



MODJESKA'S MEMOIRS

THE RECORD OF A ROMANTIC CAREER

II—THE AUTHOR'S TRIUMPHANT RISE AND SUDDEN ABANDONMENT OF HER PROFESSION FOR A HOME IN THE NEW WORLD

BY HELENA MODJESKA

INTRODUCTION TO MR. CHLAPOWSKI

DURING the summer of 1866, I met my present husband, Karol Bozenta Chlapowski. I was playing an insignificant part. The intervals were long, and in one of them I did a thing I always had avoided doing: I looked at the audience. The first face that drew my attention was Mr. Chlapowski's. He sat in the second-tier box next to the stage, leaning over the balustrade, his chin on his folded arms, eagerly looking down on the stage.

His mobile face, a slightly sarcastic smile, and the interest with which he seemed to note the slightest shadings in the actors' words and actions, drew my attention. I watched him a while, then I asked my stage lover, who knew almost every one in town, who that intelligent-looking young man was. When I heard his name, I was pleasantly surprised, for I already knew his cousin, Tadeusz Chlapowski, General Chlapowski's younger son, who also sat in the same box, in the background.

After the play both came behind the scenes, and Karol Chlapowski was introduced to me by his cousin. The very next day they called on me, and Mr. Karol was reintroduced. After a while of interesting talk with him, I was surprised to find so much learning and such marvelous gifts of conversation in a young man of twenty-five.

He was also charmingly absent-minded, and while he talked, he took a cigarette-case out of his pocket, and lit a cigarette without asking permission; then suddenly seeing a faint smile on my lips, he put it all burning into his pocket, apologizing humbly for the mistake. I hastened to assure him that I was used to tobacco, having been brought up with four brothers; but I did so mostly to save his coat from burning inside. After thanking me effusively for my "kindness," he resumed the conversation. He told me that three years before he had left the University of Louvain in order to join Dictator Langiewicz's corps during the recent insurrection. He was wounded, and sent back to his estate across the border. After having recovered, he was going to rejoin the insurgents, but was arrested by the Prussians and put in prison in "Moabit," in Berlin, together with many other young Poles, where he remained twenty months. While he was telling us this episode of his life, he noticed the sad expression on the faces about him, and rising quickly, he laughed and went to the piano, saying:

"Enough of this gruesome past. I will sing you some new Levasseur's songs. But I warn you that my voice, though rather small, is quite unpleasant to the ear." With that he sang with quite a French *entrain* and an English accent the famous song of the day called "Le Cochon de

Barbarie." It was just after our midday dinner, and black coffee had been served in the parlor. He wished his coffee right on the piano, in the place where the candles usually stand. In a moment, while he turned on the piano-stool, the cup and coffee were both inside the instrument. Happily it was an old, rented piano, and no great damage was done. This slight accident put us all in a good humor, and when Mr. Karol left us we had a feeling of having known him for years. Leaving the room, he turned once more and said:

"I must tell you that having nothing better to do at present, I am writing notices about your company." I asked him if he desired to be bribed, upon which he bowed, kissed my hand, and said, "My desire is to write honestly what I think."

And indeed he wrote honestly, for the first thing I came across in the morning paper was a severe dissection of my acting in a one-act French comedy. I liked him all the more for his sincerity, for I knew he was right.

"ROMEO AND JULIET"

At this time I was always dreaming of Shakspeare. We had had nothing but "Hamlet" in the repertoire until I spoke to Mr. Kozmian, and he, after a justified moment of hesitation, consented to produce "Romeo and Juliet." Ladnowski was to be *Romeo*, and the part of *Juliet* was sent to me, together with the manuscript.

I had never seen or even read "Romeo and Juliet" before, and I simply went wild over it. I remember that in my excitement I walked up and down my room exclaiming: "How great! How beautiful! What a genius! How he, though a man, knew *Juliet's* feelings and thoughts! There is no other being in the world who can compete with Shakspeare! He is the greatest of the great!" All the time I spent in studying *Juliet* I walked in a dream, repeating the lines, and looking for solitary places in public gardens in order to get the atmosphere of certain scenes. I used to go for long evening walks with my brother, his wife, and Ladnowski, and in some quiet nook among the trees we rehearsed the balcony scene to try our hushed voices in the open. One evening we went to the cemetery, and I repeated the tomb scene, and also my soliloquy in

the fourth act. In order to get the atmosphere of the parting scene, I spent a sleepless night, and at the first glimpse of light went into the open air. I had been up at dawn many a time before, but the grand awakening of nature had never had so much meaning.

How I played *Juliet* then I could not tell now. When I played it in English I changed some of the scenes, but not the conception of the part. I remember two things distinctly: the way in which Ladnowski and I treated the balcony scene and the effect produced on the audience.

As I said before, we had often studied the balcony scene in the open. The scene was spoken in hushed voices all through, every sentence came out with spontaneity, passion, and simplicity. The two lovers hung on each other's words with almost childish intensity. *Juliet's* words at times came out broken with quick sighs, indicating a heightened pulse, and accompanied by furtive glances about the place, expressive of the fear lest some dreaded kinsman appear suddenly. The scene was a crescendo from the softness of the speech to the hurried words exchanged toward the end:

Romeo: So thrive my soul—

Juliet: A thousand times good-night!

Then from the return of the lovers until the end the words grew softer and more and more dreamy.

As for so-called stage business, there was almost none. One single rose taken from *Juliet's* hair, kissed, and thrown to *Romeo*, with the words, "Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing," was all. What we looked after was the intensity of the situation, to which we tried to fit our mood and our voices, which remained hushed and yet audible even to the last seat in the gallery.

When the curtain fell, there was dead silence, which made me shiver with apprehension of failure; but after a few seconds of stillness, which seemed to me ages, a storm of applause arose, and we were recalled ten times before the curtain.

A VACATION IN PARIS

IN the autumn of 1866, Count Skorupka raised my salary to two hundred florins¹

¹ The Austrian florin, or gulden, is worth forty cents.

a month, and granted me six weeks' vacation, which he suggested I ought to spend in Paris in order to see the best French actors.

Paris made a great impression on me; for having traveled little, everything I saw was so new, artistic, amusing, or original, that I lived in constant excitement. After a week of my visit to Paris, Mr. Chlapowski joined us, and thereafter it was he who directed our excursions to different theaters.

THE THÉÂTRE FRANÇAIS AND OTHERS

THE first play I saw at the Théâtre Français was Alfred de Musset's "Fantasio," with Delaunay, Coquelin, and Mme. Favart. I had never before seen the elegance and finish of a Parisian actor, and I was immensely pleased with the acting of Delaunay. He was as near perfection as a human being could be; besides, in spite of his mature age, he was a most spirited lover. Coquelin *ainé* was a very young man then, but he had already made a mark in his line, and we predicted his future fame. Mme. Favart did not appeal to me. She had grand gestures and a beautiful, ringing voice, which, however, sometimes turned into a singsong, which did not please me.

