Lemberg, who consented to give me a trial, and selected three plays. The first of the plays selected for my debut was a drama called "Domy Polskie" ("Polish Homes") by Majeranowski. My part was strong, very dramatic and heroic, but also full of tenderness and love. It suited me, I thought; and, strange to say, I was not at all afraid of playing on that large stage.

I passed happily through the verdict of the audience, in spite of a slight incident which happened at the close of one of the

¹ The capital of Galicia, the southeastern part of Poland.

acts. I had to shoot from my castle at the attacking enemies, and was supposed to kill a man. We had four rehearsals, and I thought that everything went smoothly. But it seems that the supernumerary man who had to fall down at my shot sent a substitute for the next rehearsal, and the substitute sent another for the third rehearsal, and this one, being awkward, was replaced by an old man belonging to the theater. On the night of the performance the first "supper" and his two substitutes came, and all three, together with the old man who rehearsed the last, appeared in the mob. The result may easily be foreseen: all four fell down at my single shot. This of course put the public for a while in a hilarious mood; but I was called before the curtain repeatedly, and when the play was over, I had no doubt of having made a favorable impression.

ENGAGEMENT AT LEMBERG

AFTER my trial performances, I was almost sure of an engagement, especially when I realized how useful I could be to the management. The favorite of the audience was then a talented and very beautiful young woman, Madame X., to whom the parts of ingénues belonged exclusively. She was rather capricious, and enjoyed imposing her sweet will upon the management. Several times she sent a message to the stage-manager just before the performance, declaring that, being indisposed, she would not play, and she refused parts assigned to her by the manager.

He saw in me a sort of antidote against her whims, and proposed to engage me, on the absurd salary of forty florins a month, to play the parts she rejected, and also to be her understudy. I played all sorts of parts, in one place a great lady, in the next a page, a Venetian courtesan, or a Hungarian dancing-boy, a gipsy, or a fairy-queen, a shy ingénue or a rattling, singing soubrette in an operetta.

After a few weeks of my uncertain engagement on that miserable salary, I received a more serious proposal from the management.

A FAREWELL TO THE INSURGENTS OF 1863

IN the second part of January, 1863, the insurrection broke out. The Poles, en-

couraged by a few successful encounters with the Russians, threw themselves blindly into the whirl of battle. For a long time they were under the delusion that Napoleon III would help them, and England's interference was looked for; but the poor Poles were left alone with no sympathy—save in words, and no help but what they received secretly in ammunition, arms, and money from different parts of the world. These means were soon exhausted, and nothing was left but their own courage to depend upon. They fought desperately. Thousands of young men, even boys under sixteen, enlisted under the national flag. Every day brought tears and mourning into the Polish homes.

Oh, the painful recollections of those horrible times, when women and children were killed in the streets for singing hymns! The whole nation was palpitating with pain and desire for revenge. In spite of the tension, the theaters were kept open; and it was the right thing to do, for the unfortunate young men who were going to fight found there at least a few moments of pleasure before they went to sacrifice their young lives for the country.

One never-forgotten performance comes to my mind. A newly enlisted regiment was on the eve of departure. The theater was crowded. All the young insurgents were there. The play was a Polish melodrama, with national costumes and songs. In the last act almost every actor in the play had to sing a "couplet" suited to the occasion. They were words of farewell and good wishes, or appeals full of patriotic meaning spurring the young men to brave deeds. The youthful volunteers cheered at every verse; the actors sang, choking with tears, and there was such a bond of sympathy between the audience and the stage that had it not been for the footlights, all would have joined in one embrace.

I did not stay in Lemberg until the expiration of my contract. The salary was really too small to live and dress upon. I had worked hard, and always with the hope of rising some day; and though I saw no chance of the realization of my hopes in the near future, still I plodded on my way patiently. It was dis-

couraging, yet that year's experience did me a great deal of good; and though I did not seem to advance in my art, yet I was unconsciously working toward a development, acquiring versatility and originality, for I had to use a good deal of observation to play so many various characters. We settled down in Czernowice, where Mr. Modjeski rented the city theater and established a stock company.