Nothing gave me more genuine artistic joy than the Théâtre Français. I saw Mme. Madeleine Brohan and Mr. Bressant, those two great stars of high comedy, and I think I learned a great deal from both. M. Got made me jump up once in my seat and applaud furiously. I learned a great deal from these excellent actors, yet I never made any notes. Nor did I try to imitate their tone of voice, gait, or what we call in America "stage business." What I attempted to study was the way those actors and actresses treated their parts, the capacity of identifying themselves with the characters of the play, the general movement of the ensemble, the precision of expression and delivery, and their careful costuming and make-up.

One main and instructive quality of that theater was the moderation of gestures and voice of the actors. They never permitted themselves any excess. Mme.

Pasca in "Le demi-monde" was a living example of what good training combined with talent can produce. A most pleasant impression was made on us by Mme. Delaporte. She was not pretty, but real talent is more desirable than mere beauty.

We visited the Odéon, Gymnase, and Palais Royal, and returned often to the Théâtre Français and to the Vaudeville.¹ Every time I saw something new and original which made me happy. In opera we admired Mme. Sachs and M. Faure, that most distinguished baritone of his time.

RETURN TO CRACOW

I RESUMED my work in Cracow with renewed strength and energy, and played many parts, some of them in Shakspeare's plays, to my great delight, for I loved the great dramatist so much that I preferred a small part in any of his works to a melodramatic one, no matter how important or effective it might be. I played *Lady Anne* in "Richard the Third," *Titania* in "Midsummer Night's Dream," *Juliet*, and *Desdemona*. We also had Victor Hugo in our repertoire, and I personated *Blanche* in "Le roi s'amuse." A quantity of French plays were produced at that time, mostly those of Dumas *filis*, Feuillet, Augier, and Sardou.

During the following two years of my Cracow engagement I took up history and made a quantity of historical notes. I also worked at my French and music, for though I had stopped playing singing parts, yet I needed a certain amount of cultivation in music and voice for such parts as required this accomplishment.

A HIT IN "LES VIEUX GARÇONS"

I REMEMBER making a hit in Sardou's "Les vieux garçons," in the part of an ingénue, where I had to sing snatches from "Rigoletto," accompanying myself on the piano. I was supposed to come home from the opera almost crazy over the music and the singers. The only relief in this state of enthusiasm was to sit at the piano and repeat snatches of airs and *ritournelles* before some human being, and this time it was an old bachelor who was

¹ The name of Vaudeville has nothing in common with the American vaudeville theaters. The Théâtre Vaudeville, where the best modern plays were performed, had a fine reputation for the excellence of the acting.

the victim and sharer of the girl's impressions. One difficulty lay in rendering the airs in so spontaneous a manner as to give the audience the impression of a thoroughly musical person, who finds no difficulty in execution and plays and sings by ear. Another difficulty was in the treatment of the scene. There were interruptions of musical themes, by gasps, ejaculations, and rapid speech. There were numerous subtle details to observe, which, without drawing any particular attention to the music or the voice, brought all to one effect: that of an innocent, spirited girl under the spell of Verdi's genius. My brother liked my interpretation so much that every time we played the piece he stood behind the scenes and applauded. I thought more of that than of all the compliments of the critics or the repeated applause of the audience, for Felix Benda did not usually lavish praises on me. His attitude was that of a loving but by no means blind judge.

LOSS OF MEMORY

I STUDIED so much during the season of 1866-67 that one morning I experienced the horror of a temporary loss of memory. It was a most dreadful experience.

During the stage rehearsal of Schiller's "Kabale und Liebe" I could not recollect one word of the part of *Luise*, which I had played often before, and even rehearsed on the previous day. I seemed to have forgotten even the cues. When the prompter gave me the first words of my part, I did not recognize them, and had to be reminded that it was my turn to

speak. I repeated one or two lines mechanically, but not being used to follow a prompter so closely, I stopped short. The prompter also stopped, and looked at me with questioning eyes. My head began to swim, and there was so terrible a blank in my mind that I believed I was on the verge of insanity. The despair and terror must have been clearly painted on my face, for my brother led me to my dressing-room and sent for a cab to take me home. When alone in my room I burst into violent sobbing, which after a while brought a slight relief. A doctor was summoned, and he ordered a complete rest and country air. I was not allowed to read or write. Music, however, was granted to me in small doses, also sewing and embroidery. I could not go to the country on account of bad weather, but took drives between rains, and shut my doors to visitors. After two weeks of this quiet family life I went back to work, and the dreadful thing never repeated itself.



B. LADNOWSKI AS *HAMLET*

This actor played *Romeo* to Modjeska's *Juliet*.

MARRIAGE TO MR. CHLAPOWSKI AND INVITATION TO THE WARSAW IMPERIAL THEATER

ON the 12th of September, 1868, I was married to my present husband, Mr. Chlapowski. On the next day we left Cracow for Warsaw, where I had been offered an engagement of twelve performances during October. This was a great honor, but a dangerous one. The Warsaw Imperial Theater is entirely run as a stock company, the star system being un-

known there. It is an enormous and unwieldy machine, controlled as well as subsidized by the Russian government, and is composed of an opera company, comic opera, a ballet, a drama, and a comedy company. Three orchestras, two choruses, a ballet school, a dramatic school, and a large number of officials, high and low, and workmen of all kinds, belong to the organization. The salary-list includes from seven to eight hundred people. Its artistic force was recruited mostly from its dramatic schools, and if any outsider was admitted to the ranks, it was usually to the lowest ones. A new president, Count Sergius Moukhanoff, had been appointed in the early half of 1868. This gentleman, of very high intellectual attainments, had been aide-de-camp to the Grand Duke Constantine, Viceroy of Poland in 1863. His high social position, his education, his personal character, his influence at court, and his marriage with Mme. Marie Galergi, daughter of the celebrated Chancellor Nesselrode, made him one of the marked personalities not only in Warsaw, but in the highest circles of Russian society. The name of Mme. Marie Galergi was a very popular one in Europe. She was a queen of beauty, but, more than this, her intellectual superiority, her charm of manner, her artistic accomplishments, made her one of those *grandes dames*, in the noblest sense of the word, who have played important parts in the social life of Europe. Personal friend of Alfred de Musset, Chopin, Liszt, and Wagner, she was herself one of the foremost pianists of her day. Chopin considered her one of his best interpreters. Liszt and Wagner dedicated to her some of their most important works. Like other great Russian ladies living abroad, she had a very considerable political influence; but, unlike others, she exercised it only in the noblest way. The memory of her is



KAROL BOZENTA CHLAPOWSKI
IN 1866

one of the precious recollections of my past, and I shall always cherish and revere it; for she exercised a strong and refining influence upon my further artistic development.

Count Sergius Moukhanoff desired to infuse new life into the Warsaw theater. The old bureaucratic institution, though possessing several artists of the highest rank, able to compete with the foremost actors of the world, was going at a very slow pace. Count Moukhanoff decided to look outside the charmed circle in order to find new talent. Mr. Chencinski, who had seen my first appearance a few years before in Bochnia, happened to speak to him of me in favorable terms. A correspondence followed, which terminated in my engagement on terms similar to those of a regular American star engagement. This innovation was not favorably received by the majority of the members of the Warsaw theater.

HOSTILITY TOWARD A NEW-COMER

ON the day of my arrival in Warsaw there appeared in the leading paper of the city, the editor of which was the

husband of the leading tragedienne of the theater, a scathing article upon the arrogance of some incipient provincial actors or actresses who dared to enter into open rivalry with the favorites of the metropolitan stage. The management was accused, though in covered words, of introducing a new policy which might destroy the high standing of the theater, etc. This article was answered by other papers as a premature and unjustified attack. Its effect upon the public was not a bad one, as it only increased interest in my appearance, but I confess that personally it affected me deeply, and might have dampened my courage, had I not brought with me a great abundance of it. My first appearance in Warsaw I regarded as the decisive turning-point in my career. A success

behind the Warsaw footlights was my highest dream, and I was determined to realize it.

The welcome I was accorded by M.

received by my professional brethren and sisters with great courtesy, but in a ceremonious and somewhat cold manner. The atmosphere was entirely different from



Half-tone plate engraved by H. Davidson

KAROL BOZENTA CHLAPOWSKI (ON THE LEFT) IN PRISON DURING THE POLISH INSURRECTION, WITH HIS FRIEND SYPNIEWSKI

and Mme. Moukhanoff strengthened my energies. Besides them, I found my old friend J. S. Jasinski of the Cracow theater, whose interest was, of course, enlisted in the success of his former pupil. When I came to my first rehearsal I was

that of the Cracow theater, where we were all like members of one family. The play, "Les idées de Mme. Aubray," by A. Dumas *filis*, was very popular at that time, and, according to my judgment, one of the best he ever wrote. I was to play



THE IMPERIAL THEATER IN WARSAW

Here Mme. Modjeska played regularly before coming to America, and also during later visits to Warsaw. The building contains a large and a smaller auditorium. She played in both.

Janine, a part not exacting any display of great dramatic power, though containing very affecting moments. I felt safe in it, or as much as one can feel safe in anything.

When we began to rehearse, I acted as though I were before the public. I was excited by the importance of the occasion, and I felt very happy. Two or three of the actors congratulated me, and assured me that if I played in the evening as I did at the rehearsal, I should win my cause. The other members, however, gathered aside and held a prolonged conference, at the end of which the stage-manager told me that it would be impossible to produce the play for my first night, as Mr. X., who was to take part in it, felt unwell and would be obliged to stop playing for some time. Mr. X. had been present at the rehearsal, and looked the picture of health. I was distressed. Some of the members present—those who had congratulated me—exclaimed, "This is a shame!" but were not listened to. The stage-manager then asked me what part I

would select in place of *Janine* for my first appearance.

DÉBUT IN "ADRIENNE LECOUVREUR"

"WHY will you not play *Adrienne Lecouvreur*? The company is ready in it, and there will be no difficulty in the production."

Now, *Adrienne Lecouvreur* was then considered one of the most difficult parts in the reach of any actress. It had been played years before in Warsaw by Rachel, and many remembered her magnificent performance. Several of the leading tragic actresses of the Warsaw theater had attempted to play it afterward, but success had not crowned their efforts. I had placed it in my repertoire, desiring first to gain the favor of the public in easier parts, and being afraid of appearing too presumptuous in playing it at the start. The members of the Warsaw theater had only smiled contemptuously when they learned of my ambition to play *Adrienne*, and they felt that I could not succeed where only

Rachel had succeeded, and every one else had failed. I hesitated when the proposal was made so abruptly to me. I saw the snare, but determined to brave it, and I answered, "Yes."

I went straight from the theater to Mr. Jasinski to seek advice and consolation. When I told him my story, he asked me who was present at the rehearsal. When I gave him the names, he said:

"How could you be so inconsiderate as to act before them? But you must have done it well if they decided not to let you appear as *Janine*. These same people look upon you as an intruder, and have decided that you are to fail. Now, when you rehearse next time, be careful, and do not show how you will perform at night."

I followed his advice. At the rehearsal of *Adrienne* I simply repeated my words in a commonplace manner, and indicated very superficially my stage business.

A few days before my first performance, what was my astonishment when I saw that the bill of the theater was "*Adrienne Lecouvreur*" with one of the leading actresses, Mme. Palinsko, the wife of the hostile editor, in the title-rôle. The cabal had profited by the president's absence to prepare this scheme, the object of which was to take away the prestige of the comparative novelty of the play. Besides, my

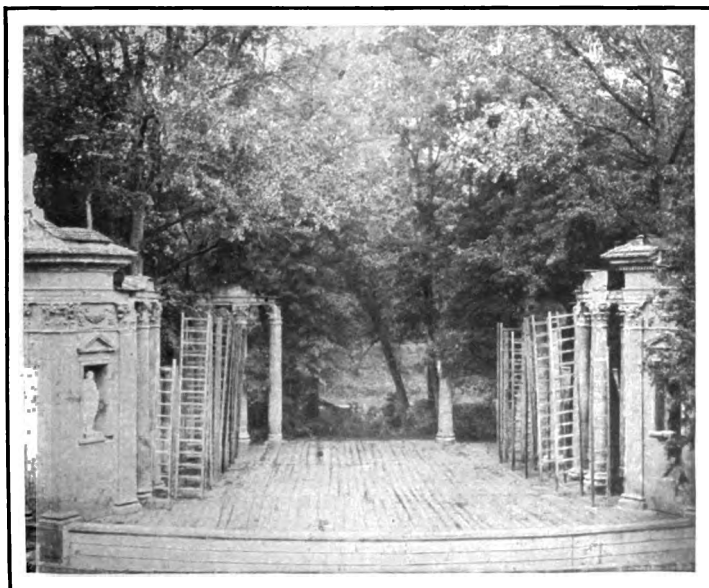
informal rehearsal had led them to believe that the comparison would crush me in the most effective manner.

I went with my husband to the performance. Hardly had the lady in question entered and uttered a few words, when my husband turned to me and said:

"Well, you are not afraid any more, are you?"

"I am encouraged," I said; and so I was.

At last the great night came. The house had been sold out. All were anxious to see how this young actress, yet unknown to fame, would accomplish her task. The premature polemic in the papers had excited public curiosity. Besides this, it was the first stroke of the theatrical policy of the new president. The viceroy, Count Berg, an old, conservative, mummified dignitary, was not particularly favorable to Moukhanoff, and would have liked to see him make a failure, and official Russian society, of course, followed his lead. Polish society was equally interested, but from different motives. Marriages of actresses into aristocratic families were rare events in Poland, where there still exist a great many old prejudices and notions. Moreover, whenever this had happened before, the actress had always left the stage. Why was it otherwise now?