VISIT TO VIENNA

IN 1863, Mr. Modjeski took a vacation, and we both went to Vienna, in order to see a little of the world, but mostly for the sake of my instruction. We went to the theater almost every evening, and I had the opportunity of seeing several good actors and actresses.

We lost no time in seeing what was worth looking at in Vienna, and we went several times to the picture galleries. I felt small and humble in the presence of the masterpieces of all ages and all nations, and yet I felt a glow of superhuman strength, and a hope that one day I might achieve fame, in a different and smaller way, of course, for our art was scarcely considered an art at all. But I formed then a strong determination never to rest until I had climbed to the very top of my profession. Again the desire of playing in another language than my own began to make its way into my mind. I thought of French and English—and Shakspeare again; but German was the only foreign tongue I spoke passably well, and my people hated Germans with the hatred of a vanquished nation, and I could not think of going on the German stage.

GLIMPSE OF THE YOUNG EMPEROR FRANCIS JOSEPH

FROM Vienna we went to Pesth, where we found the whole city in a great excitement on account of the races and a visit of the Emperor Francis Joseph, then in the prime of youth. There was to be a "gala" performance at the opera-house. The Emperor was to be present, and every one had to appear in national costume. We secured seats, and I had to procure a Hungarian head-gear, but did not object when I saw how becoming was

the small bonnet of black lace, heavily embroidered with silver.

At the theater I was positively dazzled by the aspect of the audience in the boxes—three tiers of wonderfully handsome women and brilliant uniforms. Never in my life shall I again look at so many beauties and such a display of marvelous jewels, gold-and-silver embroidered waists, sparkling with diamonds, rubies, and emeralds; misty veils, strings of rare pearls, and aigrets of gems. It seemed to me like a chapter from the Arabian Nights. When the Emperor entered, there was a deafening cheer, "Ellien! Ellien!" and the young monarch, blushing with pleasure, greeted the audience, then sat modestly directing his attention to the stage, his entrance being the cue for the rising of the curtain.

BARN-STORMING

WHILE keeping the stock company all the year round in Czernowice, we used to make excursions in the neighborhood. The artistic direction of these was given to my brother Joseph Benda. We played in all sorts of houses, and sometimes in barns or riding-schools; but my brother's ingenuity always succeeded in turning these buildings into decent-looking summer theaters, with the help of a few boards, paint, curtains, rugs, green branches, and colored lamps.

We arrived late in the afternoon at a very small town. The bills announced "The Devil's Mill." My brother, after an inspection of the stage and dressing-rooms, came to our hotel with a radiant face; but there was a knock at the door, and the property-man, covered with dust and perspiration, entered the room to inform us that the costumes of the devils were missing. My brother rushed out of the room, and when he returned two hours later he looked tired and discouraged. He said he had visited several inns, hotels, and halls for the trunks, but in vain. There was no telegraph or even railroad in Galicia in 1864, and therefore it was impossible to make inquiries. There was no time to make costumes or, what was the most important, to procure black tights for about twenty demons. No such article was to be found in the quiet little town. When I saw my bro-



From a photograph by Scholl. Half-tone plate engraved by H. Davidson

MADAME MODJESKA AS "JULIET"

ther the following morning, and asked what he intended to do about it, he answered, with a mysterious smile, "Come to the theater in the afternoon, and you will see something that will amuse you."

I did, and found my brother sitting on a high office stool in the center of the stage. At his feet were yards of red cotton stuff, and he was telling two sewing women how to make trunks.

"What about the tights?" I asked. He smiled, and waved his hand toward a huge can of black paint.

"There are the tights, my dear," he said, and then laughed.

"You don't mean to paint those poor boys all over?"

"Just what I mean to do, my little sister," he said, and laughed again.