OPEN-AIR STAGE IN THE PUBLIC PARK AT WARSAW

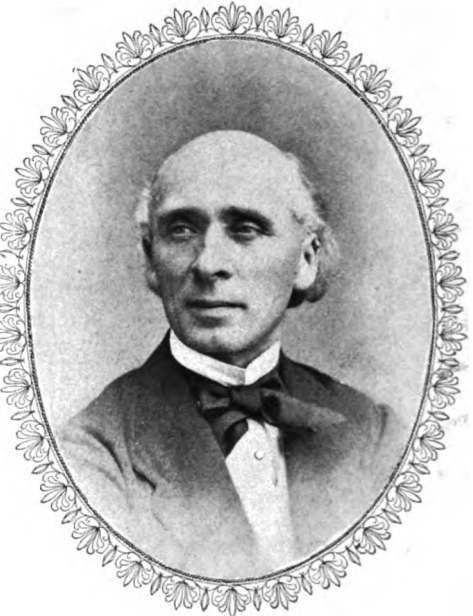
On rare occasions Mme. Modjeska played here.

I received a very pleasant greeting from the courteous audience, though it was immediately hushed into silence. And what a deep silence it was! Such listening is never known in America. Polish audiences go to the theater really to enjoy a performance; and therefore they listen and look in an almost reverent manner, so as not to lose one intonation, one delicate shading of the voice, one slight gesture, or one passing expression of the face. After the first line, I lost my fear; after a few

time and again. But my greatest, or at least the most highly prized triumph was reached when the actors who had played the parts of the *Prince* and of *Michonnet*, our great Zolkowski, the most perfect comedian I have ever seen, and Richter, second only to him, came and embraced me, with tears in their eyes, greeting me as a sister in art. I shall always remember how kind Richter was. I had been so frightened when waiting for my entrance behind the scenes that, though I heard my



ZOLKOWSKI



RICHTER

These actors at the Imperial Theater, Warsaw, were enthusiastic supporters of Modjeska at the time of her triumph as *Adrienne Lecouvreur*.

lines, I was in my part. Meantime the silence continued until I came to the fable of the two pigeons. At its close there burst in the theater such a storm of applause as I had never before heard, and have seldom heard since. A few moments later, at my first exit, the applause was repeated. The first success gave me courage and inspiration. I played as one can play only for life or death. The public, once well disposed, showered upon me the favors of its encouragement. And then came the last act, which was one of my best-beloved scenes. When the curtain fell on poor dead *Adrienne*, the public did not want to leave the theater. They called and called, and the curtain was raised

cue, I dared not go on. He was on the stage then, and, seeing my hesitation, he came very near my entrance, and, while he improvised to fill the gap, succeeded in whispering to me: "Come on! Do not be afraid. You will win the battle." Then he turned to the people on the stage: "She is coming," he exclaimed triumphantly, "and here she is!" His look and the tone of his voice were so encouraging that I stepped bravely on the stage, and, once there, recovered my wits immediately.

When the curtain fell on the second act, and the audience called me before the curtain several times, he came to me, and, shaking both my hands, said radiantly:

"You see, the battle is won. I congratulate you."

"Oh, but I am afraid of the fourth act," I said, shivering.

"Nonsense!" he answered. "Don't you see that the audience is with you? Go change your dress, and think only of your part. Forget the audience."

When the fourth act was over, I sank on my knees behind the scenes, whispering: "I thank Thee, my Lord! It is over." And I hid my face in my hands.

Richter came to me, and, lifting me from the floor, said:

"What are you thinking of? The public is applauding furiously, and you start now on your evening prayers! Come, take your call quickly!" And he dragged me on the stage a shivering, tear-stained creature, glad and thankful to him and to that dear public who waved handkerchiefs and threw flowers at me out of sheer kindness. For I knew well I was bad in that act, written for Rachel's tragic powers and Rachel's deep, strong, almost terrific voice, if one is to believe tradition. My voice had a merely nervous power, and it was never very strong. I could not render the recitation from *Phèdre* to my own satisfaction, yet these dear people applauded and called me six times before the curtain. I had a feeling of receiving alms, and was rather more ashamed than happy. Yet I had one consolation: I knew I could honestly win my applause in the fifth act.

Richter seemed to be as pleased with the reception as he wanted me to be. All the members of the company appeared in my dressing-room, those who had been friendly and those who had been hostile, and congratulated me in the most affectionate way. Next day the president asked me to pro-

long my present appearances to twice their number, and offered me an engagement for life in the Imperial Theater. The press, not excluding the "Warsaw Gazette," which had previously attacked me, praised me much above my deserts, and as to society—well, during the following two or three days it left at my door about two thousand visiting-cards (which I have kept for curiosity's sake), and I do not know how many invitations to receptions, dinners, balls, and the rest. The battle was won.



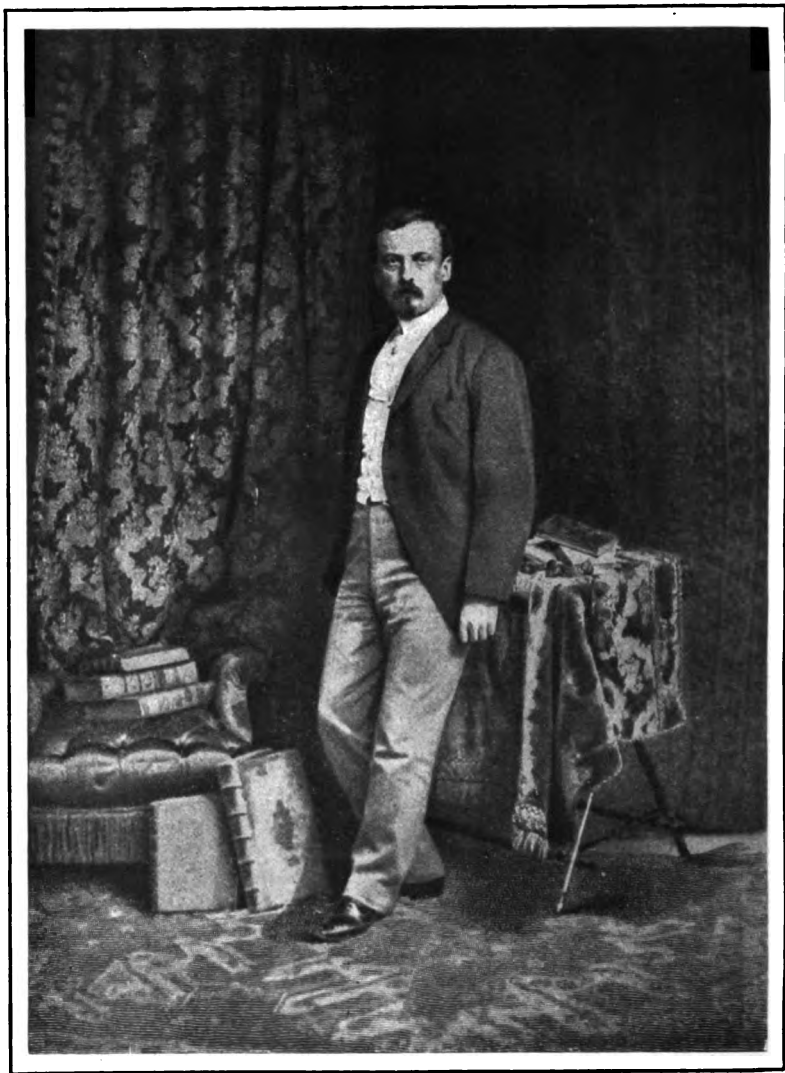
MME. MODJESKA AS OPHELIA

A CONTRACT FOR LIFE WITH THE WARSAW THEATER

EARLY in December of 1869 I signed a contract for life, beginning in the autumn of 1869. M. Moukhanoff was so pleased with the moderate salary I required, that he granted me a benefit performance every year, and also added eight hundred rubles yearly for my theatrical modern wardrobe, the costumes of past ages being furnished by the Government. On my part I begged to insert two conditions of my own.