When the "extra boys" began to come in, my brother sent each of them to a large dressing-room, in which he had previously ordered a fire in the stove, in spite of the warm June afternoon. He followed with the property-man, who carried the can of paint and a brush in one hand and a bundle of red trunks in the other.

We were all excited over the "new costumes," and anxious to see the result. In a few minutes my brother opened the door, and calling: "Attention! Number one is ready!" he pushed on the stage a most frightened boy, painted black all over, with horns on his head, and white circles about his eyes, which made them look like goggles. He had a tail made of rope and a tongue of red cloth hanging out of his opened mouth. The red, very scanty, trunks were the only protection to outraged modesty. The effect, indeed, was monstrous.

I forget the plot of that awful play, but I remember the scene where a man is brought in and sentenced by Lucifer. With a fearful yell the demons fall upon the man to beat him with uncanny-looking weapons, and strike so hard that he catches one of the devils and throws him over his shoulders as a shield against the blows. The supers, all young boys, appreciated the fun, and struck yet harder than before at the exposed part of the devil's body, until the poor imp screamed with pain, and finally exclaimed: "O Lord, Marie, Saint Joseph, stop! For God's sake, don't beat so hard!"

The audience shrieked with laughter, and the curtain fell.

In the spring of 1865 a great sorrow fell upon me, and its blow made the world dark for me. My little daughter Marylka died. They say that misfortunes never come singly, but are accompanied by other misfortunes, forming a long chain. Blow after blow struck on my heart and bruised it to the core. Family considerations do not allow me to give the details of all I suffered at that time, but after fearful struggles with inexorable fate, I found myself free, but ill and at the point of death. My mother and my brother Simon brought me and my little son Rudolphe to Cracow, and I never saw Mr. Modjeski again.

AT THE CRACOW THEATER

IN the month of September, 1865, I signed a contract with the Cracow theatrical management. The old endowed theater of my native city was at that time in the care of Count Adam Skorupka, a cultivated gentleman of wit, a great dilettante, and Stanislas Kozmian, one of the most cultivated minds of Cracow. They started a new era in the annals of Polish stage history. The personnel of the theater was changed, new actors coming to view, and only a few of the old stock being retained.

Count Skorupka brought an artistic stage-director from Warsaw, Mr. Jasinski, who proved to be the animating spirit of the whole institution, as well as a perfect and accomplished instructor.

SINGSONG DELIVERY

THE first play was "Solomon," a tragedy in verse by Wacław Szymanowski. When I recited my part of *Judith*, Mr. Jasinski said nothing, but he rubbed his forehead several times and looked at me in such a way that I knew he had some remarks to make. Yet he kept silent until the fourth act, when I had a long speech to deliver, during which he showed very distinct signs of impatience: in an irritated manner he tapped with his foot on the floor, rubbed his forehead more and more excitedly, and after I finished the sentence said abruptly:

"This is a very pretty opera, your voice

is beautiful, but your singsong is entirely out of place." I was so mortified that the tears rose to my eyes, and I scarcely saw when he came to me. He took my hand and told me not to take his remark too much to heart, but to try to change my delivery; then he added: "Your gestures, voice, expressions of your face are good; the only fault lies in the reading of the verses. After the rehearsal I will read the part for you."

I wiped my eyes and thanked him heartily, for it was just the thing I wanted to ask of him. When Mr. Jasinski read the lines it was a revelation. It seemed as if a new window opened in my brain and flooded it with light. Until then I had read the Alexandrines very carefully, putting the emphasis on the center and the ending syllable of the verse. He, on the contrary, read the lines naturally and very simply, disregarding their music and careful only of meaning and expression. He did not lose one syllable, and yet the verses sounded rather like poetic prose than rimed Alexandrines.