Knowing the unwillingness of the management to introduce new plays, I demanded that I should be permitted to produce six new plays of my choice every year, and to include them in my repertoire, and, also, that I should not be forced to play more than three times a week. These conditions were accepted, and the contract was signed.

During the Franco-Prussian War there was a break in my activity. I was ill with typhoid fever, which I brought upon myself by my own recklessness. Every summer I used to take three months' vacation, which I usually spent in star engagements. A few weeks before my illness, we went to the Carpathian Mountains



*Redakcja i przygotowanie powieści
Henryk Sienkiewicz
Zakopane 24. VII. 97.*

HENRYK SIENKIEWICZ, AUTHOR OF "WITH FIRE AND SWORD"
AND OTHER FAMOUS NOVELS

to spend the rest of my vacation in Zakopane.

THE DE RESZKES' FIRST PUBLIC CONCERT

IN order to recover entirely from the effects of my illness, we spent a few weeks in Krynica, another summer resort in the mountains, and there we met the De Reszke family, the father, Jean, Edouard,

and their sisters. Jean de Reszke was then a beautiful young boy about nineteen, his elder sister was eighteen; Edouard, sixteen; and the younger sister, Josephine, no more than fifteen. Those four children sang quartettes, duets, and solos most beautifully, and on one occasion, when I was arranging a concert for some local charity, I asked them to take part in it.



Half tone plate engraved by H. Davidson

MME. MODJESKA AS *MARY STUART*

They consented readily, and it was one of the finest concerts given in that part of the country. The De Reszkes had never sung in public, and it fell to my share to introduce Jean de Reszke to the audience on his first public appearance. It was easy to foresee, even then, a brilliant career for those four wonderful children. Only three of them, however, went on the stage. That delightful family was a bright and brilliant feature of our season. They were

so happy, so handsome, and such artists! They made friends wherever they went. Success was written on their sunny countenances. Loved and admired in their early youth, they passed to fame without the struggle and effort that are often the share of the world's celebrities.

"TUESDAY EVENINGS" AND CELEBRITIES
ONCE back in Warsaw, we resumed our Tuesday evening receptions, and I have

the dearest recollection of those moments spent in the company of many distinguished men and women. The receptions had a literary and artistic character, but there were also persons of the so-called "best world" who pleased themselves to be among our guests and to come in contact with celebrities.

One of the prominent and popular men at my time in Warsaw was Edward Leo, a lawyer and editor of the "Gazeta Polska";¹ he and his charming wife were our faithful Tuesdays, and very best friends. He was a brilliant man, and his wit was known in our country and abroad as well. It was on a visit to their country home that we met Henryk Sienkiewicz, and that glorious young man came almost regularly to our receptions. I can see him even now sitting in a cozy corner of the room, his handsome, expressive face leaning against his hand, silent, for he rarely spoke; but his brilliant, half-veiled eyes saw everything, and his ears drunk in every word. The whole room, with its contents, men, women, and objects, was unconsciously yielding food for his acute observation. He sometimes outstayed the company, and when only a few of our intimate friends remained, he took a vivid part in the conversation, to our great delight; for his many-sided intellect and slightly sarcastic humor acted like a stimulant to others.

POLICE SURVEILLANCE

THESE prolonged and regular receptions attracted the attention of the police, and

every Tuesday evening detectives and one or two gendarmes were posted at the door of our flat, and they wrote down the name of every visitor. They even went so far as to ask those who came from abroad where they lived and their names and business. A detective followed my husband wherever he went, and I noticed a vigilant spirit hovering even over my person whenever I happened to be out.



From a photograph by M. Guttenberg

JEAN DE RESZKE

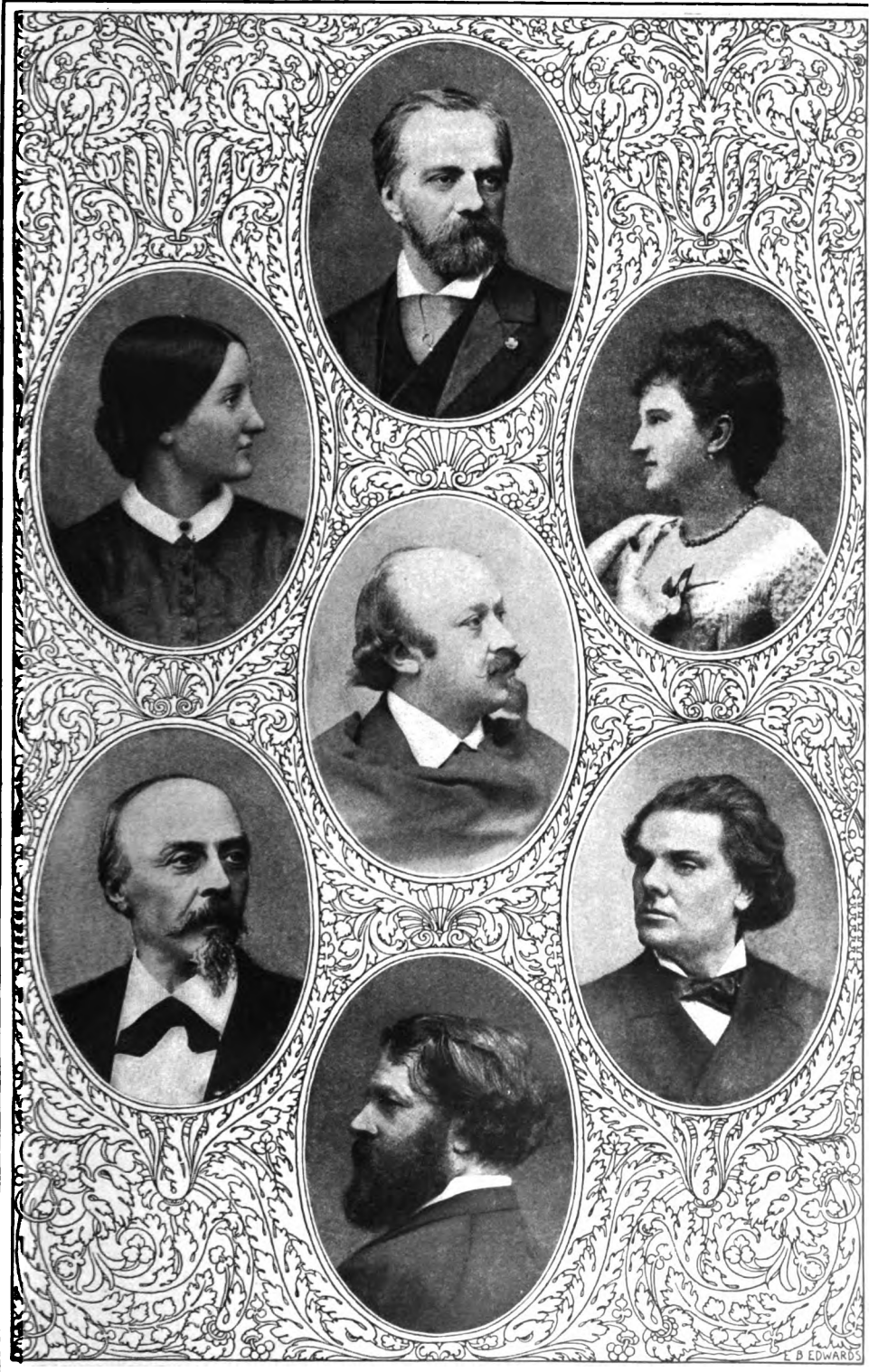
All this was amusing at first, and in some ways comfortable. We could go into the biggest crowd without being afraid of pickpockets, against whom we were protected by our official guardians. But it became annoying with time. Moreover, it was perfectly unnecessary on the part of the police, for we were not holding conspiracy meetings. We strongly resented, and always shall resent, the Government's unfair or cruel proceedings. But we saw the uselessness of an active protest, and tried to keep quiet on account of the young people about us, who were very incendiary. Even a tiny spark thrown among