I drank in all, returned home, restudied my part, and when I rehearsed next morning I saw Mr. Jasinski's eyes dance with pleasure. After the first act he shook me by the hand and said he never expected me so soon to get rid of my singsong. "Some of the actors," he said, "will keep it up forever. You are brave, and you show the true spirit, which is to be praised in a person who has already been"—here he paused, then added with a most subtle and slightly malicious smile—"a so-called 'star,' petted by the audiences, and spoiled by the critics. You see, I know something about you." I laughed, and thanked him again, and on the night of the performance I played well, for I knew that my master was pleased with me.

RIVALRY WITH ANTONINA HOFMAN

I HAD met Antonina Hofman, the leading lady, at my brother's house two years before I joined the profession, and we had become friends. She treated me with friendly condescension, and I loved and admired her. She was a handsome woman, with great, brown eyes, red lips,

and marvelous chestnut hair. She was highly gifted and much more experienced than I, so it was natural that, when she came behind the scenes after the performance, I should greet her with the joy and respect due to her position and genuine talent. She shook hands, but her eyes had a searching, scrutinizing look. It seemed to me that she was not the same person I had loved so much. I had a moment of desperate fear lest I should lose her friendship because of my success, and I hastened to inform her that I had come to Cracow to learn, that I intended to occupy a secondary position, and had no claim to the tragic heroines, *Judith* being only one of my débutante parts and not even of my choice.¹

"You are wise," was her rather cool answer—"you are very wise, because you could not possibly play dramatic heroines." I did not tell her that Mr. Jasinski had offered me several dramatic heroines, that I had refused, and that he had said: "I do not understand you. You are adapted to those parts, and it is foolish not to seize the opportunity." I told him that I was afraid to handle them, and it would be better to wait for Miss Hofman, and give her the choice. "Oh, very well," he had said pettishly; "I will not bother you with good parts any more." A feeling of deep resentment grew in my soul toward the woman I had loved as my friend. When I remembered how I had almost offended Mr. Jasinski for her sake, I felt very uneasy.

Sleep did not come to me that night. I got up and walked up and down, trying to quiet my excited nerves. One of my turns about the room brought me close to a mirror, and looking up, I saw suddenly my face bearing so dramatic an expression that I stopped to look closer at the reflection. Then slapping my forehead with the palm of my hand, I exclaimed: "Now I see why Mr. Jasinski wants me to play the emotional and tragic parts. Well, I will play all the heroines he gives me." With that resolution I went back to bed and fell sound asleep. Next morning I went to the theater early. When Mr. Jasinski saw me, he said, "Good morning," and began to examine some new scenery. I came up to him and said tim-

¹ It is still the custom in Europe to give to an actor or actress who is going to be engaged three good parts for a trial. These parts may be chosen by the actor or by the management.

idly, "I wish to speak to you, Mr. Jasinski."

He then turned to me and said abruptly, though kindly, "What is it, child?"

I told him I came to apologize for having rejected the parts he offered me, and to assure him that henceforth I would play whatever he wished. He smiled, and, shaking my hand, said: "Since you are in your senses again, I am going to try what you can do. Come to my office to-morrow, and I shall have the parts ready for you."

When I came next morning, the first thing that drew my attention was a pile of manuscripts on the desk.

"You may as well look at them," he said, smiling; "they are the parts you will have to play in the course of the season."

"All these!" I exclaimed with rapture.

"Yes; there are sixty of them, small and big ones."

Sixty parts! What luxury! I picked them up, hugged them, then sat in the chair, and began to examine them. The one on top was *Princess Eboli* in Schiller's "Don Carlos"; the next one, *Louise Miller* in "Kabale und Liebe"; then *Barbara* in a tragedy by Felinski; *Ophelia* in "Hamlet"; *Doña Sol* in Victor Hugo's "Hernani"; the wife in "Nos Intimes," by Sardou; "Adrienne Lecouvreur" by Scribe and Legouvé, etc.