them might have set them on fire.

A FAMOUS MUSICAL CIRCLE

THE musical house *par excellence* in Warsaw was, and is now, that of Louis Grossman. Besides having one of the largest piano concerns in Poland and Russia, he is an excellent musician and the composer of several comic operas. All who were known in the musical and artistic world of Europe met, sang, played, and recited in that hospitable and congenial house. We heard there Joachim and

¹ The "Polish Gazette."



Copyright by E. Bleber, Berlin
HANS VON BÜLOW

LOUIS GROSSMAN
JOSEPH JOACHIM (PHOTO. BY ELLIOTT & FRV)

Photograph by Sarony
AUGUST WILHELMJ

Henry Wieniawski, those two kings of the violin; Anton and Nicholas Rubinstein, Hans von Bülow, Mme. Artot, the sisters Marchisio, Mme. Mariani, Carlotta Patti, the violinists Wilhelmj, that most picturesque and handsome man, and Laub, Mme. Essipoff, Leschetitzky, and many others. The atmosphere of those receptions was so favorable to artists that they did not wait to be asked, but themselves offered to perform, knowing that there was no one present who was not worthy of their efforts.

When first Von Bülow was introduced to me I almost avoided him, on account of the many stories of his irascibility, his erratic disposition, his offhand treatment of the public, his brutality toward musicians, and many other crimes of this sort. On closer acquaintance with the great pianist, I experienced some astonishment to find him a man of strong mind, yet gentle nature, enthusiastic, artistic to the finger-tips, and well-bred though of an exceedingly nervous temperament. Irascible he might have been at times, but I am sure that the moments of ungovernable anger were always provoked by people's stupidity, or by some unpardonable mistakes in musical execution.

INTERESTING RELATIVES

THE picture I give of our social life in Warsaw would be quite incomplete if I did not mention an entirely different set,—which was exceedingly numerous,—my husband's relatives in the Polish capital. One of them, Mme. Morawska, a charming old lady, was my husband's grandmother, and most of the others were yet living in Warsaw, where we knew and visited them. Almost all had played a prominent part in the first part of the nineteenth century, and all were exceedingly interesting figures of the past. Very conservative and patriotic, they were above all distinguished by their strong religious proclivities, and were the leaders of catholicism in Poland. It was a new experience for an actress to be adopted by a circle so exclusive in its religious and aristocratic character.

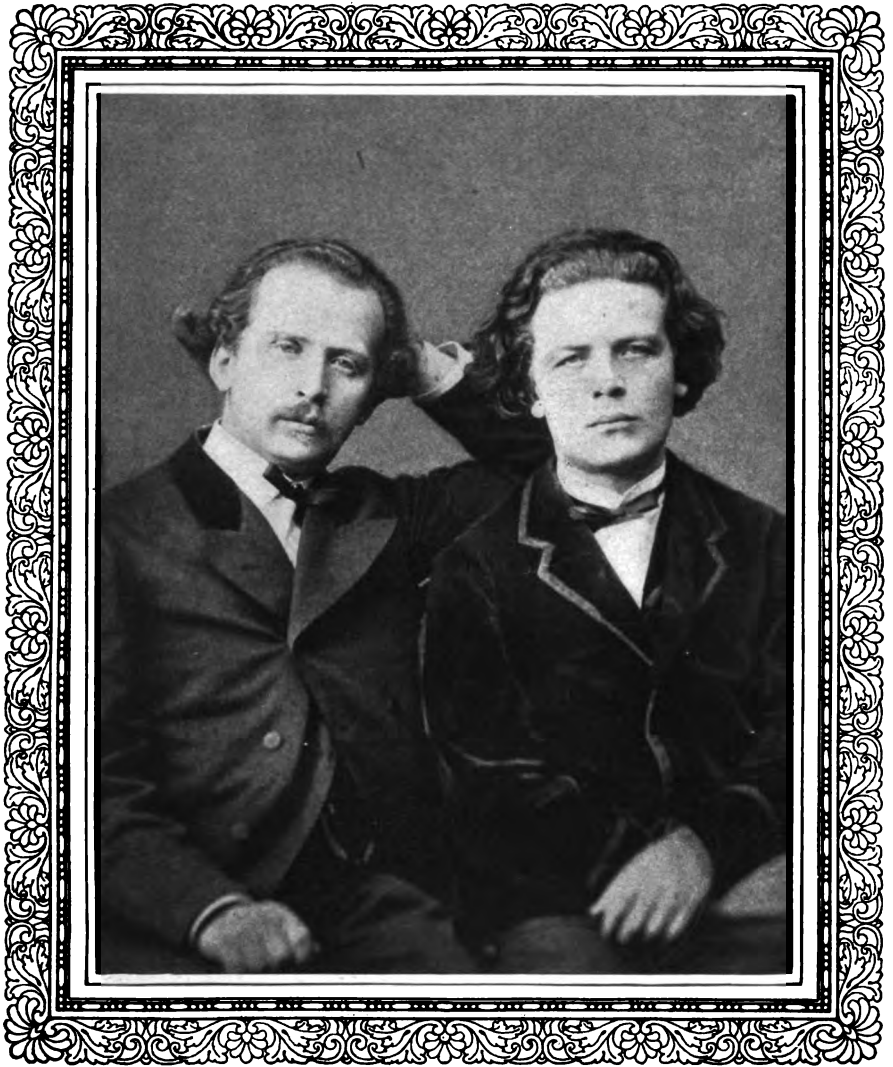
Among them the most remarkable were General Thomas Lubienski; his brother, Count Henry; their sister, Mme. Rose Sobanska; as well as the youngest of them, Count Joseph. The first one was an old

soldier of the Napoleonic wars and played a great part in the insurrection of 1830-31. The second one, Count Henry, was in his time the most important factor in the economic development of Russian Poland. He started a number of factories, opened the rich coal-mines of that country, and, in a word, greatly encouraged the spirit of enterprise among his countrymen.