There were among them sparkling parts of the old and new repertory and also some short parts in one-act comedies, sketches, and plays with songs called vaudevilles. I was so much absorbed in looking over my treasures that I did not notice when Mr. Jasinski left the office. I grabbed my precious package and hastened home, where I gloated over my booty.

I played small parts, and everything seemed to run smoothly between the leading lady and me until the tragedy "Barbara" was called for rehearsal with my name in the title-rôle. Miss Hofman, not being aware of my altered decision as to the choice of my parts, was much astonished and spoke to me about it. It was one of those moments which are not easily forgotten. I answered with great reserve, saying that I had changed my resolution

of staying behind all the time, and Mr. Jasinski was kind enough to help me to try my strength in tragedy. She was sarcastic, and being very witty, she had her laugh, yet we parted good friends. It was only after the performance of "Barbara" that we became rivals, and my line on the stage was defined.

My success in the tragic heroines did not prevent me from playing smaller parts. I also played two or three secondary parts in the plays belonging to the old repertory in which Miss Hofman had made a success. It was interesting, because the audience on those nights divided into two camps, one party calling for Hofman and the other for Modjeska.¹

FIRST REAL SUCCESS IN "DON CARLOS"

IN "Don Carlos" I made my first complete success. The part of the *Princess Eboli* fell to my share, while Antonina Hofman played the queen. If she failed in the part, it was her own fault. She could have played the queen beautifully had she cared to pay proper attention to the lines. She was full of spirit during the rehearsals, chaffing and joking and making everybody merry with her witty sallies. The result was that on the night of the performance she had to depend too much on the prompter, was often flustered, hesitating, and missed her points. I, on the contrary, having to appear together with my talented rival, took all the pains possible to work out my part. In the first place, I was "dead letter perfect" and threw all my soul into my acting; in consequence I did not miss one point, one studied intonation, what we call here, "stage business." On that evening Antonina's camp was almost silent and mine very noisy. Even Mr. Kozmian, who was her ardent admirer and friend, came behind the scenes and congratulated me on my success. Moreover, Mr. Jasinski was absent and I had worked up my part of *Princess Eboli* without his help and was rather proud of myself. It gave me confidence in my own talent and made me less timid.

After that memorable evening my name began to creep slowly into the Warsaw, and also into some German, papers. Dur-

¹ European audiences, outside of England, always call out the name of the actor whom they desire before the curtain. If by chance some one undesired takes the call, they hiss the person off the stage.

ing my first season in Cracow I received a great many favors from the people, and my standing was quite assured. Antonina Hofman, however, held her own against me in character and high-comedy parts, in which she was indeed excellent.

At this time I came in contact with many celebrities of Poland,—artists, men and women of culture, combined with occasional glimpses of the exclusive aristocratic circles,—which was very beneficial to my artistic development.

A GREAT LADY

ONE day the Countess Arthur Potocka sent Mr. Rembowski, her confidential friend, to me, and that irreproachable gentleman asked me to pay her a visit. I found the countess dressed in black. Her pale, aristocratic face in a frame of silvery hair and black lace, her lace shawl, and the flounces falling around her form in soft folds, gave her the air of an antique portrait.

I was all eyes and ears, anxious to find out what made such a distinction between high-born ladies and the average rich woman of the city. I had not been with this exquisite creature fifteen minutes before I discovered the secret: those aristocratic ladies were utterly simple, without a grain of snobbishness in their manner. Their grace was like the grace of children, unconscious of their beautiful movements, which, however, were marked with reserve acquired through early training.

After some general conversation she spoke of Rachel and Ristori, and told me I had neither their strong, ringing voice nor their tragic, statuesque poses. "You have, instead of those grand qualities, sensitiveness, intuition, grace," she said, adding laughingly, "You are as clever as a snake. You played the *Countess* in 'The White Camelia' as if you were born among us. Where did you meet countesses?"

I answered that she was the only great lady I had ever laid eyes on.

"You see," said she, "that was intuition. Other actresses, when they represent women of nobility or princesses and queens, walk as if they had swallowed a stick, with a straight, rigid spine. They sometimes resort to a lorgnette, looking snobbishly on people and examining them

from head to foot with a silly, supercilious smile. Thank Heaven, you have none of that insipid nonsense! You are simple, and that is right."

I worked very hard. On the mornings which followed the off nights, I used to get up at five o'clock and after the usual cup of coffee for breakfast, I went into the open air with my part, sometimes to the Chestnut Alley, but more often to the Botanical Gardens, where I was sure not to meet any one at an early hour. I studied aloud, having for accompaniment the songs of the birds, the trees and the flowers for inspiration, and above all the wonderful gray or blue sky with its fantastic clouds.

AN ACTOR-BROTHER, FELIX BENDA

MY married brother Felix, who was also a member of the company, and in whose house I then lived, was a great help in my studies. We used to rehearse at all hours, at the supper-table after the performance, behind the scenes during the rehearsals, and mostly during our walks. At the dinner-table we were often rebuked by my mother or by my brother's beautiful wife for these eternal rehearsals. Felix would ask between the courses:

"Helena, how does that scene begin?" and then we started. Sometimes we would discuss the meaning of the words, and in case we had not agreed, we fell into such a heated argument that we had to be called to order. At other times we would find such a natural expression for our lines that mother would take it for simple conversation, and then would follow my brother's triumphal exclamation: "You see, Helena, that was well done. Mother thinks we are having a chat."

We often played those one-act French comedies where only two characters were required. Mr. Kozmian was so pleased with the originality and exactness of our acting that he looked for more of those pieces for us. We liked them because they were holidays, after the heavy tragedies and national dramas (Felix used to call them national bombs) we had to perform at the rate of at least one a week. Very often twice a week I had to be perfect at the rehearsals in a rimed-verse tragedy. Happily I had a very good memory, and I loved my work. A little one-act play, though far from taxing physical strength,

required often more work than a five-act drama, because it had to be perfect in the minutest details in order to gain the approval of our rather difficult audience.

ONE WAY TO SUCCESS

BUT it was not only by hard work that I gained my position on the stage. There was something else—my identifying myself with every part I played to such an extent that I passed really through all the emotions of my heroines: I suffered with them, cried real tears, which I often could not stop even after the curtain was down. Owing to this extreme sensitiveness, I was exhausted after each emotional part, and oftentimes had to rest motionless until my strength returned. During my whole

career I never succeeded in giving a performance without feeling the agonies of my heroines.

I went through a wonderful training during the three years of my Cracow engagement. The time free from studies was employed in reading and also in such prosaic occupations as sewing or ironing of muslins and laces, and often when I had a little time to spare I helped in arranging some finery for my sister-in-law, Veronique Benda, who was also on the stage. I do not recollect going to parties save to those given twice a year by the manager, Count Skorupka; one dancing party during the carnival, and another at Easter, and then I danced. Oh, how I danced! With all my soul in it, for I never did anything by halves.

(To be continued)



LONDON SOLITUDE

AN IMPRESSION

BY STEPHEN PHILLIPS

STANDING amid the seethe of Charing Cross,
 Over me stole a sense of cold and loss;
 Lone amid millions, and passed by, bereft,
 By hosts discarded and by armies left,
 Armies unseeing, unhearing, hurrying,
 Deaf, blind, and dumb, and yet untarrying.
 The rising murmur and unceasing roll
 Aided the isolation of the soul.
 It seemed that there was carried on the air
 The dreadful, steady music of despair.
 No seaman wrecked beneath a desert sky
 Sounded a deeper loneliness than I.
 "A word from thee, my friend, a look from thee!"
 But no man paused with look or word for me.
 O London, what expanse of wave or land,
 What blistering infinity of sand,
 What Australasian bush, or Arctic plain,
 Or heaving silence of the middle main,
 Hath e'er the human spirit so subdued
 As thine innumerable solitude?