Countess Sobanska, the sister, was known in Warsaw under the name of "Madame Rose," and better yet as the "Mother of the Siberians." She was the widow of a very rich nobleman of Podolia who had been deported to Siberia before 1830. She accompanied him, and spent sixteen years in the most remote part of that terrible land, a guardian angel to the political exiles, nursing them, feeding them, and consoling them. Another, and the youngest of the old generation, was Count Joseph Lubienski. While not so prominent as Count Henry, yet he also took part in his economic endeavors, and had specially interested himself in banking enterprises. They were a charming couple, this old gentleman and his wife, known as "Monsieur and Madame Joseph," for she also bore the name of Josefa. One of the most interesting pictures in life, I ever saw, was their golden wedding. They were surrounded by their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, and over one hundred relatives, of whom my husband and I were happy to be a part. Three bishops belonging to the family officiated at the altar. The eldest was the brother of the aged bridegroom, Bishop Thaddeus Lubienski; the second, his nephew, Bishop Constantine Lubienski, the third, another nephew, Bishop Kossowski. I do not remember any other gathering so imposing to my eyes—imposing not by its brilliancy, but by the venerability of the participants, and the spirit of religious devotion and family love that pervaded the whole assembly.

MME. WOLTER AS "ADRIENNE"

SHORTLY before the plans for our departure for America were made, we visited Vienna, where I had the opportunity of seeing Mme. Wolter, the greatest German actress of that time. She played *Adrienne Lecouvreur*. A beautiful, statuesque person, with fine voice and expressive face, she was more adapted to classic



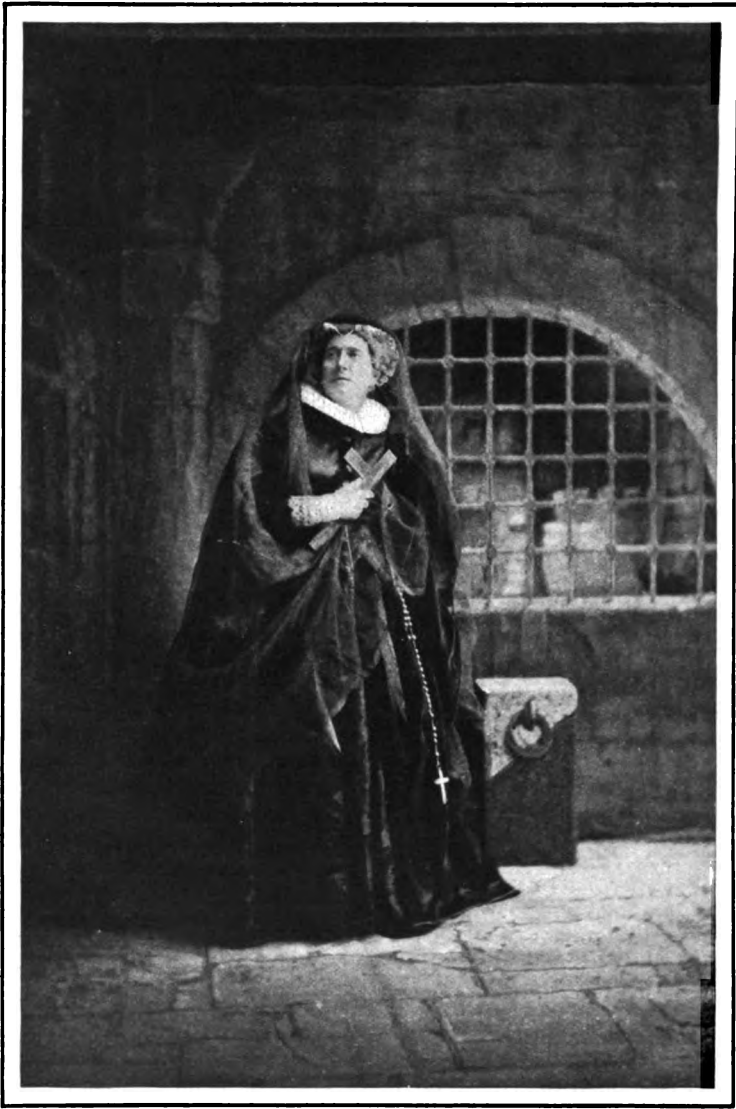
Half-tone plate engraved by H. Davidson

NICHOLAS RUBENSTEIN AND ANTON RUBENSTEIN

tragedy than to modern French drama. Though *Adrienne* belonged even then to the so-called "old school," yet the exquisite *facture* of Scribe and Legouvé required more brightness and naturalness than the Burg Theater actors could offer. In the second act, when *Adrienne* recites La Fontaine's poem of the two doves to her lover, instead of being near him and speaking to him, Mme. Wolter stood before the footlights, speaking to the audience, while Maurice stood a few steps behind her in a pose of admiration.

Several of these mistakes were noticeable, and made me think that, though

there is a saying that art has no nationality, yet French plays are always best rendered by French actors, while Shakspeare or plays from the German are almost impossible with them. I have heard that "Hamlet" has been given in Paris, but I am sure that I would not travel far to see a French *Hamlet*. Germans can play Shakspeare because the spirit of the language is similar. Moreover, they possess the necessary weight and repose, and their translations of Shakspeare and other English plays are excellent. Schlegel's Shakspearean translations are most faithful, and his language is perfect.



Half-tone plate engraved by H. Davidson

RISTORI AS *MARY STUART*

"There are also rattlesnakes," added Baranski, in a cynical tone of voice.

"Yes; but who cares? You can kill them with a stick."

"Oh, how brave you are, sitting in this cozy room!" said our skeptical friend.

"Rattlesnakes are bad, of course, but think of a grizzly bear and a puma, the California jaguar!"

"What a glorious hunt one could have!" exclaimed Sienkiewicz, and then added, "I should like to go and see that country of sunshine and primitive nature."

Dr. Karwowski entered just when we were most interested in Sienkiewicz's description of an imaginary storm on the ocean, and said to me jokingly:

"You need a change of air, Madame. Why not make a trip to America?"

"This is a good idea," my husband answered. "Why not?" and he looked at me.

I repeated, smiling, "Why not?"

Chmielowski laughed and exclaimed: "Let us all go. We will kill pumas, build huts, make our own garments out of skins, and live as our forefathers lived!"

"Just so," added Baranski. "And Pani Helena¹ will cook and wash dishes, and instead of violets and heliotrope, her perfume will be the flavor of dish-water. How enticing!"

We all laughed, and the subject was dismissed as an impossibility.

A PESSIMISTIC MOOD

DURING the pauses of the rehearsals, I used to write some thoughts and impressions on the vacant pages of my parts. Here is one that expresses my mood at that time:

(*Warsaw, 1875. Written on the acting copy of "Phèdre"*)

Peace! Almighty Father, put an end to my tortures. Is my life to be an eternal expiation for sins, mine and not mine? If I could but fly from here, far, far away, with my dearest ones, and begin a new life, a life of work and peace! Oh the people here! that jealous cruel crowd! They make sport of my tears! they mock my heart's agonies! if I knew how to hate, perhaps hatred would bring me relief. But I am weak. I cannot brave adversity. My heart is only filled with tears and love, while I ought to have a brazen brow and a heart of stone. But what true artist, what actress possesses such attributes? Only one who feels can produce feeling, only one who loves can inspire love. How can she wear a steel armor over her heart? Her only weapon is contempt. But is this enough? Will she suffer less when she appears cold and haughty? No, no, a public life is not fit for a woman! Some one said: "The happiest woman is the one of whom nothing good and nothing bad can be said."

Who knows how much truth is in these words, and whether any woman should seek happiness outside of her home, which seems to be the proper place for her. There she reigns. Her life is inaccessible to human curiosity. To the mysteries of her life only the chosen one has the key. And so it is with all quiet and happy wives and mothers. But a woman who has dared to raise her head above the others, who has extended her eager hand for laurels, who has not hesitated to expose and throw to the crowds all that her soul possessed of love, despair, and passion,—that woman has given the right to the curious multitude to interfere in her

private affairs, to rummage in the most secret recesses of her life, to count her very heart's pulsations. There is nothing as amusing to the public as some overheard snatches of an actress's talk, or the rumor of some misunderstanding in her home or outside of it. They censure her sadness, they make commentaries almost invariably false. Yet all these paltry annoyances would not count if they but touched us only. But when they touch those who are dear to us, when cruelty and malice combine to tear them with their claws, then, oh then, an invincible horror fills our soul towards that pillory called the "stage," and a great doubt rises in our mind: Was it worth while to give all that we had of the best of ourselves to the world, in order to obtain as a reward a momentary applause followed by a cup of bitterness?

Another scrap is shorter, but equally pessimistic:

(*Warsaw 2—12, 1875.*)

On the part of *Portia*)

In the old Roman times they used to throw prisoners to the lions. I threw all that was best of me to the hungry crowds, but they still ask for more, and I am so poor, so poor, that there is not enough of feeling left in me to give me comfort in every-day life.

CALIFORNIA CHOSEN FOR A REST CURE

ONE morning during the Christmas holidays my son Rudolphe came to Warsaw to spend his short vacation with us. He was even then determined to become a civil engineer. The first thing he spoke of was the coming World's Fair in America. He said it would be so nice to go to it, and then cross Panama to California. He looked so happy planning this journey that both my husband and I began to look upon the crossing of the ocean as a possibility. "Why not?" he repeated again, and my son put his arms around our necks and, kissing us in turn, said, "Oh, let us go there soon!"

Once the idea entered our heads, we communicated it to a few intimate friends, who treated the project as an insane one. No one but our young artists, Henryk Sienkiewicz and my husband's friend and Moabit prison companion, Mr. Sypniewski, took our extravagant enterprise seri-

¹ Polish for "Mrs. Helena." All my friends called me so.

ously. My husband, having only my health in view, proposed a six-months' vacation and the trip to America with the idea of visiting the most interesting places. We were to return at the end of the term, and then I should continue my work on the stage if I felt strong and well. If not, I should retire into private life.

PLANS FOR A COLONY IN AMERICA

THIS project was, however, changed in the course of time. Our friends used to talk about the new country, and the possibility of settling down somewhere in the land of freedom, away from the daily vexations to which every Pole was exposed in Russian or Prussian Poland. Henryk Sienkiewicz was the first to advocate emigration. Little by little others followed him and soon five of them expressed the desire of seeking adventures in the jungles of the virgin land.

My husband, seeing the eagerness of the young men, conceived the idea of forming a colony in California on the model of Brook Farm. The project was received with acclamation. Those who were willing to share our voluntary exile were, Henryk Sienkiewicz; our married friend Julien Sypniewski, who was anxious to bring up his two children under the influence of nature and the advanced educational system of America; Lucien Paprocki, an amateur caricaturist and my husband's relative; and Stanislaw Witkiewicz.

One evening when we were dining at the Kronenberg Palace with that delightful family, our host asked me if it were true that we intended to emigrate to America. I told him that such was our desire. "What folly!" he exclaimed. Then looking at me for a while, he added, "Unless you will study English and play on the American stage!"

These words touched a string that had been asleep in my soul for a long time. It awakened again the wild hope of playing Shakspeare in his own language. I returned home dreaming impossible dreams, but the next day I was taken down from my heaven by our friends' plans. They looked to me as a sort of providence of the colony, to look after the moral and material welfare of the hard-working farmers they were to be; in a word, to be a guar-

dian angel and a *cordon bleu*, ordinarily known by the name of cook.

"Oh, but to cook under the sapphire blue sky in the land of freedom! What joy!" I thought. "To bleach linen at the brook like the maidens of Homer's Iliad! And after the day of toil, to play the guitar and sing by moonlight, to recite poems, or to listen to the mocking-birds! And listening to our songs would be charming Indian maidens, our neighbors, making wreaths of luxuriant wild flowers for us! And in exchange we should give them trinkets for their handsome brown necks and wrists. And, oh, we should be so far away from every-day gossip and malice, nearer to God, and better." Yes, the project of a simple life, so mocked at today, had for us the charm of a revivifying novelty. It seemed like being born again.

I obtained a leave of absence from the president for one year. After that time I was bound either to return or to pay the forfeit of 6000 rubles for breaking the contract.

In the early spring Henryk Sienkiewicz and Julien Sypniewski sailed for the New World. The rest of us were to follow them in July. Sypniewski returned with glowing accounts of the beauties of California. The letters of Sienkiewicz were also most convincing, and we began to make preparations for the journey. Many, many articles were bought—heavy rugs, telescopes, brass knuckles, guns, etc. Among other things, two huge medicine-boxes, a large array of surgical instruments, and, above all, six revolvers! Even to me was presented one of the latter, a very dainty one set with mother-of-pearl.

My last appearance of the season was announced and the house was packed. After the performance the Warsaw "Courier" said:

The whole audience *en masse* formed into a double rank extending from the back door of the theater through the whole length of the park, up to its main gate. Everybody remained waiting for the appearance of the artist. As soon as she came out she was received by acclamations and cries of admiration. . . . "Come back to us!" they cried. "Come back as soon as possible, for you leave behind you a void impossible to fill."

(To be continued)